



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: PLANNING DESK

1. What improvements require a permit? / Do I need a permit?

Almost all improvements to a property require a Property Improvement Permit from the City of Manitou Springs prior to the initiation of construction/installation/modification. Also, depending on the type and scope of a given improvement, there may be additional permitting required by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD).

Here is a partial list of improvements requiring a permit from the City of Manitou Springs: fence, retaining wall, excavation or grading, commercial signage, exterior modifications (siding, stucco, windows, doors, etc.), shed/storage/accessory structures, new construction, any structural change to existing buildings, electrical, plumbing, mechanical work, furnace/water heater, deck, roofing work.

2. How much does a permit cost?

City Use Tax is paid through the Property Improvement Permit. It is assessed based on 3.8% of the cost of materials, not including labor. If there are plans to be reviewed by the Planning Department, there will be an additional \$30.00 Plan Review Fee. Furthermore, if the Fire Department needs to review the plans, there will also be a \$132.00 Fire Department Plan Review Fee for residential improvement plans or a \$330.00 Fire Department Plan Review Fee for commercial improvement plans.

3. Which improvements require that plans be submitted prior to permitting? / Am I required to submit plans?

The only improvements which do not require plans to be submitted are electrical, plumbing, mechanical, & furnace/water heater requests. These improvements are mainly handled by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) and the City of Manitou Springs issues these permits on the spot. The City's main concern with these improvements is that the City Use Tax is paid.

Virtually all other improvements will require a Site Plan, at the very least. Our Site Plan requirements may be found in [Section 18.16.010.B](#) of the Zoning Code.

Since the City does not have an engineer on Staff, Structural/Engineered plans and any plans which require review by the Manitou Springs Fire Department will need to be sent through a plan review/plan check at the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD) prior to their submittal to the City of Manitou Springs Planning Department. Pikes Peak Regional Building

Department (PPRBD) will stamp and sticker the plans with their approvals and signatures/initials. Only once the plans have been reviewed by Pikes Peak Regional Building Department can they be submitted for review with the City. The Fire Department will **NOT** review any set of plans without those approvals from the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD).

4. What is Use Tax and what is it used for?

Use Tax is a tax imposed by a state or municipality to compensate for the sales tax lost when an item is **purchased outside** of the state or municipality but is **used within** the state or municipality. For example, you buy your car in a state that has no sales tax, but you live across the border in a state that does have sales tax. When you bring your car home and register it in your state, the state taxing authority will bill you for the sales tax it would have collected had you bought the car within the state. The City of Manitou Springs collects Use Tax for building materials purchased for commercial and residential property improvements within the City. Use Tax revenues go into the City's general fund, which helps pay for City services including police, fire, street repairs, and park maintenance.

Effective as of July 1, 2020, the City's Use Tax rate is 3.8%.

5. What is the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department (PPRBD)?

The [Pikes Peak Regional Building Department](#) (PPRBD) was created in 1966 to ensure a unified minimum standard for construction, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work. Today, PPRBD serves Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Fountain, Green Mountain Falls, Manitou Springs, Monument, and Palmer Lake. The City of Manitou Springs contracts with PPRBD for regulation of the International Building Code.

6. Can I operate a short-term vacation rental in the City?

The City of Manitou Springs has regulations in place regarding short-term rental operations ([Chapter 18.89](#)). The regulations essentially state that only two percent (2%) of the available residential structures within the City may be utilized as short-term rentals and that short-term rentals must be a minimum of five hundred feet (500 ft.) from other short-term rental operations. Lastly, the applicant must be able to provide the necessary off-street parking requirements to accommodate guests. If these conditions are met, the applicant is eligible to go through the Minor Conditional Use Permit process with the City Planning Commission to become a legal short-term rental. The process takes 2-3 months to complete and requires final approval from the City Planning Commission. To find out if a property is eligible, click on the Vacation Rental Map link on the [Planning Department Webpage](#).

7. What do I need to know about performing work in the City's Local Historic Districts?

There are several things to keep in mind when working in the City's Local Historic Districts. The Historic Preservation Commission has purview over exterior alterations to properties which are visible from public right of ways and located within the Local Historic Districts ([See Map of Historic Districts](#)). This means that, in order to perform the work, the contractor/property owner must seek the approval of that Commission in a Public Hearing prior to starting construction if the proposed work is visible from the street. This process is called a [Material Change of Appearance Certification](#) and is typically a one to two (1 - 2) month process.

That being said, there is also the possibility that the work may be administratively approved by Planning Staff, instead of the request requiring the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. However, this only applies if there is no expansion of the structure/feature, it is compatible/consistent with the [Historic Design Guidelines](#), the work is replacing like material with like material (same material, type, and color – or as close to matching as possible) as part of maintenance, and/or certain re-roofing jobs depending on the material type and color proposed for use (see question number eight).

Any new construction/additions will require the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission and cannot be approved administratively. The Planning Department reserves the right to refer any request in the Local Historic Districts to the Historic Preservation Commission for final decisions, should they deem it appropriate.

8. What do I need to know about performing roofing work in the City's Local Historic Districts?

Roofing work located in the Local Historic Districts may be approved administratively by Planning Department Staff if there is no expansion to the footprint of the roof and no change to the pitch or dimensions of the roof. The other stipulation is that the roofing material color cannot be white or very light in color. The City prefers darker, earthier tones within its historic districts regarding roofing material. Rubber or metal roofs are not permitted in the Local Historic Districts unless they are located on a flat roof which is not visible from the City's right of ways or if partially replacing and matching already existing material on the structure.

Should the property owner wish to have white/light colored shingles or a metal/rubber roof, they will need to seek the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission through a [Material Change of Appearance Certification](#).

9. Are there any penalties for pulling a Property Improvement Permit after the work has already been completed?

According to the City's Municipal Code, a Property Improvement Permit must be pulled prior to the initiation of any work/construction. Any work initiated prior to the issuance of a Property Improvement Permit by the City of Manitou Springs will be considered an after-the-fact permit which carried the following penalties: The Applicant will be charged twice the Use Tax amount (2x 3.5%) plus a \$55.00 late fee.

10. How do I locate an easement?

The City of Manitou Springs is not responsible for tracking, monitoring, or enforcing easements. This is performed by El Paso County. It is possible the City may have some documentation regarding easements in the Planning Department's property files, but it not guaranteed. These

files are public record and may be viewed in the Planning Department Office. If you would like copies of any of the documents located in the property files, you will need to fill out a Colorado Open Records Act Request with the City Clerk's Office.

The best option for locating easement information is to check with the El Paso Clerk and Recorder's Office (1675 W. Garden of the Gods Road, Colorado Springs), as this is where easements are filed.

11. How do I locate/obtain a surveyor?

As a government entity, it is in the City's best interest not to make recommendations regarding the selection of a surveyor as it could be construed as biased or unequal treatment. The City recommends looking for a licensed professional when shopping for survey work to ensure the accuracy and validity of the work performed.