



Wildfire Development Permit Area FAQs

WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA (DPA)?

A Development Permit Area (DPA) is a set of development policies and guidelines for a geographic area that ensures new development within this area is consistent with the objectives outlined within the applicable Official Community Plan (OCP).

Development Permit Areas can be created to support the OCP objectives of protecting developments from hazardous conditions in the environment (such as flooding, erosion, land slip, rock falls, and fire hazards) and protecting the natural environment, including sensitive ecosystems and biodiversity. Development permits can also be created to support other Official Community Plan objectives.

See the following links for more information on Development Permit Area:

- [Development Permit Areas in the RDCK \(Video\)](#)
- [Development Permits \(Webpage\)](#)

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a general statement of the long-term vision for an area and the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the Plan. The purpose of an Official Community Plan is to provide policy directions to guide future land use decisions.

OCPs are also the documents where Development Permit Areas are formally designated. When a new DPA is proposed in an area where there is already an OCP in place, it is done by amending the OCP.

See [OCP & Zoning Amendments](#) for more information.

WHAT IS A WILDFIRE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA?

A Wildfire Development Permit Area is a set of development policies and guidelines that specify things such as subdivision design, fire-resistive building materials, and landscaping guidelines to limit development's vulnerability to the risks of wildfires. New construction, renovations, and subdivision within the Wildfire Development Permit Area are required to meet the development permit area guidelines.

WHEN IS A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT REQUIRED?

A development permit is required when development is proposed on a property that is located within a Development Permit Area designated by an Official Community Plan. If the property is within a Development Permit Area, a development permit must be obtained before subdividing land, the construction of, addition to or alteration of a building or structure, and any type of land disturbance.

Development Permit Area guidelines can include exemption criteria for some activities within a Development Permit Area and a development permit is not required for these activities. Exemption criteria vary depending on the Development Permit Area within each Official Community Plan.

Information on what Development Permit Areas apply in the electoral area you live in can be found in the Official Community Plan or the Comprehensive Land Use Bylaw. Not all electoral areas in the RDCK have the same Development Permit Areas and in some areas, there are currently no Development Permit Areas.

- [RDCK Official Community Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Bylaws](#)

WHY IS A WILDFIRE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA NEEDED IN THE RDCK?

[Community Wildfire Protection Plans \(CWPPs\)](#) for the Electoral Areas in the RDCK identify many areas as having moderate-high to high-extreme wildfire threat/probability. Our communities and homes are in close proximity to large, forested areas and strong winds during wildfires can spread embers and wildfires quickly. With longer fire seasons and more frequent extreme weather events occurring as a result of climate change, the potential of wildfire risk is increasing.

The RDCK is considering creating a Wildfire DPA to:

- Reduce the risks associated with wildfire for new construction
- Increase the community's resilience to wildfire hazards and climate change by reducing wildfire impacts as part of the land development process

WHAT KIND OF GUIDELINES WILL THE WILDFIRE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA RECOMMEND?

Clear and transparent guidelines will be proposed for the Wildfire Development Permit Area to achieve wildfire risk mitigation. Guidelines will be proposed based on an analysis of best management practices and community feedback to meet the needs of the community and achieve the goal of reducing wildfire hazard risk to people and property.

It is important that you provide your input during the process to help the RDCK better understand wildfire concerns within the region. Over the summer of 2022, the RDCK will provide FireSmart information at in-person pop-up events and seek your feedback through a community survey. Stay tuned to the project webpage for updates on how to participate and to review the proposed Wildfire Development Permit Area template.

HOW WILL THE WILDFIRE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA BE IMPLEMENTED?

There will be flexibility in the implementation of the Wildfire Development Permit Area. A template for a Wildfire Development Permit Area will be created with a menu of guideline options. The intent is to provide flexibility in implementation throughout the various Electoral Areas, as opposed to seeking consensus for immediate implementation in all 11 Electoral Areas.

This approach recognizes that some Areas may wish to implement the Wildfire Development Permit Area immediately as part of this initiative, while other Areas may not have a desire for a Wildfire Development Permit Area at this point in time or might find it more suitable to delay implementation and revisit the topic as part of upcoming OCP Reviews.

HOW WILL THE WILDFIRE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA AFFECT ME?

If your Electoral Area chooses to implement a Wildfire Development Permit Area, a development permit would be required for all development activity (some exemptions may apply) within the designated development permit area.

WHAT OTHER WILDFIRE RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS DOES THE RDCK HAVE?

See the following links for the other wildfire mitigation strategies and FireSmart programs the RDCK offers:

- [Wildfire webpage](#)
- [RDCK FireSmart webpage](#)

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

- **Community Survey:** A survey will be open from August 8th to September 5th to collect feedback from community members. Participate in the survey for a chance to win a **\$200 gift certificate** to a local business of your choice!
- **Development Community Workshop:** A virtual workshop with members of the development community will be held to collect feedback on the Wildfire DPA project.
- **Landowners and Local Business Workshop:** A virtual workshop with landowners and local businesses will be held to collect feedback on the Wildfire DPA project on Wednesday, August 17th at 6:00 PM. By participating in this workshop, you will have a chance to win a **\$50 gift certificate** to a local business of your choice!
- **In-Person FireSmart Pop-Up Events:** Wildfire Mitigation Specialists will be hosting a variety of pop-up events throughout the RDCK this summer to provide information on FireSmart initiatives and share information about the Wildfire DPA project. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact Corey Scott, RDCK Planner, at 250-352-8162 or via email at cscott@rdck.bc.ca.