

CITY OF SAN DIEGO DEVELOPMENT PERMIT Q&A

GENERAL

Development Permits are needed for certain types of construction projects in the City of San Diego. Examples of Development Permits include Neighborhood Use Permits, Conditional Use Permits, Neighborhood Development Permits, etc. A list from the City is attached showing all seven types of Development Permits.

WHEN IS A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NEEDED?

Various conditions can trigger the need for a Development Permit. Lots with mapped Steep Hillside often require a Site Development Permit. Guest Quarters in single family zones require a Neighborhood Use Permit. Project in some multi-family zones with over three dwelling units require a Site Development Permit. The need for a Development Permit can only be determined by evaluating a specific site with its size, orientation, slopes, and zoning along with the specific intended use for the site.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT?

Development Permits increase the amount of time required to obtain a construction permit by six months to one year or more. Most Development Permits require one or more noticed public hearings for input by interested parties. Review and input by the local Community Planning Group is almost always required. The Architect and Engineers need to provide much more detailed information and exhibits to the Planning Department than would be the case without a Development Permit. Also, the City charges additional fees for review of these permits. Single family new and remodeling projects ordinarily do not need to have professionally prepared Landscape and Irrigation plans, Civil Engineering designs, and a Geotechnical Investigation. However, with a Development Permit, Landscape Architecture, Civil Engineering, and a Soils Report are almost always required. In addition to the added cost of design, documentation, and City review, construction costs will be increased due to the added level of design complexity engendered by City staff review. As a rule, a Development Permit will add a minimum of \$10,000 in City fees, and \$20,000 or more in Architecture, Landscape, Civil Engineering, and Geotechnical fees. In addition, construction costs will probably increase by \$15,000 or more.

IS IT WORTH IT?

This question requires careful evaluations. In some cases, the added project potential with a Development Permit makes the added time and cost worthwhile. In many other cases, the added time and cost simply is not worth the potential added area or change of use. The costs for a Development Permit are incurred many months before a construction loan is possible. So, the owner will need to have substantial funds available from other sources several months to two years or more before the Construction Documents are finalized, a construction loan is closed, and the Construction Permit is obtained.

WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

The City of San Diego web site has more information on Development and Construction Permits. This link is a starting place. It will take you to the Land Development Code User Guide.

<http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/industry/pdf/landdevmanual/lmusersguide.pdf>

The following information is copied from the City of San Diego web site.

TYPES OF PERMIT REVIEW

The Land Development Code establishes two general types of permit review: development review and construction review.

Development review is a review of conceptual or schematic plans. The decision maker must exercise some discretion in determining whether the proposed development meets the applicable regulations, standards, and guidelines. A public hearing before the decision maker is required for projects subject to development review. The types of development proposals that require development review are subdivision maps and development permits (development permits are described below).

Construction review is a review of final or construction plans. 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. The types of permits that require construction review are grading permits, building permits, electrical permits, plumbing and mechanical permits, right-of-way permits, and sign permits.

TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

The Land Development Code establishes seven types of development permits through which development review is conducted.

Neighborhood Use Permits (NUPs) are required for uses that have the potential for limited and identifiable impacts on surrounding development within an immediate area. These uses are identified with the letter "N" in the use regulations tables in Chapter 13, Article 1, Divisions 2-6. Supplemental regulations are provided for these uses in Chapter 14, Article 1. Expansion, enlargement, or resumption of a previously conforming use also requires an NUP. (Regulations for previously conforming uses are in Chapter 12, Article 7.) Regulations for processing NUPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 2. NUPs are processed in accordance with Process Two.

Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) are required for uses that have the potential for significant impacts on surrounding development within a wide area. These uses are identified with the letter "C" in the use regulations tables in Chapter 13, Article 1, Division 2-6. The purpose of the CUP process is to determine whether, and under what conditions, a specific use may be appropriate in a given location. Supplemental regulations for these uses are provided in Chapter 14, Article 1. Regulations for processing CUPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6,

Divisions I and 3. CUPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.

Neighborhood Development Permits (NDPs) are required for developments that have the potential for limited impacts on surrounding property. The base zone regulations specify what types of development proposals require an NDP. Supplemental development regulations are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 3. Regulations for processing NDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 4. NDPs are processed in accordance with Process Two.

Site Development Permits (SDPs) are required for developments that, because of their location, size, or some other characteristic, may have significant impacts on resources or on the surrounding area. The base zone regulations specify what types of development proposals require an SDP. Supplemental regulations are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 3. Regulations for processing SDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 5. SDPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.

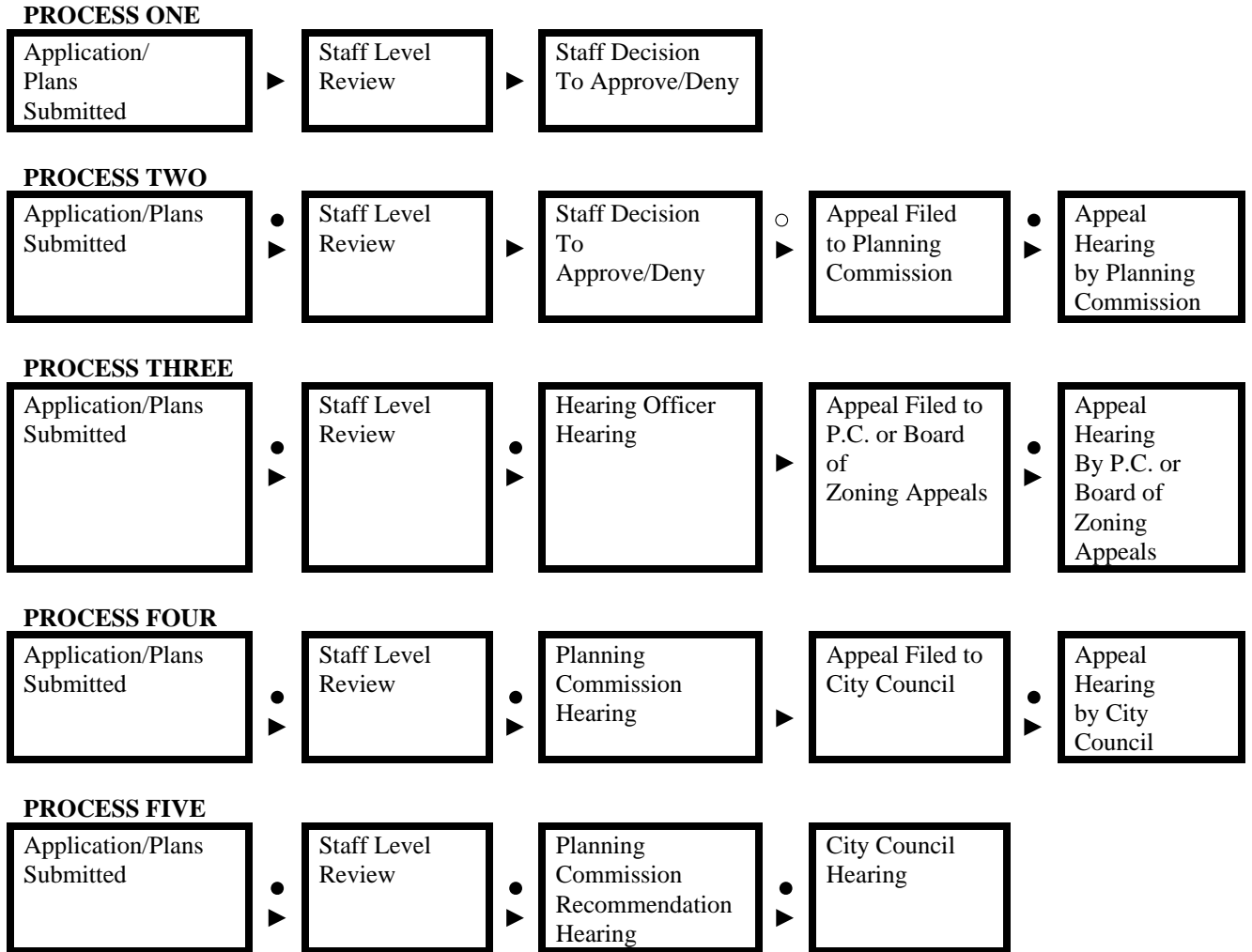
Planned Development Permits (PDPs) are an optional permit process that allows flexibility in the application of development regulations in exchange for imaginative and innovative design. Minimum planned development standards are provided in Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 4. Regulations for processing PDPs are In Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 6. PDPs are processed in accordance with Process Three, Process Four, or Process Five.

Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) are required for development in the Coastal Overlay Zone, except as provided in Chapter 12, Article 6, Division 7. Regulations for processing CDPs are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 7. CDPs are processed in accordance with Process Two or Process Three.

Variances are an optional permit process that provides relief from the strict application of development regulations where reasonable use of the property would otherwise be denied because of special circumstances unique to the property. Regulations for processing variances are in Chapter 12, Article 6, Divisions 1 and 8. Variances are processed in accordance with Process Three.

DECISION PROCESS

All permits to use or develop land that are issued by the City of San Diego fall under one of five process types. These process types are shown in the following diagram.



Key:

- Public Notice to Property Owners and Tenants within 300 Feet and to Community Planning Groups
- “Limited” Notice to Applicant and Anyone Requesting Notice

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