



# **CITY OF OURAY**

## **DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK**

**Permits, procedures, standards, guidelines and application forms  
for development projects in the  
City of Ouray, Colorado  
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# OURAY DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

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# OURAY DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK

## INTRODUCTION

### Scope -

Development in the City of Ouray affects a variety of public and private properties, which over time will influence the image of the community. In many ways, development articulates the values of the Community Plan. Those wishing to undertake a development project, large or small, should understand the procedures and requirements that define the development process in Ouray.

### Physical Setting –

Ouray's physical setting is a major influence on development. The original town site lies on an alluvial fan 7,800 feet above sea level, which is surrounded on three sides by sheer sandstone cliffs that rise to over 12,000 feet. This steep terrain and high elevation pose challenges to development that are not typical in most communities. Climatic conditions can be harsh during any season, particularly winter. Natural hazards, including floods, debris flows, rock falls, unstable slopes and wildfire have the potential to affect significant portions of the City. Soil and bedrock conditions typically make excavation difficult for both City and private landowners.

### Purpose -

This document is intended to inform and assist those interested in developing within the City of Ouray. The City believes that accurate information at the beginning of any project will make the process smoother and improve the outcome for both the individual and public. This Development Handbook summarizes how the system works from the perspective of permits and procedures. It also provides voluntary guidelines and suggestions for design that reflect community values. It supplements the Ouray City Code, but does not supersede it. Many of the referenced documents, including Ouray's Architectural Heritage, are available online in their entirety.

## PERMITS

Following are brief descriptions of various permits that may be required for any development project.

### Development -

Obtaining a permit is the first step in pursuing any project in Ouray. Under Subsection 7-3-A of the City Code, a development permit is required for any of the following projects:

- a. Rezoning
- b. Subdivision
- c. PUD
- d. Initiation or change of a permitted use.
- e. Initiation of change of a conditional use (including change of ownership).

- f. Actions requiring a building permit.
- g. Construction, alteration or erection of any fence, wall or retaining wall requiring a building permit.
- h. Grading, fill or excavation involving 8 cubic yards or more.
- i. “Development” as defined by the Flood Plain Management Regulations in City Code, Section 6.
- j. Development or expansion of a mobile home or travel home park.

### **Building –**

Section 6 of the City Code requires building permits for all new construction or remodeling, **except the following:**

- a. One-story, detached accessory buildings, such as garden sheds with a total roof area of less than 120 square feet.
- b. Fences less than 6 feet in height.
- c. Retaining walls less than four feet in height measured from the base of the footer to the top of the wall.
- d. Driveways and sidewalks
- e. Roof gutters and downspouts
- f. Finishes on floors and walls, i.e. paint, wallpaper, tile, carpet, etc.

### **Excavation or Encroachment –**

Many, but not all projects, involve excavating a City street for access, utility installation or placement of an encroachment on or under a street or other City property. In such cases, a permit is required under Subsection 13-4 of the City Code.

### **Floodplain Development-**

Most of Ouray’s original town site lies within the floodplain of the Uncompahgre River or one or more of its tributaries. Therefore, a floodplain development permit is required for projects located within these boundaries.

### **Signs-**

Permits are required for any sign to be erected in the R-2, C-1, or C-2 zoning districts.

### **Utilities -**

A permit for water and sewer is required for those obtaining service from the City.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Development Permits-**

To begin the process, an application for a development permit shall be made on forms furnished by the City. Permit applications will be processed according to the procedures in Subsection 7-3-B of the City Code. A sample application form is included in the appendix of this Handbook. The Ouray Land Use Code is available online at <http://cityofouray.com>.

**The most common development permits are those issued in conjunction with building permits for new homes, additions or fences. Normally, these can be processed by City staff in a short time frame and are often issued simultaneously with the building permit.**

If the proposed development involves a subdivision, PUD, Rezoning or changes to a non-conforming building, a more detailed review by staff, Planning Commission, City Council or all three may be required before the permit can be issued. **Please be aware that these actions involve posting laws and longer review periods. Depending on complexity, these processes can be months long.**

**Standards-** Compliance with provisions of Subsection 7-3 of the Ouray City Code is a prerequisite for approval.

**Plans** - A site plan showing existing and proposed conditions and other information required by Subsection 7-3-A of the City Code is required.

**Fees** — Please see Subsection 7-2-B-6 of the City Code.

#### **Building Permits —**

A building permit application may be filed concurrent with an application for a development permit. Owners, contractors or their duly authorized agent may apply for a building permit.

**Standards** — Compliance with the requirements of Section 6 of the City Code. Unique to Ouray are:

1. **Snow loads** —85 pounds per square foot.
2. **Wind loading** — Not be less than 70 miles per hour.
3. **Frost depth** — Forty six (46) inches, measured from the bottom of the footer to finished grade.
4. **R Values** — Minimum “R” values for residential construction are: Walls @ R-19; Ceilings @ R-49; Crawl Space @ R-II; Slab @R-10

#### **Plans -**

1. **Plot Plan** - A site plan required for the development permit will suffice.
2. **Foundation Plan** — Include dimensioned plan views of foundations with footers, stem walls, interior pads and exterior pads. Also a dimensioned section view of foundations showing type, size and placement of rebar, wire mesh, anchor bolts, support ledges, height above grade, etc.
3. **Slab or Monolithic Pour** - Show depth of footer in relation to finished grade. Include a sectional view of the pour indicating type, size, and placement of all rebar, wire or fiber mesh. Plan must also show depth and thickness of slab pour, support ledges, type of fill and compaction, size and placement of anchor bolts and ties to foundation or footers.

4. **Mechanical Schedule** — List all furnaces, boilers vents, fans, refrigeration units, etc., to be used in the project. Specify each type of heating unit as primary or back-up. Propane-fired hot water heaters and boilers are not allowed in basements.
5. **Door Schedule** — Specify each door type and size for all door openings. One (1) hour fire resistant, self-closing door is required between attached garage and dwelling.
6. **Window Schedule** — Specify window type and size for each window opening. Specify minimum of double glazed windows and safety glass where applicable. One (1) egress window is required for each bedroom that does not have a door leading directly to the outside of the dwelling. See Section 1205 of the 1997 UBC regarding natural light and ventilation requirements.
7. **Elevations** — Submit four elevation drawings. One for each facing view; north, south, east, west.
8. **Floor Plan** — Submit one for each floor, garage or basement proposed. All areas drawn must be dimensional and the square footage for each area shown. A total of the individual square footages must be calculated and shown. Each area or room must be named as to its use (bath, kitchen, closet, living, etc.).
9. **Energy Code Compliance** – As of July 1,2008 all new structures and remodels must meet the requirements of the 2006 International Energy Code as adopted by the City of Ouray.

**Fees** — Building permit fees are as established by the Codes referenced in the above Standards section. All appropriate fees will be collected, including investigation fees, if a permit is required and work is done without obtaining a permit.

#### **Excavation/Encroachment Permits** —

An application to excavate or encroach upon a street or other City property may be made on forms supplied by the City. Such applications may be made separately or concurrently with a development or building permit application.

**Standards** — Compliance with Subsection 13-4 of the Ouray City Code.

**Plans**- For excavation, a plan of work, as called for in Subsection I 34-F-d of the City Code, is required. A survey, or sketch showing the area occupied, is required for an encroachment onto City property.

**Fees** - Fees vary according to the area of City property affected; in accord with a fee schedule adopted by the City Council

#### **Floodplain Development** —

Floodplain development permit applications may be processed concurrent with applications for development and building permits.

**Standards** — Compliance with Subsection 6-4 of the Ouray City Code.

**Plans** — Information required by Subsection 6-4-C-2 must be submitted with a site plan that accompanies an application for a Development Permit as required by Subsection 7-3.

**Fees**- None

### **Signs—**

It is unlawful to erect or maintain any sign except in compliance with City requirements. An application for a sign permit may be obtained from the City.

**Standards** — The City’s Sign Regulations are contained in Subsection 7-6 of the Ouray City Code.

**Plans** — A sketch of the proposed sign is a requirement of the application process.

**Fees**- Please see Subsection 7-2-B-6 of the City Code.

### **Utilities-**

All new housing, lodging or commercial development **must** connect to the municipal water and sewer system. Application for service is typically made concurrent with application for other permits described earlier in this section.

**Standards** —Applications must be in accord with the requirements of Section 9 of the Ouray City Code.

**Plans**- Plans required for development and building permits are sufficient to apply for water and sewer service.

**Fees** — Please see Subsection 9-4-B, C and D of the City Code

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **Physical Setting -**

Ouray is uniquely situated in a mountain setting, which features dramatic views, clean air and water, proximity and easy access to public lands, geothermal springs, and abundant wildlife. Ouray lies within the narrow valley of the Uncompahgre River with undeveloped mountainsides and cliffs rising abruptly on the east and west sides of town. Within the City limits, these higher lands were platted for development as part of the original town site.

### **Architectural Character -**

The town’s mountain setting, mining history and settlement time frame have all influenced local architecture. Climatic conditions in mountainous terrain create design challenges that require substantial structures with steep roof pitches and sturdy, deep foundations. Unfortunately, the first structures in Ouray met only one of these requirements - steep roofs. Ouray is not unlike many Colorado mining towns, which saw most of its Victorian homes and commercial structures built as part of the mining boom

of the late 19th century. The pattern of lots and blocks in Ouray is also similar to other Colorado mountain towns established during the same time frame. This layout features 24, 25'x142' lots per block. As a result, many of the first structures built on single lots were narrow two-story buildings. Today, while Ouray's architectural character includes a variety of styles; two story structures with steeply pitched roofs are still the norm.

### **Purpose -**

Voluntary guidelines are recommended in the Ouray Community Plan as a means of achieving compatibility in the construction of new buildings. The Community Plan also emphasizes the importance of the City's historic buildings and the need to protect the economic and cultural values they represent

The following guidelines define the desired scale and character of development, without dictating a particular architectural style. They are intended to inform and educate both public decision makers and private landowners as to designs that will be compatible with Ouray's historic character, but at the same time recognize and take advantage of modern construction practices.

### **General Guidelines – See “[Ouray's Architectural Heritage](#)” for examples**

1. **Quality** - Construction of buildings and designs should be durable and maintain suitability with respect to local conditions.
2. **Compatibility** - Design of new construction should be compatible with other structures in the neighborhood and with Ouray's architectural tradition. Consultation with the Ouray County Historical Society is recommended for input on elements that represent this compatibility.
3. **Mass and Scale** - The scale and mass of new structures and additions to existing structures should be in proportion with others nearby and with the structure being expanded.
4. **Height** - Buildings should be within the range of heights found on nearby structures. Maximum heights are as required by City Zoning Regulations.
5. **Materials** - Exterior materials that appear similar in color, texture and dimension with the City's historical context are encouraged. Technologically advanced materials are acceptable as long as they are visually compatible and resemble historical materials in form, texture, color, finish, dimension and placement.
6. **Colors** - Colors that are compatible with Ouray's physical setting and architectural tradition are encouraged. Select paint or roof colors that compliment those of natural materials found on the building, site or surrounding areas such as terra cotta, stone, natural rock or brick. Avoid colors that are disharmonious with other colors used on the building or found on adjacent buildings. Contrasting colors that accent architectural details and entrances are encouraged.

## **Guidelines for Residential Structures**

1. **Dormers** — The use of dormers to break up and add interest to rooflines is encouraged. As a rule of thumb, one dormer per 20 to 25 linear foot of roof is suggested. *OAH pgs. pp. 17-18*
2. **Roofs** - Steeply pitched roofs are consistent with Ouray's architectural tradition. A minimum pitch of 8:12 is recommended to match traditional construction and facilitate snowmelt. *OAH pp.4-14*
3. **Openings** — Large expanses of blank walls are neither attractive or in keeping with traditional building design in Ouray. As a minimum, 10% of all wall areas should be dedicated to either windows or doors.
4. **Windows** - The use of predominantly narrow units, stacked above each other, with a spacing of three or more window widths between openings, is recommended. Grouping of window units in 2s and 3s is also common and acceptable. *OAH pp.15-20*
5. **Porches** — Covered front porches are common features of traditional residential design in Ouray and are encouraged. Decks are recommended for the rear, or side, of the structure rather than the front. *OAH pp. 21-31*
6. **Garages** — Traditional residences in Ouray had either no garages or had garages that were detached and sized for one car only. Garages should be designed so as to not dominate the front (main) elevation of the structure. Locations off the alley, or oriented such that the entrance is not visible from the street, are encouraged.
7. **Ornamentation** —Spindle work, decorative shingles, overhangs, decorative brackets, gable pediments and similar features were commonly used on many of Ouray's historical residences. If such features are to be employed in the design of new construction, it is important that they be similar, but not identical. *OAH pp.28-35*
8. **Scrapeoffs and Teardowns** — Proposals affecting structures 50 years old or more should be reviewed with the OCHS to minimize the loss of significant historical resources. **Prior to obtaining a City of Ouray building permit, a state-issued demolition permit is required.**

## **Guidelines for the Main Street Commercial District \***

1. **Height** — Matching the existing alignment of building cornices or rooflines is recommended. Additions or new construction should fall within a range of 10 percent of the mean building height found in the block.
2. **Width** — Most existing buildings reflect the historical pattern of 25' lot widths. Design of new construction occupying two or more lots should reflect

the repetition of this width through a division of the façade to maintain the pattern.

3. **Setbacks** — Maintain the alignment of building fronts along the sidewalk edge.
4. **Facades** — Most structures in the downtown commercial district feature two story facades with parapets, bracketed cornices, decorative ornamentation and narrow windows with vertical orientation stacked above each other. Designing new construction to match this theme is recommended. Blank facades with no conforming ornamentation, windows or doors on either the first or second story are undesirable.
5. **Horizontal Rhythms** - Maintain a clear visual division between street level and upper floors.
6. **Exterior Materials** — Wood, brick, stone and cast iron are all currently used in the commercial district. Exterior materials in new construction should be compatible with materials in common usage on other buildings in the area.
7. **Openings and Fenestration** — Glass windowed storefronts with recessed entries and transoms are recommended for the street level. On the second floor, double hung sash, or oriel/bay windows are traditional and encouraged.

\* A very comprehensive guide to commercial structures in Ouray is found in [Ouray's Architectural Heritage](#) beginning on pg. 37. The discussion covers building styles and components with photos and details.

**CITY OF OURAY  
LAND USE APPLICATION**

<b>Development Permit</b> (    ) <b>7-3-A</b>	<b>Subdivision</b> (    ) <b>7-7B</b>
<b>Conditional Use</b> (    ) <b>7-4-F</b>	<b>Minor Subdivision</b> (    ) <b>7-7-D</b>
<b>Variance</b> (    ) <b>7-4-G</b>	<b>PUD</b> (    ) <b>7-5</b>
<b>Rezoning</b> (    ) <b>7-4-I</b>	<b>Other</b> (    )
<b>Replat</b> (    ) <b>7-7-B</b>	

<b>APPLICANT</b> Name: _____  Mailing Address: _____  City, State, Zip Code _____  Telephone Number _____  Address of Property _____ Acreage / Sq. Ft. _____  Zoning District _____	<b>OWNER OF RECORD (If different from Applicant )</b> Name: _____  Mailing Address: _____  City, State, Zip Code: _____  Telephone Number: _____
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**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REQUESTED ACTION:**

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**ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED FOR ALL ACTIONS:**

1. Land Use Application Form
2. Evidence of ownership or written notarized consent of legal owner (s).
3. Two copies of all site plans (including set-backs, parking, floor areas) in accord with Sect. 7-3-A
4. Information showing compliance with applicable criteria. See Sect 7 Ouray City Code.

**FEE SCHEDULE** (Revised by Ordinance No. 1, 2001):

Fees for review of applications required by this land use code shall be paid at the time the application is submitted and shall be as follows:

Development Permit	\$ 10.00	
Conditional Use	\$ 50.00	
Variance	\$ 75.00	
Rezoning	\$200.00	
Outline Development Plan	\$100.00	+ \$10/Lot
Preliminary Plat	\$200.00	+ \$10/Lot
Final Plat	\$100.00	+ \$10/Lot
Minor Subdivision	\$250.00	
PUD Preliminary	\$200.00	+ \$10/Lot
PUD Final	\$100.00	+ \$10/Lot
Re-Plats/Amended Plats	\$200.00	
Non-Conforming Modification	\$ 50.00	
Mobile/Travel Home Park	\$250.00	+ \$20/Space

If the City's cost for review exceeds the above *fees*, the applicant shall reimburse the City for all additional costs incurred during the review, processing, and administration of the application, including, but not limited to, legal fees, postage, notice and publishing costs, map costs, engineering review fees, together with wages and associated payroll costs for contract employees. The City shall bill the applicant periodically as such costs are incurred. Each bill shall be due 30 days after its date. Bills not paid by the due date shall accrue interest at the rate of 1- 1/2 % per month or part thereof. No plat shall be recorded, improvements accepted, lien released, building permit issued, tap approved, or other approval action taken until all fees then due are paid to the City. Such fees may be certified to the County Treasurer for collection as delinquent charges.

(Source: Ordinance No. 12, 2005)

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF OWNER

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY OF OURAY

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_

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**CITY OF OURAY**  
**CONTACTS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

<b><u>TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>PHONE</u></b>
<b>BUILDING INSPECTOR</b>	DENNIS MOYER	325-7063
<b>LAND USE COORDINATOR</b>	MIKE FEDEL	325-7070
<b>CITY ADMINISTRATOR</b>	PATRICK RONDINELLI	325-7060
<b>PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR</b>	DAN FOSSEY	325-7074
<b>ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR</b>	PAT O'HAIR/TROY MONGER	249-1870
<b>PLUMBING/GAS INSPECTOR</b>	MONTE HOOD	249-8565

**DETAILS & INSPECTION SCHEDULES**

Both the Land Use Coordinator and Building Inspector are part-time employees of the City of Ouray. The Land Use Coordinator is available every Tuesday and by appointment. He can be reached by e-mail ([fedelm@ci.ouray.co.us](mailto:fedelm@ci.ouray.co.us)) at any time. E-mail is checked regularly. The Building Inspector is in the office every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 - 4:30. Please take this into account and schedule accordingly. With proper notification, we can usually accommodate your requests.

**OURAY'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE** – Published by The Ouray County Historical Society, is referenced frequently (eg. OAH pp.28-35) throughout this document. The City of Ouray strongly encourages its use during the design process. Every aspect of Ouray's unique architecture, including detailed photographs, can be found here. To access the document, go to [www.ouraycountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.ouraycountyhistoricalsociety.org) and look for "Ouray's Architectural Heritage" on the list.