Development Services

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LAND DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

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Project Submittal Requirements

Section 1

Guide to Project Submittal Process

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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CALL (619) 446-5300 FOR APPOINTMENTS AND (619) 446-5000 FOR INFORMATION

Visit our web site at www.sandiego.gov/development-services

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Section 1

Guide to the Project Submittal Process

Important Steps to Project Approval

Following the basic steps listed below will assist you in completing your project submittal package and help lead you to a successful project approval. To determine the City of San Diego's planning, zoning, subdivision, and/or building regulations that apply to your project; you must obtain the Parcel Information (DS-302). By evaluating this information **PRIOR** to designing your project, you can avoid mistakes early in the process, save time, and reduce processing costs.

This information can be obtained with staff assistance, at the self-help computer on the 3rd floor of the Development Services Center or by faxing the request to (619) 446-5050. NOTE: Project Submittal Requirements (Section 2-6) require all parcel information to be on the plans.

Important Note:

Other permits, approvals, and fees may be required from outside agencies that are not handled by the City of San Diego Development Services Department, e.g. school districts, public utilities, County Health. Contact the appropriate agency for information on their procedures.

1. Determine the zoning designation of your property

Zoning is the legislative method by which land use, intensity of development, site design and architectural design are controlled. Some zones apply to all or many parts of the City while other zones, such as those within Planned Districts, apply only to very specific sections of the City.

Another type of zoning, called Overlay Zones add special regulations to the underlying zone. The first step in determining the zoning regulations that apply to your property is to find your site on the Official Zoning Maps, available through our Website at: http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/.

The Official Zoning Maps were adopted by Council on February 28, 2006 and currently only represent base zone information. In the future, it is intended the maps will also provide overlay zone and Planned District information. Until then it is recommended you request conformation of your zoning using one of the methods listed below.

Base zones govern the uses permitted and the development regulations of the site. Once you have determined the base zone, refer to Land Development Code Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 1-6 for your property development regulations. If your

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property is in a Planned District, refer to Chapter 15. A Planned District is a legally described geographic area which has been designated by the City Council and adopts different development controls than city-wide base zones.

Development and Permit Information (DPI) staff, located on the 3rd floor of the Development Services Center, can assist you in obtaining the zoning information for a particular parcel. You will need to provide the project address (if available), legal description or Assessor's Parcel Number. You may request zoning information by:

1. Submitting a Parcel Information Form (DS-302) and submitting it by Fax to the number listed on the form.
2. In person, by visiting DPI staff on the third floor of the Development Services Center at 1222 First Avenue. Appointments are recommended. Call (619) 446-5300 to schedule an appointment.
3. Phoning the Development Services Department (DSD) general information line at (619) 446-5000.

2. Determine what uses are allowed on your property

After you have determined your zoning, refer to Municipal Code Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 1-6 to find the uses permitted in each zone. Divisions 2-6 contain use regulations tables that list the permitted uses for each zone, uses that are allowed with specified limitations, and uses that require a use permit. If your property is located within an overlay zone, you will also need to refer to Chapter 13, Article 2 to find any supplemental regulations. If your property is in a Planned District, refer to Chapter 15 for permitted uses.

3. Identify regulations governing the size and scale of development

To find the basic development regulations that apply to your site, refer to the development regulations tables in Municipal Code Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 2-6. These regulations govern the size and scale of development and include requirements for lot size, setbacks, structure height and permitted density. Each division contains a development regulations table that lists the basic development regulations for each base zone. The tables also refer to other sections in the Municipal Code that contain additional regulations that are applicable in the base zone. If your property is in a Planned District refer to Chapter 15 for property development regulations.

4. Identify other development regulations that apply to your property

Once you have found the use and development regulations for your base zone and any overlay zones, if applicable, look in Municipal Code Chapter 14 for additional city-wide, general development regulations that apply in all zones. All development is subject to the general development regulations in Chapter 14, Article 2, whether or not a permit or other approval is required. This article includes regulations for grading, drainage, fences, landscaping, parking, equipment screening, loading areas, outdoor storage, and signs. If the regulations require that you obtain a permit for certain types of development, an applicability table will refer you to the appropriate sections within each division for the type of construction or development permit needed.

5. Determine if your property contains environmentally sensitive lands

Environmentally Sensitive Lands include sensitive biological resources, steep hillsides, sensitive coastal bluffs, coastal beaches, and special flood hazard areas. If you are developing property that contains Environmentally Sensitive Lands, refer to Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 1 for the supplemental regulations.

If any portion of your property contains environmentally sensitive lands, you will be required to provide more information to assist City staff in determining the type of permit you will need. DPI staff can assist you in determining if your property is identified on any of the resource maps, i.e., sensitive vegetation, 25% slopes, sensitive coastal resources, or special flood hazard areas. Call (619) 446-5300 for a DPI appointment.

If your property contains environmentally sensitive lands and you do not qualify for exemption pursuant to Municipal Code Section 143.0110(c), you will need to obtain either a Neighborhood Development Permit or a Site Development Permit. To determine which type of permit you need refer to Table 143-01A Applicability of Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations in Municipal Code Section 143.0110.

If you can qualify for an exemption pursuant to Municipal Code Section 143.0110(c), you will not be required to obtain either a Neighborhood or Site Development Permit. If the exemption you qualify for is 143.0110(c) (1), you will be required to provide a statement on the site or grading plan signed by the property owner acknowledging that "the development activity will not encroach into the environmentally sensitive lands during or after construction and that further development on the property is not permitted unless the development is reviewed and approved pursuant to Chapter 14, Article 1, Division 1 of the Municipal Code."

6. Determine if your property contains historical resources

a. **Potential Historical Resource:** If the project site contains a structure that is 45 or more years old AND is not a designated Historic Site, Structure or in a Historic District, see Information Bulletin 580 (Potential Historical Resource Review) for additional submittal and review requirements.

b. **Designated Historical Site or District:** If the project site or structure is designated Historical OR located within a Historical District, see Information Bulletin 581 (Designated Historical Resource Review) for review requirements.

7. Geologic hazard category and earthquake fault buffer

The Geologic Hazard Category of the site identifies the type of geotechnical study that may be required. This study may identify considerations that must be included in the proposed development. Information on the required geotechnical report for construction permits can be found in Municipal Code Section 145.1803; the required geotechnical study for Development Permits, Subdivision Approvals and Grading Permits is identified in Information Bulletin 515.

Earthquake Fault Buffers are designated corridors on either side of known fault lines. These corridor widths vary from 100 feet from either side of the fault in Geologic Hazard Zone 12 and 450-800 feet from either side of the fault in Geologic Hazard Zone 11. Developments that lie within these buffer zones are subject to various State and City regulations that could impact the feasibility of a proposed project. Information on the fault lines and their associated buffers can be obtained from the City of San Diego, Seismic Safety Map published in 1995. These maps are located in the DSD, Customer Self-Help Area, 1222 First Avenue, 3rd Floor.

8. Identify model code requirements

Model Codes are adopted by the City of San Diego to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare. The provisions of these codes apply to the construction, alteration, moving, removal, demolition, repair, conversion, maintenance and use of all buildings or structures in the City of San Diego. The model codes used by the City of San Diego are:

- California Building Code
- California Mechanical Code
- California Plumbing Code
- California Fire Code
- California Electrical Code
- State of California Energy Conservation requirements (Title 24).
- California Residential Code
- California Green Building Standards Code

Early identification of the requirements during the conceptual design state may save delays during final construction permit stages.

9. Determine the type of permit or approval review

The Municipal Code establishes four categories of permit/approval types: Construction Permits, Development Permits/Approval, Subdivision Approvals, and Policy Approvals. Before proceeding with a Construction permit application, it is important that you verify if a Development Permit, Subdivision

Approval, or Policy Approval is required for your proposed development. These approvals must be obtained before a construction permit may be issued.

Refer to the Permit/Approval Table for a complete listing of all the permit/approval types identified in the Municipal Code.

- **Construction Permits:**
  Construction permit review is a review of final or construction plans which include building, grading, and public right-of-way permits. The decision maker's review is administrative or ministerial – the permit is approved if the regulations are met or denied if the regulations are not met. There is no public hearing or public noticing of these projects.

- **Development Permits/Approvals:**
  Development permit review is a review of architectural and site design plans. The decision maker must exercise some discretion in determining whether the proposed development meets the applicable regulations, standards, and guidelines. A public hearing is required for projects subject to development review where the appropriate decision maker decides on the project. If a Development Permit/Approval is required, it must be approved before a Construction Permit can be issued.

- **Subdivision Approvals:**
  Subdivision approvals regulate the division of lands and the associated design of improvements, and the acquisition and vacation of public rights-of-way and public easements with the City. Some subdivision approvals are administrative and do not require a public hearing. Some are discretionary and require a public hearing.

- **Policy Approvals:**
  Policy approvals involve requests to amend existing City policies such as changing the zoning designation of a site or amending a community plan. These types of approvals require a public hearing.

10. Determine the decision process

Applications for permits, maps, and other approvals are reviewed through one of the five decision processes depicted in the Decision Processes and Notices diagram. The zoning, conditions of the site and proposed project determines the process that is followed for each application. For more information on these processes, refer to Municipal Code Chapter 11, Article 2. If more than one type of decision process is required for your project, then the decisions are consolidated (except for Process One decisions) and taken to the highest decision level (per Municipal Code Section 112.0103).

Typically, projects that fall under Process One, Two or Three take less time and cost less money than projects that fall under Process Four or Process Five. Applicants should be familiar with thresholds in the development regulations that determine the decision processes. If you can design your project to fall under one of the lower decision processes, it could save substantial time and money in the review and approval process.

11. Determine the review process

Most projects are required to be submitted into plan review. There are some minor projects, however, that can be reviewed over-the-counter. Some of the more common minor projects include:

a) Construction permits for single-story, single-dwelling unit additions (see Information Bulletin 140, "How to Obtain a Permit to Build a Residential Addition").

b) Accessory structures for single-dwelling units (carports, patio covers, fences, retaining walls) using City of San Diego standard designs contained in Information Bulletins.

c) Construction permits for minor interior remodels for commercial tenant improvements.

d) Standard public improvements as identified on Information Bulletin 165, "How to Obtain a Public Right-of-Way Permit for Standard Public Improvements."

Decision Processes and Notices

PROCESS ONE

Application/ Plans Submitted → Staff Level Review → Staff Decision to Approve/Deny

PROCESS TWO

Application/ Plans Submitted ● → Staff Level Review → Staff Decision to Approve/Deny ❍ → Appeal Filed to Planning Commission ● → Appeal Hearing by Planning Commission

PROCESS THREE

Application/ Plans Submitted ● → Staff Level Review ● → Hearing Officer Hearing → Appeal Filed to Planning Commission ● → Appeal Hearing by Planning Commission

PROCESS FOUR

Application/ Plans Submitted ● → Staff Level Review ● → Planning Commission Hearing → Appeal Filed to City Council ● → Appeal Hearing by City Council

PROCESS FIVE

Application/ Plans Submitted ● → Staff Level Review ● → Planning Commission Recommendation Hearing ● → City Council Hearing

Key

- ● Public Notice to all Property Owners, Tenants, Community Planning Groups within 300 Feet of the development, and Anyone Requesting Notice
- ❍ Public Notice to Applicant, Community Planning Groups within 300 feet, and Anyone Requesting Notice

12. Determine the project submittal requirements and schedule your submittal appointment

Using the information you have gathered to this point; refer to the applicable sections of this publication to determine the forms, documents, and plans that must be submitted for project review and approval.

It is necessary to evaluate all projects being submitted to ensure that the required information is provided to review the project. This is known as the completeness review. In most cases the completeness review can be done while you wait. Once it is determined that your submittal is complete (including correct number of sets), you can pay your fees and/or deposits and your application is fully submitted.

Some projects (as identified in Sections 2-6 of the Project Submittal Requirements Manual) will need to go through a Submitted Completeness Review. The Submitted Completeness Review allows staff more time to review the plans/documents for the required detail, customize the number of copies needed, and set up the project for review. After the Submitted Completeness Review, staff will notify the applicant whether the application is ready to be fully submitted or whether additional information or clarification is required.

Development approvals (also referred to as discretionary) always require a public noticing pack-

age. For complete information on a public noticing package see Information Bulletin 512. "How to Obtain Public Noticing Information."

Submittal appointments are recommended and can be made by phoning (619) 446-5300. Please describe your project in detail so that the correct type of appointment can be scheduled.

13. What happens next?

Plan Review

Once you have successfully submitted your application, plans, documents, etc., and have paid the required fees or deposits, City staff can begin their review. Your project will be assigned a Project Manager who will be your single point of contact for any questions you may have. The Project Manager will ensure that your plans are routed to appropriate City staff for review and comment. The review time could range anywhere from two to four weeks or longer, depending on the complexity of your project.

Ministerial Reviews - As each reviewing discipline has completed their review, they will route the plans, their issues (if not approved), and a Submittal Requirements Report (if required to resubmit) to our Plan Pick-up area on the third floor of the Development Services Center. The point of contact for the project will then be notified by electronic mail, US Mail, or fax (depending upon the preferred method of communication provided at the time of submittal) that your plans are ready to be picked up.

Discretionary Reviews – All discretionary reviews are assigned a Development Project Manager (DPM) to actively manage your project. The DPM will evaluate the comments received from the various reviews and forward the applicant's project point of contact a project status letter detailing any outstanding issues.

Environmental Review

As part of the review process for your project, it will be determined if your project is subject to environmental review. All development activities that are subject to Process Two, Three, Four, or Five Decisions require compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), i.e., discretionary review triggers CEQA. The purpose of CEQA is to provide accurate, objective, timely, and orderly evaluation and disclosure of potential environmental impacts of proposed projects to the decision makers (Hearing Officer, Planning Commission or City Council). The application for a development permit also serves as the application for environmental review. First, the environmental staff will identify if a CEQA exemption can be granted. If not, an environmental initial study will be conducted to identify any potential environmental issues that may be associated with the project and to determine what type of environmental document will need to be prepared. For more information, please refer to Municipal Code Chapter 12, Article 8, Divisions 1-3.

Infrastructure Requirements Identified

As part of the review process and based on the scope and details of your project, City staff will determine the infrastructure improvements (i.e., sidewalk, street or alley improvements, bus stops, pedestrian ramps, etc.) that may be required for your project. Fronting public improvements may be required to be brought up to current City standards or to mitigate impacts of the new development in accordance with Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 6 of the Municipal Code.

Permit Issuance

Construction permits can be issued once the project has been signed off by all required review disciplines. You will receive an Inspection Record card at the time of permit issuance. The Field Inspector signs this card as the construction is inspected and approved.

Development permits and other approvals requiring a public hearing cannot be issued until the hearing body approves the project, all rights of appeal have been exhausted, and the permit is recorded in the Office of the County Recorder as set forth in Section 126.0106 of the Municipal Code. At this point, you can proceed with the construction permit stage.

If you have any questions regarding the regula-

tions contained in the Municipal Code, the Land Development Manual, or the Submittal Requirements Manual, you may contact DPI by phone at (619) 446-5000 or you can make an appointment by phoning (619) 446-5300 to obtain the information in person on the third floor of the Development Services Center, 1222 First Avenue.

A wide variety of helpful information on development regulations can also be obtained on line at http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services. Development regulations, fee schedules, submittal requirements, and forms are all conveniently located on line.

OPTIONAL PROJECT REVIEW SERVICES

The optional review services below are offered to save you time in the plan preparation process. These services offer an opportunity for you to submit limited information and get preliminary feedback from staff regarding a potential project or modification to an already approved project. This can be done prior to formal submittal for a required approval, allowing you to determine how you would like to proceed in processing your project with the City.

Preliminary Review

Preliminary review helps you obtain the answers that you need to determine the feasibility of your development project and to be successful in submitting the project for City review.

Preliminary Review is an optional, fee-based service. This service is offered prior to your formal submittal to the City for required permits and review. For complete information on the preliminary review service and for the Preliminary Review Questionnaire, see Information Bulletin 513, "Preliminary Review."

Substantial Conformance Review

Substantial Conformance Review (SCR) is a service available to customers who are proposing to modify their projects after a discretionary permit has been approved by the City. If the only prior discretionary action, however, was a tentative map or vesting tentative map, and a final map for the project has been approved, then this service is not available.

The goal of SCR is to determine if the change proposed for a project is consistent and in conformance with the previously approved permit. This service is offered to allow customers to provide only the information needed to make a conformance determination, without having to go to the expense of preparing complete construction documents. The process does not include a review for conformance with other City regulations, which is performed when an application for a construction permit approval such as a building, grading, or public improvement permit is made.

Instead of SCR, customers may choose to include their project changes as part of a complete construction permit application (building permit, grading permit, public improvement permit, etc.). Staff will review the project change for conformance with the prior permit as part of the process of checking the plans against applicable regulations. If the project changes are not deemed to be in conformance with the previously approved discretionary permit, minor to significant project redesign or an amendment to the previously approved permit may be required. The applicant makes the choice to risk a full construction permit submittal, or to opt for the more tailored SCR service.

SCR in most cases is a deposit-based service. This service is offered prior to your formal submittal to the City for required construction permits. For complete information on SCR, see Information Bulletin 500, "Substantial Conformance Review."

Public Project Assessment

This optional service is intended to assist public project applicants in determining required permits and approvals and to provide an environmental assessment of the project. Public projects are defined as a project originated by a City department or lessee or a project located on City-owned property. Many public projects require a City Council or City Manager action that subjects the

project to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. The Assessment of Public Projects is a vehicle to assist the applicant in obtaining information on any necessary permits and required CEQA documentation. For complete information on the Public Project Assessment service, see Information Bulletin 510, "Assessment of Public Projects."

PROJECT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Once you have identified all the applicable regulations and have designed your project accordingly, you are ready to prepare your submittal package. The table below provides a listing of all permit/approval types, the corresponding Municipal Code section that will tell you when that type of permit/approval is required, and which sections of this manual contain the information you will need to submit your project. For example, if you are applying for a building permit you would reference Municipal Code Section 129.0202 to find out when a building permit is required. You would then turn to Section 2 of this manual, titled Construction Permits – Structures, to find out which items you need to submit.

You can use the Submittal Matrices and the Minimum Submittal Requirements Checklists found in each section to identify the forms, documents, and plans that are required for certain types of permits and approvals. The Submittal Matrices are easy-to-use tools to help you quickly identify the number of items you need to submit to the City.

The Submittal Requirements Checklists provide a detailed description of what the content of each of the required forms, documents, and plans must be. You can also refer to the Information Bulletins referenced in the Submittal Matrices that provide further information. If you still have questions regarding why you need to submit a certain item, you can obtain a pre-submittal appointment by phoning (619) 446-5300. Keep in mind that the completeness of your submittal package will help the reviewing disciplines expedite the processing of your application.

Permit/Approval Table

Permit/Approval	When is it required? (Code Section)	Decision Level	Submittal Manual Section
Amendments to Development Permits and Tentative Maps	126.0113	Process 2, 3, 4, or 5	Section 4
Building Permit	129.0202	Process 1	Section 2 and Section 2A
Certificate of Compliance	125.0210	Process 1	Section 5
Certificate of Correction	125.0140	Process 1	Section 5
Coastal Development Permit	126.0702	Process 2 or 3	Section 4
Conditional Use Permit	126.0303	Process 3, 4, or 5	Section 4
Dedication of Right-of-Way	144.0203	Process 1	Section 5
Demolition/Removal Permit	129.0502	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 710, "Permit Instructions, Procedures for Building Demolition/Removal"
Designation of Historic Resource	123.0202	Process 4	Section 6
Development Agreements	124.0102	Process 5	Section 6
Easement Vacation	125.1010	Process 2 or 5	Section 5
Electrical Permit	129.0302	Process 1	Section 2
Electrical Vehicle Charging System	129.0302	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 187 "How to Obtain a Permit for Electrical Vehicle Charging Systems"
Encroachments within Public Right-of-Way	129.0715	Process 1,2 or 4	See Information Bulletin 576 "How to Obtain a Permit for Encroachments within the Public Right-of-Way"
Extension of Time (Tentative Map or Development Permit)	126.0111	Process 3, 4 or 5	Section 4
Final Map	125.0610	Process 1	Section 5
Grading Permit	129.0602	Process 1	Section 3
Land Use Plan/Local Coastal Program Amendment	122.0106	Process 5	Section 6
Lot Line Adjustment	125.0310	Process 1	Section 5
Map Waiver	125.0120	Process 3	Section 4
Neighborhood Development Permit	126.0402	Process 2	Section 4
Neighborhood Use Permit	126.0203	Process 2	Section 4
Parcel Map	125.0501	Process 1	Section 5
Parking Lots (Building Permit) adding 4 or more parking spaces	142.0505, 142.0402	Process 1	Section 2
Planned Development Permit	126.0602	Process 3, 4, or 5	Section 4
Plumbing/Mechanical Permit	129.0402	Process 1	Section 2
Public Right-of-Way Permit	129.0702	Process 1	Section 3
Public Right-of-Way Vacation	125.0010	Process 5	Section 5

Permit/Approval	When is it required? (Code Section)	Decision Level	Submittal Manual Section
Reimbursement Agreement	61.2215 & General Plan PF-A.2.c	Process 5	Visit Facilities Financing web site
Reversion to Acreage	125.0810	Process 5	Section 5
Rezoning	123.0102	Process 5	Section 6
Sidewalk Cafe	141.0621	Process 1 or 2	Section 2, 3, 4
Sign Permit	129.0802	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 111, "General Procedures, Sign Plan Check to Permit Issuance."
Site Development Permit	126.0502	Process 3, 4, or 5	Section 4
Site Reconnaissance and Testing	143.0110	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 560, "How to Obtain a Grading Permit for Site Reconnaissance and Testing."
Site Restoration	142-0150	Process 1	Section 3
Solar Photovoltaic Systems	129.0302	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 301 "How to Obtain a Permit for Installation of Solar Photovoltaic Systems"
Street Name Change	125.1110	Process 1 or 5	Section 5
Substantial Conformance Review	126.0112	Process 2 in the Coastal Overlay Zone; Process 1 elsewhere	See Information Bulletin 500, "Substantial Conformance Review"
Subdivision Improvement Agreement	144.0401	Process 1	Section 3
Temporary Construction Permit	129.0117	Process 1	See Information Bulletin 533, "How to Obtain a Temporary Use Permit"
Temporary Use Permit	123.0401	Process 1	Section 2
Tentative Map / Vesting Tentative Map	125.0410	Process 3, 4, or 5	Section 4
Variance	126.0802	Process 3	Section 4
Tolling Inside Coastal Zone	126.0115	Process 5	
Tolling Outside Coastal Zone	125.0150	Process 5	

Other Helpful Resources:

City Website

Land Development Code (Chapters 11-15):

Development and Permit Information (619) 446-5000

Appointment Line (619) 446-5300