



ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION OVERVIEW AND EXPLANATION

WHY DO WE HAVE THIS ORDINANCE?

The City of Vancouver values its place as the oldest continuous settlement in the Pacific Northwest and is committed to the preservation, interpretation, and celebration of the diversity of Northwest life. Therefore, the City has established a process and standards for identifying, documenting, and preserving Vancouver's archaeological resources prior to permitting ground disturbing activities.

DOES THIS ORDINANCE APPLY TO ME?

The Archaeological Preservation Ordinance applies to projects that include any activity: (1) that requires a permit, and (2) disturbs the ground. Specifically, any project that meets at least one of the following criteria is subject to the ordinance:

- The project disturbs an area where there is a high probability that archaeological sites exist. Areas designated as Level A on the attached Archaeological Predictive Model map show which areas are designated as high probability. The disturbance area only needs to be partially within the high probability area to trigger the ordinance.
- The project disturbs an area within 1/4 mile of a known archaeological site. The City will make this determination.
- The project disturbs an area of 5 acres or more, and the disturbance area is wholly located within Level B areas as indicated on the attached Archaeological Predictive Model map.
- The City determines that reliable and credible information indicates the probable existence of an archaeological site in the disturbance area.
- When any item of archaeological interest is discovered during development.

ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS?

Yes, there are some exceptions from the ordinance. If at least one of the following exceptions applies to your project, the ordinance does not apply to you:

- Permits for accessory dwelling units.
- Land use permits handled as ministerial actions, except grading and tree removal permits.
- Sign permits.
- Conditional use permits for a change in use not involving ground disturbance for structural modification.
- Zoning variance approvals.
- Ground-disturbing actions or activities classified as exempt actions under VMC 20.00.220A except landscaping activities and single-family and duplex dwellings not requiring an environmental review.
- Ground-disturbing activities where the Director determines that the disturbance area was adequately investigated in the past and the existence of an archaeological site was determined to not be probable or actual.
- Applications which have vested prior to September 1, 1997.
- Ground-disturbing activities where the provisions of this ordinance were previously applied toward a larger, more comprehensive ground-disturbing action or activity, such as a subdivision, which encompasses the scope of the current application.
- Ground-disturbing activities where the larger activity (e.g. subdivision) was initially exempt.
- Ground-disturbing activities where the disturbance area is within 1/4 mile of a known archaeological site may be exempted due to the effects of a geographic barrier.
- Ground-disturbing activities proposed in areas where the Director determines that previous substantial disturbance has been documented.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THIS ORDINANCE APPLIES TO MY PROJECT?

If the ordinance applies to your project, you must hire an archaeologist to make a preliminary investigation of the disturbance area. The preliminary investigation is called a predetermination (VMC 20.99.200). A predetermination will indicate whether it is likely that an archaeological site exists in the disturbance area. The archaeologist must complete a predetermination report using a form provided by the City. The predetermination report must be submitted with your application.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PREDETERMINATION?

The City will have an independent archaeologist review the predetermination report, and the Director of Development Review Services will issue a determination on the likelihood of a site's existence. If the conclusion is that there are not likely to be any archaeological resources in the disturbance area, the project may proceed through the rest of the approval process. However, if there are likely to be archaeological resources in the area, then you must hire an archaeologist to make a more complete investigation of the area.

This investigation is called a survey. (VMC 20.99.300) A survey will establish the actual presence or absence of an archaeological site in the disturbance area. The archaeologist must complete a survey report according to the guidelines published by the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (attached). The survey report must be submitted, reviewed, and determined to be complete and adequate before your application can be determined technically complete.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SURVEY?

The City will have an independent archaeologist review the survey report, and the Director of Development Review Services will issue a determination on the existence a site. If a site is found to be present, the potential significance of the site will be determined in consultation with OAHP. If no archaeological site is found in the disturbance area, or if any sites present are not potentially significant, the project may proceed through the rest of the approval process. However, if there is a significant archaeological site in the disturbance area, the City will work with you and OAHP to determine the options that are available. A State permit would be required before any further archaeological investigation or development activity could be undertaken.

HOW LONG WILL ALL OF THIS TAKE?

In the vast majority of cases, the archaeology portion of the development review process should not lengthen the overall procedure. Predeterminations can generally be turned around in two weeks, and surveys in three to four weeks depending on the project size and complexity, and the availability of archaeologists. In any case, only 15 out of 100 predeterminations are anticipated to result in a survey, and just one of those is expected to result in further assessment beyond a survey.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FIND AN ARTIFACT DURING THE PROJECT?

If during the course of the project, an item of archaeological interest is found, the ordinance applies to your project immediately. This is called the Discovery Principle. This principle applies even if your project has gone through a predetermination or survey already, or was originally exempt.

If you do find an archaeological resource, you are required to stop all ground-disturbing work immediately, and notify Development Review Services (306-696-8005) and the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (206-753-4011) of your find as soon as possible. Failure to do so could result in a felony conviction.

WHO CAN I HIRE TO DO THIS?

The State recognizes archaeologists as either “qualified” or “professional” according to their education and experience. Both qualified and professional archaeologists may perform predeterminations and surveys. Only professional archaeologists may do work for which a State permit is required. The State maintains a list of archaeologists who have asked to be included and have provided evidence that they meet the standards for a professional archaeologist. This list is attached for your convenience. The State does not recommend or guarantee the work of any of the archaeologists on the list.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION CHECKLIST.

This checklist is an easy way to help you through the Archaeological Resource Preservation process as your project moves along.

1. Does the ordinance apply to your project?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 2 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 12
2. Do you have a completed predetermination and report?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 4 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 3
3. Hire an Archaeologist to perform a predetermination and complete a predetermination report.	GO TO 4
4. Submit the predetermination report to the City.	GO TO 5
5. Has the City determined that archaeological resources are likely to be present in the disturbance area?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 6 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 12
6. Do you have a completed survey and report?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 8 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 7
7. Hire an Archaeologist to perform a survey and complete a survey report.	GO TO 8
8. Submit the survey report to the City.	GO TO 9
9. Has the City determined that archaeological resources are present in the disturbance area?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 10 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 12
10. Has the City determined that the site is significant?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 11 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 12
11. Archaeological resources shall be further evaluated, avoided, properly mitigated, or properly recovered in accordance with the Director’s recommendation and the terms of any necessary permit from the State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.	GO TO 13
12. Proceed with application procedure- ordinance no longer applicable.	GO TO 13
13. Is an item of archaeological interest found during the course of the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES- GO TO 14 <input type="checkbox"/> NO- GO TO 15
14. Stop work immediately. Notify Development Review Services (360) 696-8005, and State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (206) 753-4011.	GO TO 3
15. Complete Project.	END.

WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

The City would like to answer any questions about this ordinance that you may have. Come in person to the Citizens' Service Center on Mill Plain Boulevard between Main Street and Broadway during business hours, call us at (360) 696-8005, or write to:

City of Vancouver
Development Review Services
PO Box 1995
Vancouver, WA 98668-1995