



Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board
City of Bemidji Northern Township

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Commercial & Multi-Family Developers Packet

Contact List

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Project Design Approval Process: The entire approval process can take anywhere between a few weeks to a few months depending on the type of development and the complexities involved. It is **strongly** recommended to contact the Planning Office early in the process in an effort to identify possible issues and ensure that your project receives approval well in advance of your development schedules.

The JPB is required to review and approve any building permits that propose any of the following items, other items not listed may also require review:

1. New structure construction, or the expansion of a structure.
2. Proposing new external lighting.
3. Proposing new signage.
4. Proposing change of the land use, (Ex. Law Office changes to Dollar Store, Residential to Commercial or vice-versa).
5. Any project that will alter the grading and drainage on-site.
6. Any commercial or multi-family project that will remove trees.

The following are a list of steps that help to identify what items you should be planning to complete and when:

Step 1: Preliminary Research

Research the property of your proposed project site to answer the following questions:

1. Is the proposed use allowed in the zoning district the property is located in?
 - a. Refer to the Zoning Map and Section 302 of Zoning Ordinance.
2. Is the use permitted, or does it require Conditional or Interim Use approval?
 - a. Refer to the Zoning Map and Section 302 of Zoning Ordinance.
3. If not, can the property be rezoned without spot zoning?
 - a. Are there any adjacent properties with your desired zoning? If not, it is likely any zoning request would create a spot zone.
4. Will the setbacks, impervious surface restrictions, and layout of the lot work for your proposal?
 - a. Refer to Section 402 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The following website link can assist in researching <https://www.jpbgba.org/planning>.

Click on the “City of Bemidji On-Line Mapping Services” link. Once you are directed to the Interactive Maps & Apps Gallery, there are two components that will help you with the pre-application process. The first component that may be of help, is the [Planning & Zoning WebApp](#). With this WebApp, you will be able to zoom into the property of your interest and with a click of the button, the zoning district will be identified along with the lot size and setback requirements. The second component that may also be helpful, is the [Bemidji Area Land Records Interactive Map](#). With this Interactive Map, you will be able to search for the property of interest, as well as utilizing the many features that are offered on the site. You can use the measuring tool to measure estimated distances between buildings and lot lines, along with calculating square footage of the site or a building. Also through the Interactive Map, you are able to use the Identify Command for the selected property to identify the tax information for that parcel.

For types of uses allowed in particular zoning districts, please refer to Section 302 of the [Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board Zoning & Subdivision Ordinance](#) from the link above to see if your proposed land use is allowed at your location of interest.

Visit the Joint Planning Board WEBSITE: www.jpbgba.org for additional information relating to ordinances, schedules, fees, and application forms.

- [Greater Bemidji Area Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance](#)
- [Application Cut-Off Dates & Meeting Schedules](#)
- [Application Forms, Fee Schedule & Check Lists](#)

Step 2: Preliminary Idea Discussion

1. Contact the JPB office to speak with a Planner. This meeting can be in person, through E-mail or a conversation over the phone, if an in-person meeting is desired please schedule an appointment. The Planner will review the site and proposed land use with you to ensure your proposal is allowed, or review what steps would be needed to move the project forward.
 - a. At this time, it is helpful to have a rough drawing or concept site plan of the proposed site layout on the property.

Step 3: Preliminary Site Review and Approval Process Discussion

1. Schedule an appointment with a Planner for project plan review pre-application discussion. If you would like to also meet with a Building Official or Engineer at this time it can be accommodated. The Planner will inform the applicant of permitting requirements for the site and timelines associated with them.
 - a. At this time, a preliminary site plan is required for review; it is recommended that a preliminary site plan be submitted prior to meeting to allow staff adequate time to review.
 - b. A preliminary site plan should be completed by a design professional (Architect, Surveyor, or Engineer)
 - c. The following proposed items should be on a preliminary site plan and should meet JPB Zoning Ordinance requirements or be identified as requiring a variance or other additional approval:
 - i. Building location with setback distances
 - ii. Building size and height
 - iii. Parking with ingress/egress to adjacent streets and distances to intersections.
 - iv. Exterior lighting.
 - v. Estimated existing trees to be removed and potential locations for proposed landscaping.
 - vi. Stormwater pond location.
 - vii. Freestanding sign location.
 - d. Provide an electronic copy of preliminary site plan, JPB staff may request hard copies for review as well.
 - e. Review of preliminary plans may vary, please allow 10 days for review and response.

2. For more complex projects, the Planner or Building Official may recommend you to attend a development meeting, held the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month, to explain the project for all departments involved in the project plan review process.
3. Projects that will require a variance, conditional use permit (CUP), interim use permit (IUP), major or minor subdivision and/or a planned unit development (PUD), the project will require Joint Planning Commission (JPC) and Joint Planning Board (JPB) approval. Refer to [Appendix A: JPC/JPB Review Process](#) for additional information and timelines. Applications are due the last working day of every month to the JPB staff. Refer to the [GBAJPB Schedule](#) for a list of application submittal dates and reserved monthly meetings.

Step 4: Submit Final Plans for Review

1. Submit an application for JPB commercial/multi-family site plan review. See [Appendix B: Commercial/Multi-Family Site Plan Review Application](#):
 - a. Requirements for site submittals are listed in [Appendix C: Planning Director's Memorandum](#) dated February 27, 2018.
 - b. Requirements for engineering submittals are listed in [Appendix D: City Engineer's Memorandum](#) dated February 16th, 2018
 - c. Deliverables:
 - i. Three (3) sets of site and engineering plans in printed size of 11" x 17."
 - ii. Electronic PDF's of printed deliverables shall also be submitted via email or flash drive.
2. Submit an application for building plan review. See [Appendix E: Building Plan Review Application](#):
 - a. Requirements for building plan review submittals are listed in [Appendix F: Building Department Plan Review Documents and Process Memorandum](#) dated February 26, 2018
 - b. Deliverables:
 - i. One (1) set of site and engineering plan sets.
 - ii. Two (2) sets of building plans including:
 1. Architectural
 2. Structural
 3. Mechanical
 4. Electrical
 5. Energy Code Compliance documentation for envelope, mechanical and lighting
 - iii. One (1) – Architectural Specification Book.

- iv. Plumbing plan review on commercial buildings must be submitted to the Department of Labor and Industry Plumbing Plan Review Section for their plan review and approval. This approval must be granted prior to permitting.
- v. Electronic PDF's of printed deliverables shall also be submitted via email or flash drive.

Step 5: JPB and Staff Review

1. The project owner or project manager will receive comments regarding the final plans from the JPB and other departments or agencies requiring review.
2. Review time can vary due to project size and complexities. Projects are reviewed on a first come first serve basis, but typical review time is thirty (30) days from date of applicant submittal.
3. If comments from department review require design changes or additional information, applicant shall provide that information and return to Planner or Building Official. Refer to Step 4 for deliverable formats of resubmittals.
4. Comments will also estimate the amount of escrow required by each department and other applications, permits or fees, that will be required including but not limited to:
 - a. Developers Agreement for Project Certificate of Completion
 - b. Tree Removal and Preservation
 - c. Septic Systems (SSTS)
 - d. Sign Permits
 - e. 911 Addressing Permit

Step 6: Apply for a Building Permit (City Limits) or Land Use Permit (Northern Township) as well as other applications required.

1. Building Permit applications can be obtained from the building office or online LINK to be used within City of Bemidji. Typical applications required to obtain a building permit:
 - a. Building Permit Application
 - b. Mechanical Permit Application
 - c. Sewer & Water Access Charge Application
 - d. Digging/Utility Permit Application
 - e. Stormwater Erosion Control Application and Permit (see Appendix N)
 - f. Utility and Stormwater As-Built Deliverables (see Appendix O)
2. JPB Land Use Permit application to be used within Northern Township, can be obtained from Planning Office or online at: <https://www.jpbgba.org/applications>

- a. For all commercial, multi-family or non-single family residential uses, a submitted land use application shall include the following items by a licensed civil engineer, in which will then be reviewed by another licensed engineer of the JPB choosing:
 - i. Grading and drainage plans; and
 - ii. Stormwater calculations meeting local and state guidelines.
3. If an application for a requirement is not provided in this document contact the Planner you are working with to obtain an application.

Step 7: Pre-construction Meeting

1. For complex projects a pre-construction meeting will take place before building permits are issued.
2. The meeting will discuss expectations for inspections and deliverables required by each regulating authority and timelines associated with the project.
3. In order to streamline review of projects and ensure that projects are constructed as designed and approved a process was developed called the Project Construction Approval Process:
 - a. The JPB and Building Department have developed project checklists that shall be posted in a visible location on the project site. The **Commercial Site Plan Closeout Card (GREEN) provided as Appendix G** and the **Building Inspection Documentation Card (ORANGE) provided as Appendix H**. These documents will track various items that require inspection and approval during construction. The Developer is responsible for notifying the respective department staff during construction in accordance with each card's requirements. These cards must be finalized and all items approved prior to Certificate of Project Completion.
4. Typical attendance at meeting would be applicant and contractors as well as representation from the JPB, Building Office, Fire Department, Engineering and Stormwater Office, and GIS office.

Step 8: Execute Short Form Development Agreement and Issue Permits.

Typically Step 8 will happen immediately after Step 7, if all final items have been addressed at the Pre-Construction Meeting.

1. Execute Development Agreement. See **Appendix I: Certificate of Project Completion Agreement** for a draft copy of a, the Planner will work with you to adjust the agreement to work with your specific project.
 - a. This Agreement is making the developer liable for completing the project as approved by the JPB and other regulating authorities including but not limited to the Building Office, Fire Department, Engineering and Stormwater Office, and GIS office.
 - b. This Agreement is not the same as a Building Certificate of Occupancy, which acknowledges that the "building" was constructed to meet the building code.

- c. This Agreement will work out any timelines that have been agreed upon with the project pertaining to seasonal weather conditions, which may need additional time to be completed.
 - d. This Agreement also will outline escrow amounts required at time permits are issued.
 - i. Escrows will be determined using **Appendix J: Commercial / Multi-Family Escrow / Field Verification Form**
 - e. This agreement may also have other agreements or requirements attached to it:
 - i. Stormwater and Utility As-Builts
 - ii. Stormwater Maintenance Agreement
2. Building Permit or Land Use Permit
- a. The Planner will notify the Building Official that the building permit can be issued, or issued with conditions.
 - b. The applicant will be notified when the permit is available to be picked up and the total fee required for permits and escrow.

Step 9: Erosion Control Installation and Inspection

- 1. The Stormwater Site Analyst shall inspect the installation of all on-site erosion control prior to any site grading or equipment mobilization for the construction site.

Step 10: Construction Review

The following outlines the construction review process for building, engineering, planning, stormwater, and as-built requirements.

- 1. Construction Review Process:
 - a. Planner will review required inspections with **Commercial Site Plan Closeout Card provided as Appendix G** with Developer or Prime Contractor before building permit is issued. This will happen at pre-construction meeting. If you have questions regarding this card or you don't have one on-site, please contact a Planner.
 - i. This card is expected to be posted on-site, in the job trailer or held with the project manager at all times to ensure inspection can be documented.
 - b. Developer will notify Planner or Engineer 48-hours in advance for any required inspections in accordance with the inspection procedures discussed in the pre-construction meeting regarding the Commercial Site Closeout Card.
 - c. For Site Grading & Drainage Inspection contact the Assistant City Engineer.
 - d. For As-Built Deliverables contact the GIS Coordinator for questions.
- 2. City of Bemidji Building Department Construction Review

- a. At the time of issuing a building permit and during the pre-construction meeting, the Building Official will go over the required inspections and the Building Inspection Documentation Card that's to be placed on site.

Step 11: Project Closeout

Through the Development Agreement, the developer will acknowledge that the site or building shall not be occupied for the proposed use without approval of the Certificate of Project Completion.

1. Review Project for Completion

- a. The following departments, Building, JPB, Engineering, Stormwater, Fire, and GIS need to sign off on the Certificate of Project Completion form acknowledging that their department has received all deliverables and the site was constructed as approved.
- b. Seasonal weather delays may be granted if required with conditions and approval from the Planning Director.
- c. The JPB will document comments regarding project status of completion, and any conditions required for final approval.

2. Final Certificate of Project Completion

- a. The City Manager or Community Development Director will sign off on **Certificate of Project Completion Form provided as Appendix K** once all departments give final approval.
- b. The JPB will distribute the final Certificate of Project Completion to each department and the applicant.

3. Return of Escrow

- a. Each department will distribute any remaining escrow funds to the applicant. If the project was completed as approved, the developer should anticipate receiving 100% of their escrow money.
- b. Landscaping escrows will be held for one year from the date trees were planted.

Appendix:

- A. **JPC/JPB Review Process**
- B. **Commercial / Multi-Family Site Plan Review Application**
- C. **JPB Site Plan Approval Memorandum**
- D. **Engineering Site Plan Approval Memorandum**
- E. **Building Plan Review Application**
- F. **Building Department Plan Review Documents and Process**
- G. **GBAJPB Commercial Site Closeout Card**
- H. **City of Bemidji Building Inspection Documentation Card**
- I. **GBAJPB Short Form Development Agreement**
- J. **Commercial / Multi-Family Escrow / Field Verification Form**
- K. **Certificate of Completion Form**
- L. **City of Bemidji Building Permit Fee Schedule**
- M. **JPB Fee Schedule**
- N. **Stormwater Erosion Control Application and Permit**
- O. **Utility and Stormwater As-Built Deliverables**