# Retaining Wall Process

**Determine Whether Permits are Required**

Applicant plans to construct a retaining wall – check definition in IBC, or IRC to determine whether building permit is required for the wall.

- To verify cut/fill restrictions, check LDC Section 25.6-341 and 23.6-342.
- For further information, contact the Development Assistance Center at 974-4370.

**Site Plan Process**

- If you, apply for site plan exemption.
- If yes, a separate building permit may be required for wall. Does the project meet the description of a site plan exemption? (LDC 25-6.2)
- If no, include wall design in required site plan application.
- If not, there is no city process.

**Process is Dependent on the Location of Proposed Wall**

- Wall to be located on a single lot, not in or impacting ROW or easements nor part of a water quality or detention facility.
  - Site plan exemption granted by DAC. Structural plans and details are required to be included in your site plan exemption submittal.
  - Site plan exemption granted by DAC. Structural plans and details are required to be included in your site plan exemption submittal. Plans reviewed by QSDM/Public Works, [TCM 11.3.3]

- Wall to be located on a single lot, not in or impacting ROW or easements not part of a water quality or detention facility.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.

- Wall to be located on multiple lots.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers and QSDM/Public Works, [TCM 11.3.3]

- Wall integral to a proposed building.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.

- Wall to be located in or potentially impacting ROW (full-purpose) or public easements (in full-purpose and ETJ).
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers and QSDM/Public Works, [TCM 11.3.3]

- Wall integral to a water quality or detention facility (NOT in public easements).
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.
  - Include structural plans and details for wall in site plan application. Plans reviewed by LUR drainage engineers.

**Information and Review Required**

- Site plan exemption granted by DAC. Structural plans and details are required to be included in your site plan exemption submittal.

**Building Permit Process**

- Apply for building permit
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- Third-party engineer’s inspection report required to close permit
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- Only location / size of wall inspected by environmental inspectors but not inspected for structural requirements. Third-party inspection report required to close permit.
- Third-party engineer’s inspection report required to close permit
- Wall inspected by Site/Subdivision Inspectors or Third-party engineer’s inspection report required to close permit.
- Third-party engineer’s inspection report required to close permit

**Inspection**

- No building permit required
- No building permit required
- No building permit required
- No building permit required
- No building permit required
- If wall is integral to drainage facility, the location and size of wall is inspected by environmental inspectors.

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**Acronyms**

- ROW – Right of Way
- ETJ – Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- LUR – Land Use Review
- TCM – Transportation Criteria Manual
- IBC – International Building Code
- IRC – International Residential Code
- LDC – Land Development Code
- DAC – Development Assistance Center
- QSDM – Quality and Standards Management Division

**Definitions**

Retaining wall: a structure used to support a soil or rock embankment or slope in a vertical or near-vertical configuration in which it would otherwise be unstable because of gravitational forces or applied loads. [TCM 11.3.1(i)]

Retention walls, regardless of type or height, must be designed by engineers licensed in the State of Texas, using current industry standards and accepted engineering practices. [TCM 11.3.3] All engineering plans and details submitted to the City for review must be sealed and signed by a PE.

IBC § 105.2 (2009 edition): Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or IIIA liquids are exempt from the permit requirements of the City.

IBC § 105.2 (2016 edition): Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet (1219 mm) in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge are exempt from the permit requirements of the City.

Surcharge: To fill to excess or beyond normal capacity [Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, © 1974]; A surface loading in addition to the soil load behind a retaining wall. [Definitions of Engineering Terms, Talal Ahmed Kamal, © 1992]

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