

Memo



TO: Engineering Permit Staff
Utility Permit Applicants
FROM: Brian Connolly, Public Works Director
CC: Paul Merchlewicz, City Engineer
DATE: January 5, 2026
RE: **Utility Permitting Process - Frequently Asked Questions**

The purpose of this memo is to provide clarification for City of Inver Grove Heights permitting staff, consultant engineers, and private utility representatives related to frequently asked questions related to the City's permitting requirements for utilities in the City's right of way (ROW). The hyperlinks provided for City Code, State Statute, and other website links are accurate as of the date of this memo, but should be reviewed as applicable, as websites may change when updated.

City Permitting Application & Fees

As of March 2023, the City of Inver Grove Heights participates in the Dakota County One Stop Roadway Permit system. This system is accessible through the City's ROW permitting webpage (<https://www.ighmn.gov/459/Right-of-Way-Permits>).

Excavation work in the public ROW is governed by [City Code 7-2](#), while management of public ROW, including installation and/or maintenance of private utilities, is governed by [City Code 7-3](#).

The cost of the ROW permit fees is detailed in the "Right of Way Management" section of the current version of the [City's Fee Schedule](#). Utility permit fees are based on the length of utility installed, regardless of whether it is underground or overhead, and includes any service laterals in the ROW.

The Public Works Director has been given authority through the City Code referenced above to set required sureties and additional requirements for work within the public ROW. The Public Works Director has delegated oversight and implementation of Code requirements to staff within the City's Engineering Division. Where excavations occur, the City will collect a surety bond to ensure ROW is restored. The bond value is set in the fee schedule, but may be adjusted or converted to a letter of credit or other surety (i.e., cash escrow) based on installation conditions in accordance with [City Code 7-2-3](#).

All permits require that the contractor performing the work be registered with the City, and insured and licensed to perform work in the State of Minnesota ([City Code 7-3-6](#)).

Permit applications must include detailed design plans/drawings as specified in [City Code 7-3-7-2](#). These include the following key provisions:

- 1) Scaled drawings showing the location and area of the proposed project and the location of all known existing facilities owned or operated by the applicant.
- 2) Scaled dimensions indicating the proposed location of the new facility within the ROW.

- 3) Scaled dimensions of the facility from an existing physical topographic feature (such as “back of curb”, “edge of bituminous road”).
- 4) Plans must show all existing physical topographic features (trees, shrubs, culverts, driveways, fences, street signs) that lie within ten feet (10') of the proposed facility location.
- 5) Plans must clearly show the location of public ROW and any drainage and utility easements.
- 6) Plans must show the location of any public streets, alleys, sidewalks, or trails that will be disrupted by the work.
- 7) Plans must show the location of any public streets, alleys, sidewalks, or trails that will be temporarily closed to traffic or obstructed by work, and show the proposed detour and traffic control plan, approved by a registered engineer.
- 8) Restoration methods to be utilized, including any concrete or asphalt typical sections, material requirements (i.e., mix design, aggregate type, etc.), and turf establishment means (seed or sod, type of seed, and erosion control protections).

The City maintains a GIS database for existing watermain and services, sanitary sewer and services, and storm sewer. At an applicant’s request the City will provide GIS data in the form of a geodatabase (*.gdb) file for the City assets within a utility registrant-defined boundary via a SharePoint link, to be integrated into utility plans. The City utilizes ESRI software for GIS purposes; if a utility registrant wishes to utilize a different format, the City is able to convert data into individual utility shape files (*.shp, *.shx, or *.dbf) upon specific request. For new telecommunication permit applications over 1,000 linear feet, please see the ***Special Requirements for Telecommunication Permits*** section for additional information regarding City utility representation within design plans.

Permit Limitations

The City will limit permit authorizations to **5,000 combined linear feet** for any private utility registrant at any one time (including main line and any lateral/service lines). A utility registrant installing more than 5,000 linear feet of facilities will be required to submit a separate permit application for any work above 5,000 linear feet, and that permit will only be approved after the successful completion of work associated with previous permits. A registrant that wishes to submit several permits for unrelated (discontinuous) work can submit up to five (5) permits at any one time, provided that work does not exceed a combined 5,000 linear feet. Regardless of the number of permits submitted, a registrant will not be allowed to have more than five (5) crews working within the City at any one time.

At the discretion of the Public Works Director (as delegated to the City’s Engineering Division), the City may approve and allow work to proceed beyond the above-noted restrictions based on the City’s ability to review permits and provide adequate inspection and oversight.

Utility Coordination

The City will provides project-specific utility coordination activities in accordance with [Minnesota Statute 216D.04, Subd. 1\(c\)](#) for all public projects (i.e., street reconstruction, utility reconstruction, etc.). These include both design utility coordination and preconstruction meetings. All private utility operators that operate within these project areas as listed by the Gopher State One Call utility registry are invited to attend these meetings and provide information regarding future utility installation projects.

The City reserves the right to deny a private utility permit if work disturbs hard surfaces (street or trail pavement, sidewalks, driveways, etc.) where those surfaces have been reconstructed in the past seven (7) years ([City Code 7-3-7-6](#)). The City's Engineering Division can provide information upon request regarding recent street and utility construction projects throughout the community. Future street projects, as defined in the City's Pavement Management Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is posted and regularly updated at the [City's Road Work GIS](#) site.

Property Owner Notifications

All utility registrants performing permitted work will be required to notify adjacent property owners of work that is occurring. This may be done via a mailed letter, door hanger, or other written form ([City Code 7-3-7-5](#)). The notice must clearly indicate the project work occurring, the company performing the work, the anticipated start and completion dates, and provide a contact name and phone number/email for an individual representing the utility registrant.

Routine work that does not excavate or close a roadway, or does not require excavation within a boulevard or easement (i.e., replacing pedestal boxes or pulling wires through existing conduit) do not require the above notification ([City Code 7-3-10](#)). At the discretion of the City's Engineering Division, the notification requirement may be voided or modified.

For new telecommunication permit applications over 1,000 linear feet, please see the ***Special Requirements for Telecommunication Permits*** section for additional information regarding notification requirements.

Construction Requirements

All contractors working within public ROW are required by law to contact Gopher State One Call prior to any excavation and follow the required State Statutes for locate protection and preservation requirements.

Any new underground facilities placed within the public ROW will be required to utilize handholes and junction boxes that are at or below grade level. Pedestal or transmission boxes that are above ground can only be installed in drainage and utility easements outside the public ROW. Where easements do not exist outside the ROW, the City's Engineering Division may determine, at their sole discretion, whether above-ground boxes will be allowed. No above-ground facilities may be placed in defined roadway "clear zones" or "sight triangles" as specified in applicable City Code and design manuals.

Installation of overhead facilities within public ROW will only be permitted where existing overhead facilities exist. Replacement of overhead facility poles and structures will be required to meet all lateral and vertical clearance requirements as defined in applicable City Code and design manuals, as determined by the City's Engineering Division.

Construction shall follow all applicable work standards ([City Code 7-3-12](#)), and the City reserves the right to perform inspections of work at any time ([City Code 7-3-13](#)).

Potholing of all utility crossings will be required for directional drilling, including in streets, trails, sidewalks, and driveways. Potholing under concrete driveways, sidewalks, and road pavement will require the replacement of the entire disturbed panel, and meet the requirements of the City's Engineering Division [Standard Details](#). *Core holes will not be allowed to be filled within concrete*

surfaces. Core holes will be allowed in bituminous pavement areas, but only when the core hole is the only disturbance within a measured 100 ft² (10' x 10') area. Core holes must be backfilled with sand, Class 5 aggregate, and bituminous pavement patch, with each layer equal to or greater than the depth of the surrounding pavement section. Core holes must be circular (up to 2' in diameter), or rectangular (not larger than 4 ft² (2' x 2') in size) and be sawcut in a square/rectangular pattern (90-degree cuts) prior to restoration. If more than one core is performed in a 100 ft² area, the full depth of pavement for the disturbed area must be sawcut in a square/rectangular pattern (90-degree cuts), pavement removed, the subgrade and aggregate based compacted, and then pavement replaced to match the adjacent pavement depth. Any additional patching and restoration of public ROW must be completed in accordance with [City Code 7-3-16](#).

Except in an emergency, or with approval of the City's Engineering Division, no excavation will be permitted to begin prior to April 1 or after November 1 of any given year. All hard-surface restoration must be completed no later than November 15 of any given year ([City Code 7-3-9.B](#)).

All non-paved areas must be restored to their original condition. A utility registrant will be responsible for watering any grass seed or sod installed until at least 70% of that seed becomes established. The City follows the most current version of the [MnDOT Standard Specifications for Construction](#) for establishing vegetation, including soil quality, seed type, and installation/germination schedules. Any restoration that is determined to be non-compliant after placement will be replaced at the discretion of the City's Engineering Division.

Record Drawings

Prior to close-out of the permit and release of any sureties, utility registrants are required to provide record drawings showing all facilities installed, and both vertical and horizontal locations of facilities ([City Code 7-3-17](#)). Beginning January 1, 2026, utility operators must use geospatial locating information to develop these drawings, including XYZ coordinates, in accordance with [Minnesota Statute 216D.04, Subd. 3\(h\)](#). Record drawings may be submitted in GIS, AutoCAD, or PDF format, or another format if approved by the Public Works Director. For telecommunication installations over 1,000 linear feet in length, data must be provided in a shape file (*.shp, *.shx, or *.dbf) (see ***Special Requirements for Telecommunication Permits***).

Special Requirements for Telecommunication Permits

Security & Escrow

Telecom registrants performing "build out" of new facilities within the City will be required to submit a cash security (escrow) in an amount to cover the City's permit/design review costs and inspection costs that are not otherwise covered by the permitting fees. "build out" is defined in this memo as any telecom registrant that:

- 1) Does not currently operate facilities in the City of Inver Grove Heights; or
- 2) An existing telecom provider who is installing telecom conduit or fiber optic, broadband, or other telecommunications transmission facilities with the intent to register new customers; or
- 3) Any telecommunication expansion that exceeds 5,000 linear feet.

The City will identify these costs as part of the permit application review and require deposit of these funds prior to permit approval ([City Code 7-3-7-2](#)).

Design Drawings

Permit applications for more than 1,000 linear feet of new telecommunications installation will require the applicant to submit design drawings that include existing public (City) utilities shown on the plans. The City will provide GIS data in the form of a geodatabase (*.gdb) or shape (*.shp, *.shx, or *.dbf) file to utility registrants for this information in to be integrated into design files. All utility crossings of public utilities (watermain and services, sanitary sewer and services, and storm sewer) will require identification of crossing elevation data and documentation of public utility elevation. Where elevation data is not known, assumed depth information should be identified on the plan based on in-field conditions, and highlighted (called out) for field verification during construction (i.e., potholing).

Construction Meetings & Coordination

Telecom registrants performing "build out" of new facilities within the City will be required to have a preconstruction meeting with City permit and inspection staff to review the scope of work, and schedule of work activities, including number of crews, locations, and anticipated project progress. The telecom registrant will be required to have bi-weekly (every two weeks) progress update meetings, either at the site of the work occurring, or another location within the City as deemed suitable by the City's permit and inspection staff. These progress meetings shall focus on work progress, schedule updates, and be utilized to address any key non-compliance issues (i.e., restoration, erosion control, site protection, etc.).

Property Owner Notifications

The City recognizes that new telecom "build outs" provide opportunities for telecom registrants to solicit new customers for services. The City has established requirements for entities soliciting services, and telecom registrants are encouraged to review these requirements in advance of any solicitation activities related to new telecom services ([City Code 4-11](#)). Telecom registrants shall not include new service solicitation with the initial property owner notification related to construction activities, as to not diminish the purpose of property owner notification related to said construction. Subsequent notifications may include new service information if the Telecom registrant follows requirements in [City Code 4-11](#) for solicitation of services.

Telecom Installer Safety Certification

As of January 1, 2026, the State of Minnesota requires all telecommunication installers to meet [State Statute 326B.198](#) with respect to the [safety-qualified underground telecommunications installer program](#). Every crew must have at least one (1) certified installer working on the site at all times that excavation (open trench or trenchless) is occurring. Failure to meet this requirement will result in permit suspension and/or revocation in accordance with [City Code 7-3-7-10](#).

Record Drawings

At the end of the installation, the telecom operator will be required to submit as-builts to the City in a shape file (*.shp, *.shx, or *.dbf) (same format as the City utility data files provided for design drawings).