

Planning Division Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. I am interested in purchasing property. What should I know before I buy?

The City recommends looking at a title report carefully to see any encumbrances on the property including: easements, pre-annexation agreements, deed restrictions and more. A title report can be obtained from a Title Company. Attorneys, title companies, and realtors may also serve as a good source of information. In addition, the City Engineering & Development Services Department may have additional information such as a copy of the plat, plot plan, and related information. This information is public and can be viewed at City Hall.

2. What is a Zoning District?

A zoning district is a classification of land in the City limits which divides property into specific types of uses. Zoning regulates the type of development that can occur in an area. Zoning also sets other standards for development in a particular zoning district. City Council determines the zoning designation of a property. For example, in the City there are zones that are reserved for residential, commercial, and industrial development. The City uses the Comprehensive Plan to help make zoning decisions.

3. How do I determine the zoning of my property?

The Planning Division keeps the official zoning map and can provide you with zoning information. Please call (307) 686-5281 with either an address or legal description of the property. There is also an online map and zoning map on the City website homepage that may help determine zoning.

4. How do I locate my property lines?

It is the responsibility of the property owner to determine the location of his or her property lines. The City may have documents such as a plat, plot plan, and foundation location certificate which will show the dimensions of the property; however, hiring a licensed land surveyor is the only way to accurately locate the property lines. Acquiring a survey of your property is also the best way to resolve a property line dispute with an adjacent property owner. The City does not have a Surveyor on staff that can assist with locating property lines.

5. I have an easement on my property. How will this affect me?

Easements are designated areas on your land that are set aside for the use of others for a specific purpose, usually for a type of public utility. This means the easement holder has the right to access the property for a specific purpose such as maintenance of an electrical, water, or sanitary sewer line. Permanent structures of any nature are not allowed in easements. Fences are allowed in most types of easements with an easement encroachment agreement with the owner stating that a portion of fence may be removed if necessary. Fences are not allowed in drainage easements. For more information, please call the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

6. What are setbacks and how do I find setback information?

Setbacks are distances from the property line in which a structure may not be located. Setbacks vary by the zoning designation of the property and are defined in the City of Gillette Zoning Ordinance. The required setback may be different for a primary use structure versus an accessory use structure such as a shed. The Zoning Ordinance may be found on the City's website at www.gillettewy.gov under the Planning Link. For additional information, please contact the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

7. What is the difference between a primary structure and an accessory structure?

The primary structure is the main building which houses the main use on the property. An accessory structure is one that houses an accessory use that is incidental or used in conjunction with the main building. For example, in a residential district the home would be the primary structure with a shed serving as an accessory structure. Residential lots within the City must have a primary structure prior to constructing an accessory structure.

8. What do I need in order to build a home on my property?

You or your contractor will need to submit an application to the Building Inspection Division with all required building plans and a professionally prepared plot plan. See the plot plan example on the City Website under the Building Inspection/ Forms and Permits.

9. What do I need in order to build a garage on my property or put an addition on my house?

You must submit an application to the Building Inspection Division with required building plans and a plot plan showing the distances from the proposed structure to the property lines. The new structure must meet all City requirements and setbacks. Upon approval from the Building Inspection and Planning Divisions, you will be issued a building and a zoning permit. There is a fee for the building permit and the zoning permit is free of charge. For more information regarding building requirements or fees, please contact the City Building Inspection Division at (307) 686-5260. For information related to plots plans, setbacks, or allowable uses of the property, please call the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

10. What is a plot plan? What is a foundation location certificate?

A plot plan is a drawing illustrating the lot dimensions and any buildings placed on the lot. The plot plan shows distances from the structures to the property lines and is drawn to a particular scale. The plot plan is typically submitted to the City prior to a new home being constructed. A foundation location certificate is submitted to the City after the foundation is completed. It shows the foundation placement on the lot and is stamped by a licensed surveyor. The City has these documents for newer homes in the City and homeowners may obtain a copy of either document by calling or stopping by the Planning Division.

11. Are there any size restrictions on building a pole barn, garage, shop or other accessory structure?

Yes. The Zoning Ordinance states the gross floor area of the accessory use shall not exceed the gross floor area of the permitted use (home). The total living area of the home applies to this calculation so a basement of a home could be used to calculate the total. This regulation applies to all residential and mobile home zoning districts in the City.

12. Do I need a permit to build a fence?

Yes. Property owners may come to the Second Floor of City Hall where the Building Inspection Division to acquire a free zoning permit. You do not need to bring any documents, just be able to identify the location of the proposed fence. City staff looks for any sight distance obstructions, conflicts with easements, and more. The process is generally very easy and quick. Residential fences in front yards are limited to 4' in height and 6' for side and rear yards. If you have any questions, please contact the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

13. What types of permits are required to build a deck, shed, or retaining wall?

Typically, a City Building and Zoning Permit is required to build any of these items. However, a shed that is less than 200 square feet in size and a retaining wall that is less than 4 feet in height only require a zoning permit. Both permits may be obtained by coming to the Second Floor of City Hall where the Building Inspection Division is located.

14. Do I need a permit for a temporary sign?

Yes. The Code Compliance and Planning Divisions issue temporary sign permits. Please stop by the Second Floor of City Hall where the Planning Division is located for a permit or call (307) 686-5281 for more information. Signs are not allowed to be located in the City Right-of-Way, on electrical poles, City signs, etc. These permits are free of charge.

15. Can I operate a commercial business in a residential zone?

Some types of businesses that do not alter the character of the residential neighborhood may be allowed in residential zones. Only a certain percentage of the home may be used for a business and the rest must remain residential. The Code Compliance Division issues all Home Occupation Permits and may be reached at (307) 686-5281.

16. How do I change the zoning of my property?

A property owner may request a zoning change through the Planning Division. There are a set of criteria that must be met in order for a zoning change to occur. City Council makes the final determination for all zoning districts. If you would like more information, please call the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

17. Can I have a secondary residence or mother-in-law apartment on my property?

The current Zoning Ordinance does not allow for more than one residence per lot in a single family zoning district.

18. Where do I find information regarding property ownership or tax information?

The County Assessor's office has the most up-to-date information. Please call the County Assessor's Office at (307) 682-7266.

19. Can I subdivide my property?

A landowner may apply to have his or her property subdivided. This requires getting a surveyor and completing all other requirements. Decisions regarding subdivisions are made by the City Council. The Subdivision Regulations govern the way land is divided in the City of Gillette. This document is available online at www.gillettewy.gov under the Planning page. If you are interested in subdividing your property please contact the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281 for more information.

20. Where do I obtain maps of the City?

City maps may be obtained from the City GIS Division which is located on the Second Floor of City Hall. For more information, please contact the GIS Division at (307) 686-5364.

21. I received a notice in the mail regarding a proposal in my area. What do I do?

State law and/or City regulations require property owners that are located close to a proposed development to be notified. Please call the Planning Division for more information on the proposal if you have any questions. Everyone is invited to attend all Planning Commission and City Council Public Meetings to offer any relevant public input.

22. What is being built down the street from me?

Contact the City Planning Division at (307) 686-5281 to learn about new development in the City.

23. Can I park my car on my lawn?

The Zoning Ordinance requires that all residential homes have a minimum of two off-street parking spaces that are surfaced with asphalt or concrete. Any additional parking of vehicles must be on an approved gravel surface and not on the lawn or bare ground.

24. How can an annexation be initiated?

In order to be annexed, land in Campbell County must be contiguous to the City limits. A property owner may petition for his or her land to be annexed into the City. All extensions of City services are generally at the expense of the landowner. For more information, please contact the Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.

25. Can I receive City water and/or sanitary sewer services if I live in the County?

Possibly, with approval from the City Council. The Council recently placed restrictions on new water services outside of the City, until the Madison water project is completed. All service requests should be accompanied by a letter and map and delivered to the Planning Division. All extensions are generally at the property owner's expense. For more information, please contact the City Planning Division at (307) 686-5281.