

This bulletin is for information only and can change at any time.

Purpose

To clarify the City of Vernon's bylaws and regulations as they pertain to retaining walls. Please refer to the [Zoning Bylaw](#) for complete regulatory information.

Retaining Wall Height and Spacing

Retaining Wall height, measured from **Natural Grade** on the lower side of the wall, shall not exceed 1.2 m except for walls required as a condition of subdivision approval.

At least 1.2 m of horizontal separation must be provided between **Retaining Wall** tiers.

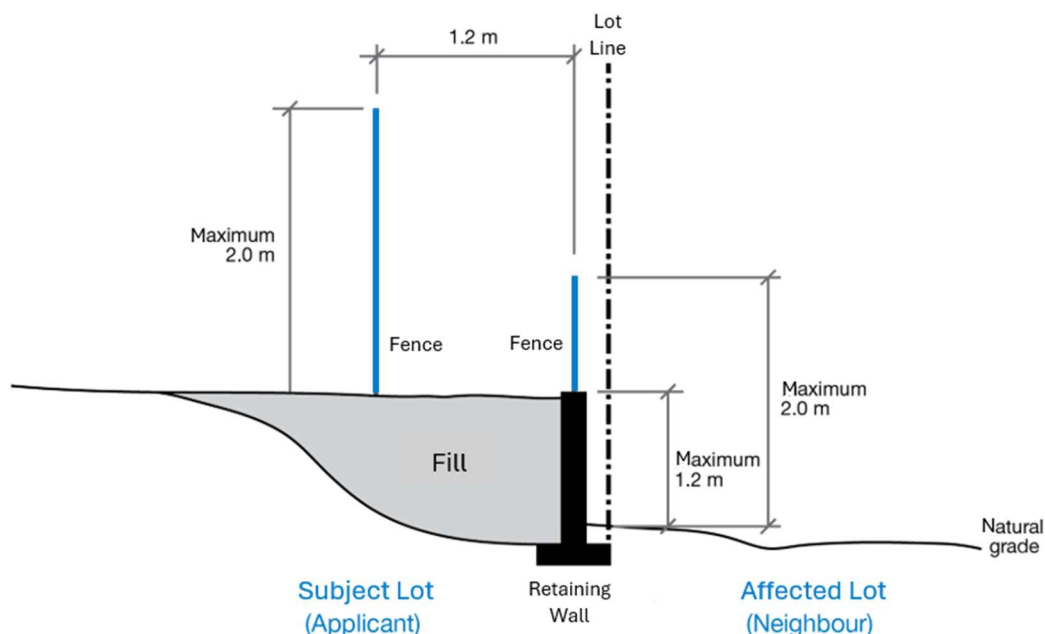
Key Terms

- **Retaining Wall** means a **Structure** constructed to hold back, stabilize, or support soil or other earthen material.
- **Natural Grade** means the elevation of the ground in its natural state before human alteration.
- **Fence** means a **Structure** made of wood, metal, masonry, or other material that is used as an enclosure or for screening purposes around all or part of a **Lot**.

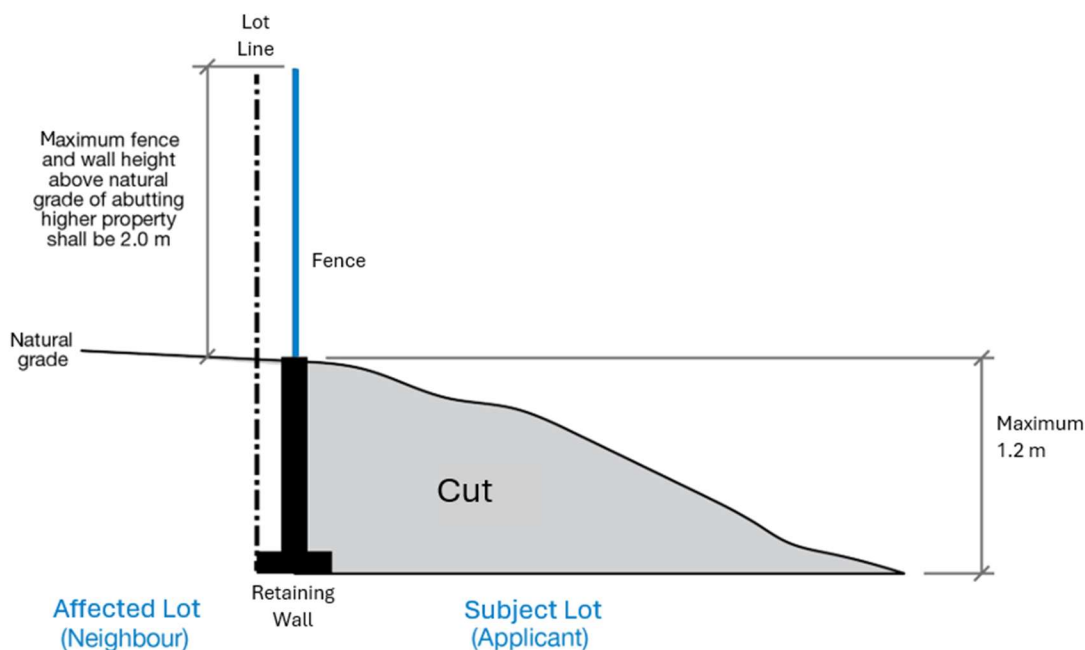
Combined Fences and Retaining Walls

The following maximum height limitations apply to combined fence and retaining wall structures:

Higher Subject Lot: where the subject **Lot** is higher than the affected **Lot**, the combined height of a **Fence** and **Retaining Wall** at the **Lot Line** or within 1.2 m of the **Lot Line** shall not exceed 2.0 m, measured from **Natural Grade** at the **Lot Line**.



Lower Subject Lot: Where the subject Lot is lower than the affected Lot, the combined height of a Fence and the portion of the Retaining Wall that extends above the Natural Grade of the affected Lot shall not exceed 2.0 m, measured from the Natural Grade at the Lot Line.



Retaining Wall Materials

Consider the following before selecting a retaining wall:

- Prioritizing native building materials (i.e. earth berms, rock forms, or stone) reduces the visual impact of cuts.
- Retaining wall height and length should be minimized. Stepped or terraced walls with landscaping are encouraged where steep cuts are required.
- Prioritizing non-combustible materials over wood is recommended to improve fire resistance. See FireSmart BC's [Landscaping Best Practices](#) webpage for more information.

Permit Requirements

A permit is not required to construct a retaining wall provided it complies with the [Zoning Bylaw](#).

If a proposed retaining wall does not comply, such as exceeding the maximum height requirements, a Development Variance Permit is required. Following Development Variance Permit approval, a Building Permit with plans prepared by a professional engineer will also be required to address potential slope stability concerns.

Where can I learn more?

For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 250-550-3634 or planning@vernon.ca. Staff are also available at the Community Services Building (3001 32nd Ave) during business hours.

