



ARE YOU CONSIDERING:

- Opening a new place of business
- Adding a use to an existing business
- Changing the use of an existing business
- Converting part of your residence to run a business from your home?

Before you proceed, you need to make sure that your project complies with municipal regulations, the National Building Code and any other applicable legislation. A meeting with a Northwest Regional Service Commission development officer will help steer your project in the right direction, identify development opportunities, avoid unpleasant surprises and speed up the processing of your application.

CHOOSING A LOCATION

When you are choosing a particular business, you are also choosing your clientele and market. It is important to ensure that your location has sufficient accessibility for your target clients. Lower rent very often also means lower potential sales, and you should aim for maximum visibility as a result. Keep your eyes open as there are many opportunities in our region.

DEVELOPING YOUR SITE

Commercial uses must maintain National Building Code standards. You will learn more about these standards as you go through the permit application process. Aesthetics are also very important. The corporate image you project makes your customers either want to do business with you or move on to the next place. We are here to help. Consider also calling upon the services of professionals in corporate imaging, marketing and interior design.

PARKING

Depending on the intended use, the by-laws establish ratios of the minimum number of parking spaces to the surface area used by the business. A development officer can advise you on this. Be sure to set aside enough space for landscaping. Greenery is a value-added feature that brings in business.



SIGNAGE

A permit is required for the installation of all commercial signs.

Bigger does not necessarily mean better when it comes to signage. Standards have been established by sector to promote effective commercial signage and help to avoid confusion created by signs that are too large, too “busy” or poorly designed.

The purpose of a sign is to encourage clients to enter your establishment, not list your entire inventory! Your sign should indicate the bare essentials: your logo, the name of your business and what you do.

Your sign should be simple, original and invite people to enter your establishment. Which of the signs above achieves this? Aim for readability. Avoid background images, which can make it difficult to see the text on your sign. Do not hesitate to call upon the services of professionals when developing your corporate image, especially signage.



TO APPLY FOR A PERMIT, YOU NEED TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- name, address and telephone number of the proponent, that is, the owner or other authorized person
- cadastral information or civic address of the building
- current use of the building
- proposed use of the building
- description of anticipated work along with plans (if applicable)
- drawing showing layout, quantity and size of parking spaces
- corporate name
- surface area to be occupied by proposed use
- sketch of proposed signage (content and size).

BEFORE OPENING, YOU MUST:

- obtain the building permit
- develop the required parking spaces
- obtain a commercial signage permit.

SETTING UP AN OFFICE OR BUSINESS IN YOUR RESIDENCE

The by-laws set out a list of business activities that people are allowed to carry out from a residence. You also need to apply for a development permit and maintain certain standards, such as:

- maximum area occupied by the activity
- required number of parking spaces
- number of employees
- exterior signage.

