



SINGLE-FAMILY PLANNING APPLICATION GUIDE

Applicability

The following types of planning applications are required for projects involving single-family residences:

- a. **Single-Family Dwelling Design Review (SFDDR)** [SMMC 27.08.032]
 - New or partially replaced one- or two-story residence when an existing residence is “substantially removed” per SMMC 27.18.035
 - New two-story residence in any residential zoning district
 - If an existing single-story residence: any second-story addition of floor area per SMMC 27.04.200(c)
 - If an existing two-story residence:
 - any second-story addition greater than 20% of the existing building square footage, or
 - any second-story addition greater than 200 square feet of floor area per SMMC 27.04.200(c)
- b. **Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR)**
 - An extension of a single-family residence wall on the first floor that has a non-conforming side setback [SMMC 27.18.080]
 - A fence exception on private property [SMMC 27.84.020]
 - A circular driveway [SMMC 27.18.070]
- c. **Special Use Permit (SUP)**
 - A “substantial removal” of
 - an existing roof structure with an associated increase in height of 2 feet or more as measured at the highest point, or
 - demolition of 50% or more of existing exterior walls in an R1 zone only [SMMC 27.18.035]
 - More than two plumbing fixtures in an accessory structure [SMMC 27.18.030]
- d. **Site Development Planning Application (SDPA)** [SMMC 23.40.030]
 - Removal of any tree with a diameter 6 inches or greater in conjunction with the addition of one or more new dwelling units; or
 - Grading for construction located on a slope of 15 percent or greater or within the slope setbacks, unless such work is exempted.
- e. **Variance** [SMMC 27.78.040]

Variations may be requested only for specific Zoning code requirements. Approval of variance applications in the City of San Mateo are extremely rare due to the rigorous findings for approval that must be made.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Zoning Administrator (ZA) Decision Process for Planning Applications Summary:

Step	Action	Responsibility
1	Mailing addresses: Obtain City approval of meeting notice and meeting date and time, then purchase Neighborhood Informational Meeting mailing addresses from the City of San Mateo Planning Division	Applicant
2	Meeting notice and Neighborhood Informational Meeting: Mail Neighborhood Informational Meeting notice & hold neighborhood meeting	Applicant
3	Application submittal: Submit the single-family planning application guide to the City within 60 calendar days of neighborhood meeting. Submittals can be made online at www.cityofsanmateo.org/onlinepermitcenter or in-person at City Hall.	Applicant
4	Project review: Project review for code compliance and CEQA ¹ exemption status and preparation of Incomplete Letter within 30 calendar days of submittal. If application is deemed incomplete, an incomplete letter is sent to the applicant with detailed comments from all reviewing City departments/divisions. <i>Note: The applicant has 120 calendar days to provide a response before the planning application is closed out due to inactivity.</i>	City staff (Development Review Board)
5	Application resubmittal: If incomplete, resubmit revised plans/additional information. Staff will provide a subsequent review (Step 4) and prepare a revised Incomplete Letter within 30 calendar days if needed. <i>Note: Multiple rounds of resubmittals may be required before planning application is complete. Each round may take up to 30 calendar days.</i>	Applicant
6	Public notice for Decision: When application is deemed complete, planner prepares Planning Application's Conditions of Approval and public notice of "Pending Zoning Administrator Decision." City staff will mail the notice at least 10 calendar days prior to a ZA decision, and members of the public may comment on the planning application. Applicant is required to post the public notice placard on the project site during these 10 days.	City staff & Applicant
7	Decision: Take action on the project through a ZA Decision document. (Note: decision is made to approve or deny the planning application.) The decision date begins a 10-calendar day appeal period.	City Staff (Zoning Administrator)
8	Determination: The ZA decision is final at the end of the 10 calendar day appeal period, unless: a. An appeal is filed for Planning Commission review (\$500 appeal fee); or b. Planning Application is "called up" for review by a Planning Commissioner If no appeal or call-up is received, the City's decision on the application is final.	

¹ CEQA: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) outlines categories of projects which are exempt from further environmental review. Project which are not categorically exempt require an Initial Study which leads to either a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). For process and timing information on projects with Initial Studies and EIR's, please consult with Planning Division staff.

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATION & MEETING PROCESS

The San Mateo City Council and Planning Commission have established a planning application neighborhood notification and review process to ensure that there is resident involvement early in the land development process. The process is intended to familiarize the surrounding property owners and residents, business owners, neighborhood associations and interested persons with the details of the proposed project.

1. **Purchase mailing addresses:** Purchase the neighborhood informational meeting mailing addresses from the City of San Mateo Planning Division through the Online Permit Center:
www.cityofsanmateo.org/onlinepermitcenter
 - Click on *Citizen Self-Service (CSS) Online Permit Center*, then *Apply*, then *Informational Neighborhood Meeting Labels* under *Planning Applications*
 - The fee is \$479 from 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2022.
 - Mailing addresses must be purchased from the City within 3 months of the neighborhood meeting date. If addresses are purchased and not used, the applicant must re-purchase the mailing addresses to ensure they are up-to-date.

2. **Virtual neighborhood meeting date & time:** Select the meeting date and time.
 - Meetings must be a minimum of one (1) hour
 - Meetings must be held between the hours of 6-8 pm on a weeknight or 12-6pm on a weekend
 - Meetings cannot be held on the following dates:
 - Evenings of City public meetings (City Council, Public Works Commission, or Planning Commission meetings only). Typical meeting dates include:
 - City Council – First and third Monday of each month
 - Planning Commission – Second and fourth Tuesday of each month
 - Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission – Second Wednesday of each monthPlease check the city's website at www.cityofsanmateo.org/60/Commissions-Boards and www.cityofsanmateo.org/55/City-Council for an up-to-date calendar.
 - Legal holidays, common religious holidays, or during the week of Thanksgiving and December 15th-January 1st, or local, State and Federal Election days

3. **Virtual Meeting Platform, Link, and Dial-in Phone Number:**
 - Meeting should be held via Zoom. Please check with the project planner if you wish to use another platform.
 - Create the following, which will be printed on the neighborhood notice postcards and placard(s).
 - A web link/URL to a publicly-accessible virtual conference meeting room. The City recommends providing an email for members of the public to request the URL in an email or calendar invitation.
 - A dial-in phone number with access code if applicable.

4. **Draft meeting notice:** Prepare the draft meeting notice that includes the following information:
 - A factual description of the proposed planning application. See attached sample notice and please be as detailed as possible in describing the scope of the project.
 - Reduced legible copies (8.5" x 11" or 11" x 17") of both the proposed site plan and existing and proposed building elevations for all four building sides. A website link to the full plan set may be included in the notice in lieu of the plan sheets where the mailing list exceeds 1,000 individuals.

- Applicant and/or property owner’s name and contact information, including a phone number and/or email address.
- Virtual meeting information as described above

5. Planning Division approval of meeting notice:

- Email the draft meeting notice and plans to Planning@cityofsanmateo.org to obtain staff approval of the draft notice and meeting date/time.
- The City must provide a written confirmation stating the draft notice is approved.

Note: Staff approval must be completed before making copies of the proposed notice/plans. Please allow time for revisions and additional review if necessary. If you do not obtain an approval before making copies, it will be the applicant’s responsibility to redo the notice at the applicant’s own expense.

6. Prepare meeting notice: Make copies of the approved meeting notice and plans, and complete the following:

1. Apply all the mailing addresses on envelopes
2. Place stamps on the envelopes
3. Place the applicant’s return address on the envelopes.
4. Insert the copies of the notice and plans in envelopes. (Please do not copy the stamped draft notice - use a clean unstamped original)
5. Seal the envelopes.

7. Deliver notices: Mail the envelopes at the Post Office or a USPS mailbox to ensure that all envelopes comply with the requirement to be postmarked at least 10 calendar days before the Neighborhood Informational Meeting.

What to do at the Virtual Neighborhood Informational Meeting	
*City staff will not be present	
1	The proposed site plan, building elevations, and landscaping concept plans shall be presented at the meeting. Detailed structural, framing, and plumbing plans are not necessary.
2	Record a list of who attends the meeting and their address and contact information. Submit with your Planning Application.
3	Record a list of the comments made at the meeting, and any written correspondence submitted at or before/after the meeting related to the proposed project. Submit with your Planning Application.
<i>Note</i>	<i>All neighborhood informational meetings must comply with the requirements listed above. Any deviations from these criteria may require that the meeting notices be mailed a second time and a second meeting be held in accordance with the above.</i>

Upon completion of the pre-application neighborhood meeting, the applicant must submit a planning application no later than 60 calendar days after the meeting.

Sample Meeting Notice

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL INFORMATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING
RELATED TO A PROPOSED SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT AT
ADDRESS

You are invited to attend a virtual neighborhood meeting with (insert name of property owners) to discuss a proposal for (insert detailed description of the proposed project, including the required planning application types (ex: SFDDR, SPAR, etc.)) at (insert property address(es)). Reduced copies of the proposed site plan and building elevations have been included for your reference.

The virtual meeting will be held on (day, date, time) at
(URL for meeting web address).

Meeting ID: ### ##### Passcode: #####

Dial-in Phone Number: (###) ###-#### Access Code: #####

To attend the virtual meeting, please type the link into your internet browser.

Please note that you are not required to be visible to others to participate in the meeting.

Please be sure that the mute button is not on should you want to participate.

The purpose of this meeting is to get preliminary comments from the neighborhood regarding the proposed project. All property owners and residential and commercial tenants within 500 feet of the project site have been mailed this notice. After this meeting, the applicant will submit a planning application with the City of San Mateo. Once the planning application has been submitted to the City, you will receive another notice from the City requesting final comments on the proposed project prior to the final action on the planning application.

Prior to the formal submittal of a planning application, all comments should be directed to the applicant. Please contact (insert name of primary application contact, either the property owners or applicant) at (insert contact email and phone number) if you have any questions or comments or wish to arrange for an alternative meeting time or location to discuss the project.