

A green tree frog is shown clinging to a tree branch. The frog is green with brown and tan mottled patterns on its back and sides. It is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, facing towards the left. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest. The text "DEVELOPMENT PERMIT" is centered above the main title, and the City of Surrey logo is in the bottom right corner.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEMS

What is the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area (SEDPA)?

Surrey's SEDPA is made up of two distinct classifications of the natural environment: Streamside Areas and Green Infrastructure Areas.

STREAMSIDE AREAS: represent those areas next to and setback from a stream that link aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems as well as those areas that exert influence on a stream whether for food or habitat reasons.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AREAS: represent the Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Management Areas identified in Surrey's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy.

What are the SEDPA Objectives?

Surrey supports the use of the SEDPA in order to:

- Maintain and enhance ecosystems
- Support and enhance biological diversity
- Integrate ecological systems and processes into urban areas
- Assess conservation values and environment priorities equally with land development
- Conserve, protect and enhance aquatic areas and habitat
- Provide for: drainage maintenance access, potential public trails, beaver habitat accommodation, tree health, natural stream dynamics and slope stability risk minimization.



Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Process

Refer to Surrey's Official Community Plan (OCP) for more detailed information, exemptions and submission requirements.

A Apply for a Development Permit Application.

Applications are required when proposing to:

- Subdivide land
- Construct, add to or alter a building or structure
- Construct roads and trails
- Disturb soils, alter land or clear land
- Install non-structural surfaces with semi-previous or impervious materials.

B Design Developments Appropriately.

- Minimize damage to protected areas
- Protect and enhance natural areas, drainage patterns and habitat areas
- Account for the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area objectives
- Manage Municipal liabilities; and
- Meet Federal and Provincial requirements.

C Hire Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP).

One or more QEP may need to be hired to adequately review and provide details about the proposed development.

D Submit Detailed Reports.

- Overall site development
- Building and construction details
- Drainage
- Sensitive habitats
- Trees and vegetation
- Stream Top of Bank locations.

E Submit an Ecosystem Development Plan for all Applications.

Review the SEDPA Guidelines in the OCP for more information and submission requirements.

F Identify the Protection Areas.

- Streamside Protection Areas are defined in Surrey Zoning Bylaw Part 7a
- Green Infrastructure Protection Areas are defined by the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy's Green Infrastructure Network and Biodiversity Management Areas.

G If required, submit an Impact Mitigation Plan.

Refer to SEDPA Guidelines in the OCP for more information.

H Submit any required bonding.

Prior to any development occurring.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is an overview of frequently asked question as they apply to the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area (SEDPA) and guidelines.

1 What areas are included in the SEDPA?

The Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area is comprised of:

- Streamside Areas
- Green Infrastructure Areas

Each of these areas can include habitat for Species-at-Risk, mature tree stands, raptor nesting sites, wetlands, wildlife hubs and corridors, and streams and watercourses etc.

2 Where can I see the boundary of the SEDPA?

The Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area can be viewed in Surrey's Official Community Plan or, for more detailed property information, it can be viewed on Surrey's on-line mapping system at www.surrey.ca/COSMOS.

3 When was the SEDPA adopted by Council?

The Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area placeholder was originally approved by City Council in October 2014 when the new Official Community Plan was adopted. The content of the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area was approved by Council and added to the Official Community Plan in September 2016.

4 How much does a SEDPA application cost?

The current fees are set out in the Development Application Fees Bylaw, which is available on Surrey's Website under: City Government—Bylaws & Policies—By-law Library—Regulatory By-laws. Additional costs may also include hiring one or more professionals who will prepare reports required for your application submission.

5 Who do I hire for professional reports and how much will it cost?

It is up to the property owner or applicant to hire appropriately Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEP) who can provide the type of information required by the City of Surrey. A QEP is a professional Biologist, Geoscientist, Engineer, Forester and/or Agrologist registered in good standing in British Columbia, with demonstrated education, expertise, accreditation and knowledge relevant to sensitive environments, ecosystems and/or riparian/streamside management.

6 What is an Exemption and when do they apply?

Exemptions are development activity, confirmed by City staff, that do not require a Development Permit. A full list of Exemptions is provided in the Implementation Section of the Official Community Plan and generally include interior renovations, ecological restoration, farm activities within the Agricultural Land Reserve, or emergency repair actions.

7 *My property falls within more than one Development Permit Area***What do I do now?**

All requirements and guidelines for each separate Development Permit Area apply to properties that fall within more than one Development Permit Area and application submissions should be coordinated for all Development Permit Areas that apply. A lead professional may need to be hired to provide overall site coordination of the development for all aspects of each Development Permit Area.

8 *The existing building on my property currently sits in a Protection Area***What happens now?**

The SEDPA Guidelines recognize there are properties where the house, yard and existing landscaping already lie within a Protection Area. Depending on the situation, and for Building Permit applications only, existing, approved and lawfully-constructed buildings or structures, existing landscaping or other pre-existing land uses are considered to be pre-existing and can more than likely remain as they are. For development applications, any additions to those existing buildings, or any new construction proposed on the site, will need to comply to the SEDPA Guidelines and, if in a Streamside Protection Area, with part 7a of the Zoning Bylaw.

9 *My property falls within the SEDPA***When can I apply for a Soils Permit?**

Once a Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit has been approved and issued you can apply for a Soils Permit.

10 *My property falls within the SEDPA***When can I apply for a Building Permit?**

Once a SEDPA application has been submitted and there are no additional design and site changes expected, a Building Permit application can be submitted. Building Permit applications will only be processed to a certain point though, until the Development Permit has been approved and issued.

11 *My property meets the Zoning Streamside Setbacks*

Do I still need a Riparian Area Regulations (RAR) assessment?

It depends. The requirement for an additional Riparian Areas Regulation assessment will be determined by the Qualified Environmental Professional retained for the development proposal. For the most part, an additional RAR assessment will not be necessary but this is determined on a site-specific basis.

12 **How is the SEDPA process different from the RAR process?**

A Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit is required for most development that falls within a Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area. The Streamside Protection Area (SPA) is established by first determining the Top of Bank rather than the High Water Mark. This is to ensure protection of additional elements unique to streamside areas. Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) and Streamside Protection Enhancement Area (SPEA) setbacks are for fish protection only.

13 **What is the difference between SEDPA, SPA, RAR and SPEA?**

SEDPA—Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area (defined in Surrey's OCP)

SPA—Streamside Protection Area (required as part of Surrey's SEDPA process)

RAR—Riparian Area Regulation (Provincial requirement to protect fish habitat)

SPEA—Streamside Protection Enhancement Area (defined Provincially as part of a Riparian Area Regulation assessment only)

14 **Can I move a watercourse?**

Depending on the circumstances, watercourses may be relocated but only according to Provincial and Federal requirements. Contact Surrey's Engineering Department at 604-591-8693 to discuss this further.

15 *A neighbour down the street built a new home***Can I build mine like theirs?**

Every lot is unique and not all lots are in the Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area or fall into multiple Development Permit Areas. Comparing development potential to other lots is not a true reflection of how a property can be developed. In some instances, houses may need to be constructed smaller than the maximum size permitted in the zone to properly ensure protection of the sensitive ecosystem.

16 **Will the SEDPA affect how large a house I can build?**

The City of Surrey has a number of regulations that may affect the size of construction of a house, including, but not limited to the SEDPA and the Zoning Bylaw Streamside Protection requirements. All required bylaws and regulations pertaining to development should be reviewed with City staff to determine the size of building permitted on a site-specific basis.

17 *I want to buy an existing house that sits within the Protection Area, then tear it down and build a new one***Can I use the existing footprint?**

No. When a new home is built and the original house has been removed, the existing footprint is not considered pre-existing and therefore development would need to comply with the SEDPA Guidelines and, if in a Streamside Protection Area, with Part 7a of the Zoning Bylaw.

18 **Is there a variance process? Does this affect the Development Permit application?**

Within Streamside Protection Areas, where a proposal shows encroachment into the required setbacks established in Part 7a of the Zoning Bylaw, a Development Variance Permit (DVP) application is required to seek approval to reduce the Streamside Protection Area.

Variations requested for Streamside setback reductions require the submission of additional studies and reports. Variance requests may or may not be approved and will be evaluated from an environmental protection perspective. A DVP process requires approval from Council and will delay the processing of a SEDPA Development Permit application and any other required development applications.

Riparian Area Regulations (RAR) cannot be varied by any process and must be met regardless of any SEDPA requirements.

19 *I'm a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)***What do I do/what is my role?**

Review the requirements and Guidelines of the SEDPA and prepare the required reports as directed. Ensure the reports directly address the information provided in the Guidelines. Contact Surrey's Planning and Development Department at 604-591-4441 to discuss further.

What is an Official Community Plan (OCP)?

An OCP is a document prepared by local governments that sets out the long-term objectives and policies for how a community wants to evolve and change over time. The BC Provincial Government provides the framework for what content is included in an OCP enabling local governments the ability to address a wide-range of issues including transportation, agriculture, the natural environment, parks and recreation, social services and social development.

What are Development Permit Areas (DPAs)?

Development Permit Areas are used by municipalities to control development design and site planning in order to meet specific community objectives. Specific development guidelines are established for each different DPA and apply to new development. Surrey has four Development Permit Areas:

- **Form and Character**
- **Hazard Lands**
- **Sensitive Ecosystems**
- **Farm Protection**

If a property falls within more than one DPA, all applicable guidelines shall apply but are accommodated through ONE application only.

Where do Development Permits Apply?

The OCP identifies each of Surrey's Development Permit Areas. For convenience, each Development Permit Area is also mapped out and available on COSMOS (as a reference only), the City's on-line mapping service, available at www.surrey.ca/COSMOS.

When is a Development Permit needed?

Each Development Permit Area has different ways in which it applies to property within Surrey. The OCP identifies when a Development Permit is required as well as the development requirements for each area.

What is the DPA process?

Each Development Permit Area process is slightly different. Refer to the submission guidelines in the OCP for each Development Permit Area for additional information.

SURREY'S OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE:

ONLINE: www.surrey.ca/ocp

IN PERSON: City of Surrey, Planning and Development Department,
13450 104 Avenue, Surrey, British Columbia

E-MAIL: planning@surrey.ca

