



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 1, 2020

City of San Diego Transitions From Paper to Online Permits With #DigitalDSD

SWITCH TO ONLINE SUBMITTAL FOR NEW PROJECTS AND PERMITS STARTS JULY 1,
GOAL TO HELP CUSTOMERS SAVE TIME AND MONEY

SAN DIEGO – With the start of a new fiscal year, the City of San Diego’s Development Services Department (DSD) reminds customers that new service enhancements, policies and regulations take effect Wednesday, July 1. These service changes reinforce the City’s commitment to supporting the local building and construction industry and align with the department’s use of technology to streamline the permitting process.

New efficiencies will also help DSD regulate land use and building development, a process that can exceed more than 75,000 approvals each year.

“We are fast-tracking our online permitting to make it faster and easier for customers to apply for projects and building permits online, which is especially helpful in implementing COVID-19 physical distancing restrictions,” said DSD Director Elyse W. Lowe. “Over last several months, we have leveraged technology and changed how we operate to help our customers and keep the construction industry moving forward; it’s what we call #DigitalDSD.”

#DigitalDSD is a department initiative to modernize all workplace systems, increase productivity and improve service delivery to customers. Among the recent technological improvements are the switch to electronic submittals for [residential solar photovoltaic projects](#), the [roll-out of an online permitting system](#) for all new development projects, updating the online [Small Cell Supplemental GIS Tool](#) and last month’s launch of a new [Zoning and Parcel Information Portal](#).

While DSD has incorporated many recent innovations in how it conducts business, five new service changes will take place with the new fiscal year:

- **New applications, submittals and construction changes must be submitted entirely online.** All new applications for permits and approvals, as well as construction changes for previously issued permits, must be processed online by visiting the DSD home page: sandiego.gov/dsd.

Announced earlier in June, paper-based applications will no longer be accepted. Paper applications received before July 1 may continue to be processed in the same manner. Still, applicants are encouraged to digitize all project-related files to expedite processing and avoid delays with [mandatory quarantine periods in place](#) to review hardcopy files.

- **Rapid Review process replaces over-the-counter review process.** DSD is launching a Rapid Review program for tenant improvements, additions and remodel projects. Previously, customers could have these projects reviewed over the counter the same day. Rapid Review, starting in July, aims to speed up the review process for online submission once the projects are set up by DSD and fees are paid.

“Rapid Review speeds up approval of permits submitted online for smaller projects such as office tenant improvements and home additions,” said DSD Interim Deputy Director Kelly Charles. “Historically, DSD has performed such reviews in person using paper plans. DSD’s goal is to mirror the quick in-person customer service with the virtual processing of online permits.”

- **New fee schedule goes into effect.** The Department [Cost Recoverable User Fees increased](#), helping DSD meet established levels of service while ensuring full cost recoverability and ensuring there are sufficient resources to improve the quality of mandated regulatory review processes.
- **Inclusionary housing regulations adopted.** Changes to the City’s [Inclusionary Affordable Housing regulations](#) were adopted by the City Council and are effective today. The updated regulations will be implemented incrementally so they are fully effective by July 1, 2024. The updated regulations apply to residential developments of 10 or more dwelling units and condominium conversions of two or more dwelling units, with some exceptions.

The regulations allow developers to satisfy the requirements by providing on- and off-site inclusionary dwelling units, paying an in-lieu fee, or through other methods such as rehabilitating existing dwelling units for conversion to inclusionary dwelling units, rehabilitating existing restricted dwelling units or short-term residential occupancy hotel rooms, or donating land.

- **Use of interim transportation threshold for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review.** The City Council is scheduled to adopt a new City-specific threshold for transportation impacts in compliance with Senate Bill 743, as part of the [Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices Initiative](#). Before final City adoption and starting today, City staff will begin reviewing projects for potential vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts consistent with the draft Transportation Study Manual, which can be found on the [Complete Communities: Housing Solutions and Mobility Choices Initiative](#) webpage.

DSD provides review, permit, inspection and code enforcement services for private and public development projects throughout the City. The department also assists customers with development projects in a timely manner to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations, ensuring all City neighborhoods continue to be healthy, safe and livable for all residents, visitors and businesses. To electronically submit an application for new projects, visit sandiego.gov/dsd.

###