



Project Issue Resolution

City of San Diego
Development Services Department
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INFORMATION
BULLETIN

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The purpose of this Information Bulletin is to identify a process for applicants to follow once a legitimate project issue is identified. This policy shall apply to the Development Services Department (DSD) and Planning Departments in their capacity as reviewers, inspectors, and project managers of privately-initiated land use and development projects.

During the project review and inspection process, it is DSD's and Planning Department's goal and expectation that all staff will provide complete review comments and provide any necessary explanations related to those comments.

Staff will strive to identify all apparent project issues and requirements at the outset of the project review and communicate those issues and requirements at the conclusion of the first review cycle where the issue appears.

The departments are committed to minimizing "late hits" to the greatest extent possible and to avoid applying additional requirements late in the review process whenever it is within our control.

All DSD and Planning staff are responsible for ensuring that each project review is conducted in a complete and timely manner. In order to service our customers most appropriately and efficiently, the initial review cycle is intended to be comprehensive and include any and all plan check comments for the project as it is currently proposed. Subsequent plan checks are intended to address corrections made pursuant to the initial review or to address plan changes initiated by the applicant. The ultimate goal of this policy is to eliminate instances where comments that should have been addressed in the initial review are added in subsequent plan reviews and to develop an efficient process to resolve these issues.

When a project issue or requirement is missed during the initial project review and caught during subsequent analysis, it is commonly referred to as a late hit. This typically results in additional costs and schedule delays. There are some late hits that are under the control of the City. For example:

1. Reinterpretation of a land use policy that results in project design changes.
2. Failure to timely identify project design requirements such as variable setbacks or off-setting planes.
3. Failure to appropriately apply current land use regulations such as Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zones or storm water requirements, or;
4. Failure to timely identify project impacts to Environmentally Sensitive Lands.

Note, there are situations where the City cannot control changes that are applied to projects late in the review process. For example:

1. New federal, state or local regulations that trigger additional requirements regardless of the status or timing of the project review.
2. The applicant/consultant provided erroneous or incorrect information or omitted information that was not provided until later in the review process.
3. Legal deficiencies typically identified during environmental document review, or;
4. Changes/additional information requested by the decision-making authority or plan reviewer.

A. SECOND OPINION

DSD is dedicated to meeting customer service needs and offers a Guaranteed Second Opinion. Customers are free at any time to ask for interpretations of codes of ordinances, any requests for additional information or studies, or project related processing requirements from a supervisor, senior

staff member, or Project Manager. Staff welcomes the opportunity to seek additional clarification.

If a customer disagrees with a staff interpretation, City staff or the customer may request a second opinion from the supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved via a Second Opinion, the customer may seek a Project Issue Resolution.

B. PROJECT ISSUE RESOLUTION (PIR)

Project Issue Resolution (PIR) conferences provide customers an opportunity to quickly and inexpensively have issues heard and considered by executive department management. Issues considered under this procedure typically include disagreements between the applicant and staff on interpretations of codes or ordinances, requests for additional information or studies, or project related processing requirements. Customers must attempt to resolve these issues with project staff supervision via a Second Opinion before a PIR conference will be considered.

If necessary, PIR conferences will be available after the issuance of the third Assessment Letter for discretionary projects. For ministerial projects, PIR conferences may be requested by the applicant after the third cycle review comments are issued. Relevant City staff, applicant and applicant consultant(s), as deemed appropriate, must attend.

Determinations resulting from the PIR process are solely intended to break review log-jams and streamline the permit review process. They are not intended to pre-ordain permit approvals, therefore, PIR determinations are not binding on any City decision-making body including City Council, Planning Commission, or

Hearing Officers. This process is only available to project applicants, and not for project opponents. The existing discretionary process allows for public input as part of the decision/hearing process. Similarly, this process will not reconsider final decisions or formal recommendations made by the Director or any other formal City decision-making body.

C. PROCESS FOR PROJECT ISSUE RESOLUTION MEETING

PIR Requests should be coordinated as follows:

- Discretionary Projects: Contact the assigned Development Project Manager.
- Ministerial Projects: Contact the reviewer supervisor or manager for the relevant discipline.