



# PLANNING APPLICATION GUIDE

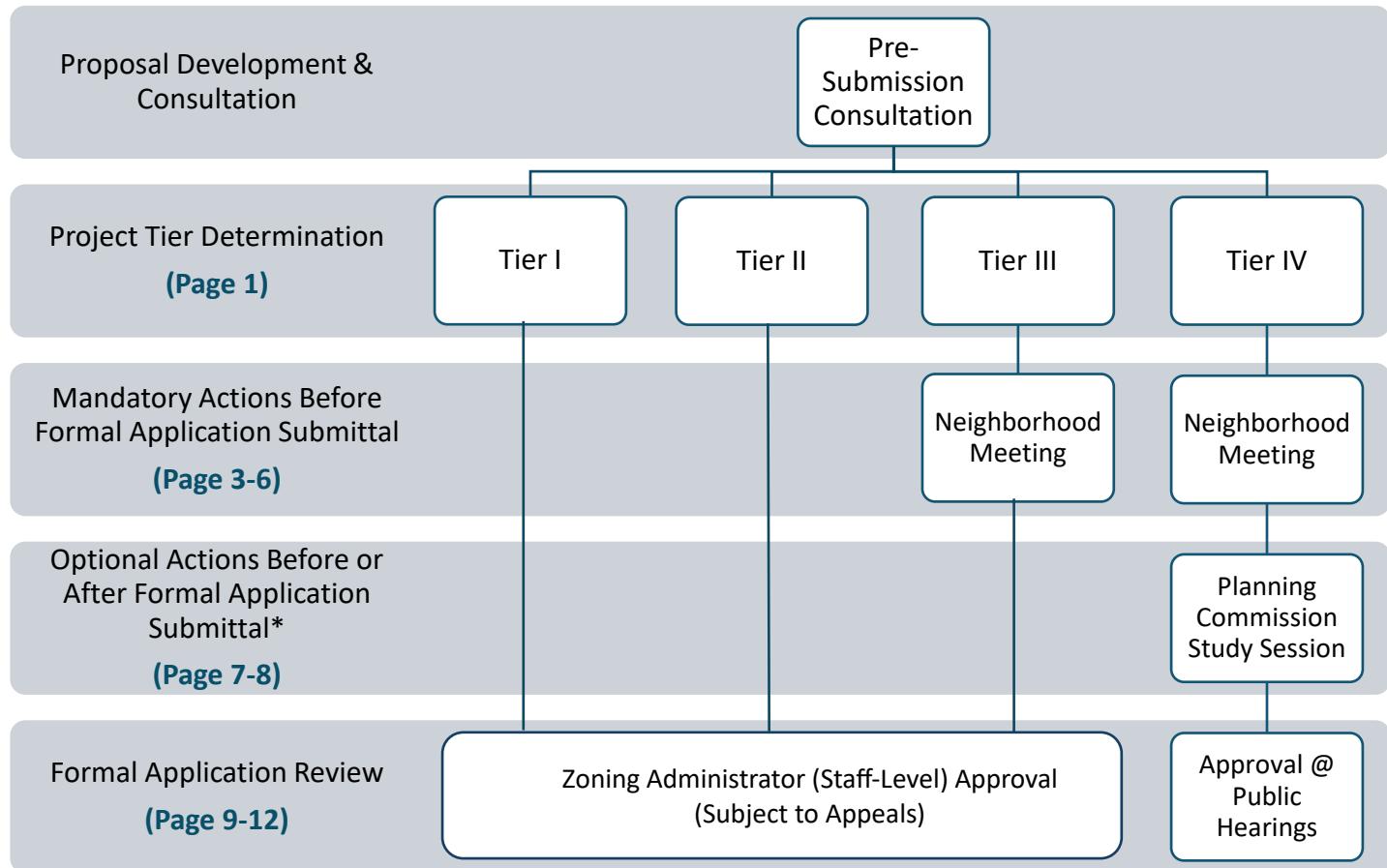
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Noticing Requirement		Project Type
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tier I:</b> <b>No Noticing Required</b> <b>(No action required before formal application – Go to Pages 11-12)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Detached accessory structures containing more than two plumbing fixtures (R1) <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Application Extension <input type="checkbox"/> Other minor site improvements (e.g. circular driveway or very minor improvement projects that don't qualify for Tiers II-III below)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tier II:</b> <b>Notice Radius - Adjacent Properties</b> <b>Approval Body: Zoning Administrator</b> <b>(Staff send out adjacent neighbor notice after planning application submission – Go to Pages 11 - 12)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New one-story single-family residence or existing residence alteration with a Special Use Permit (SUP) <input type="checkbox"/> Second story addition of 200 sq.ft. floor area or greater to a single-family residence, if it is not a substantial removal of existing residence under <a href="#">SMMC Section 27.18.035</a> <input type="checkbox"/> ADU Discretionary Review and any SB 9 Planning Application <input type="checkbox"/> Fence exception and fences over seven (7) feet in height <input type="checkbox"/> Extending a legal non-conforming wall within the setbacks (R1) <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas located in required front or street yards (R1) <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Use Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Site Development Permit for major vegetation removal or grading of 5,000 cy or less <input type="checkbox"/> Modification to previously approved projects other than Major Modification to projects previously approved by Planning Commission or City Council <input type="checkbox"/> Minor projects as determined by the Zoning Administrator (e.g. small non-residential projects relative to the size of the existing improvement)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tier III:</b> <b>Notice Radius - 500 feet</b> <b>Approval Body: Zoning Administrator</b> <b>(Applicants send out notice and hold neighborhood meeting prior to formal planning application submittal.</b> <b>Go to Pages 3-6 and 11-12)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New two-story single-family residence or existing residence alteration with a SUP <input type="checkbox"/> Alteration, addition, or demolition of a single-family residence designated as historic resource, eligible for historic designation, or located in historic districts <input type="checkbox"/> Up to twenty-five (25) dwelling units that meet objective design standards <input type="checkbox"/> Up to five (5) residential dwelling units that do not meet objective design standards <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 10,000 square feet of non- residential development <input type="checkbox"/> Variances for structures of single-family residences or duplex <input type="checkbox"/> Tentative Map without exceptions (Title 26 with exception of <a href="#">SMMC 26.68.010</a> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Tier IV:</b> <b>Notice Radius – 1,000 feet</b> <b>Approval Bodies: Planning Commission (PC) and/or City Council</b> <b>(Applicants send out neighborhood notice and hold neighborhood meeting prior to formal planning application submittal. Go to Page 3 – 12)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Use Permit not related to single-family residential development <input type="checkbox"/> Twenty-six (26) or more dwelling units that meet objective design standards <input type="checkbox"/> Six (6) or more dwelling units that do not meet objective design standards <input type="checkbox"/> New nonresidential projects or additions over 10,000 sq. ft. <input type="checkbox"/> Site Development Planning Application with grading >5,000 cy <input type="checkbox"/> Tentative Maps with exceptions ( <a href="#">SMMC 26.68.010</a> ) <input type="checkbox"/> Projects accompanied by a negative declaration or Environmental Impact Report <input type="checkbox"/> Release of conditions or easements recorded by the City <input type="checkbox"/> Major Modification to a previous Planning Commission/City Council approval <input type="checkbox"/> Variances for planning applications other than single-family residences or duplex <input type="checkbox"/> Planned sign districts and freestanding signs over eight feet in height <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Buildings exceeding 55 feet in height*</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Historic Building Survey Amendment and Demolition Permit*</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>City funded projects and Downtown Economic Development Permit*</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Zoning reclassification, planned development, general plan amendments*</b>

Note: Projects marked in bold font with \* symbol require City Council's review and approval

# Planning Application Road Map \*



\*Note: This Guide and its requirements are developed pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 65 (2024).

# Neighborhood Notification and Meeting Process

1.

Select the  
Virtual  
Neighborhood  
Meeting Date  
and Time

Note: **Please plan ahead** to ensure all steps are completed according to the timeline.

Meetings must be held at **Weeknight**: between 6-8 pm  
**Weekend**: between 12-6pm

Meetings **cannot be held** on the following dates:

- Holidays; during the week of Thanksgiving and December 15th-January 1<sup>st</sup>; or election days
- Evenings of City Council, Public Works Commission, or Planning Commission meetings (Please check the Commissions and Council webpages for an up-to-date calendar)
- Religious and cultural holidays

2.

Virtual Meeting  
Platform, Link,  
and Dial-in  
Phone Number

Meeting should be held via **Zoom**.

Create a weblink/URL to zoom.com/join, dial-in phone number, and access code to be included on the neighborhood noticing.

3.

Prepare Draft  
Meeting Notice  
and Plans

**Refer to the Neighborhood Meeting Notice Template**

**(Page 5)** and prepare the draft that includes the following:

- Detailed description of the proposed planning application and project scope.
- Applicant and/or property owner's name, phone, and emails
- Virtual meeting info (see Step 2)
- A Note stating the meeting would be recorded and the recorded video would be shared with the City via a publicly accessible link. The link is required to be valid until the end of the appeal period of the project

One 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 and/or website link to the full plans

4.

Planning  
Division  
Approval of  
Meeting Notice

Email the draft meeting notice and plans to [planning@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:planning@cityofsanmateo.org) for staff's approval and confirmation on the meeting date/time.

Within 2-3 days upon receipt of the notice, the city will provide written confirmation stating the draft notice is approved before copies of the proposed notice/plans are made. Revisions may be necessary. Without obtaining an approval before making copies, the applicant is responsible to redo the notice at their own expense.

# Neighborhood Notification and Meeting Process

5.

Purchase Mailing Addresses

Start from [Online Permit Center](https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4294/Online-Permit-Center) (<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4294/Online-Permit-Center>)  
→ [Portal](#) → [Apply](#) → [Planning Applications](#)  
→ [Apply Informational Neighborhood Meeting Labels](#) → [Create Account](#)  
→ [Obtain mailing list from Staff](#)

**Fee:** Per [Fee Schedule](#) or consult staff

6.

Deliver Notices

Make copies of the approved meeting notice and plans, based on the number of recipients on the mailing list. Then complete the following:

- Place each recipient's mailing address, the applicant's return address and a stamp onto envelopes.
- Insert the copies of the notice and plans in envelopes. (Do not copy the stamped draft notice from staff's approval - use an unstamp original)
- Seal and mail the envelopes at the Post Office or a USPS.
- Ensure that **all envelopes shall be postmarked at least 10 calendar days** before the Neighborhood Meeting.

7.

Hold and Record the Neighborhood Meetings

Minimal Length  
**Tier III Projects:** 40 mins  
**Tier IV Projects:** 1 hour

Staff attendance is optional

Applicant shall hold the meeting per the following requirements. **Any deviations from the requirements may require that the meeting notices be mailed a second time and a second meeting be held.**

## Neighborhood Meeting Requirements

- Agenda:** Applicant presents the project, followed by discussion between all participants.
- Conduct the following tasks during and after the meeting and submit the required documents with formal planning application submittal:**
- Statement of Completion of Meeting Notice and Affidavit (Page 5 of [Planning Application Guide](#)) – This item is recommended to be uploaded to Portal under the NIN record after the neighborhood meeting
- A list of the meeting attendees, their addresses, and contact information.
- A list of the comments made at the meeting, and any written correspondence submitted at or before/after the meeting (see template on Page 6).
- Applicants shall record the meeting and share the recorded video with staff via a publicly accessible link. Certain project links will be uploaded on the projects' [What's Happening](#) webpages.

# Sample Meeting Notice (Tier III and IV Projects)

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL INFORMATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING  
RELATED TO A PROPOSED PROJECT AT  
ADDRESS

You are invited to attend a virtual neighborhood meeting with (insert name of property owners or the applicants) to discuss a proposal for (insert detailed description of the proposed project, including the required planning application types (ex: Single-Family Dwelling Design Review (SFDDR), Site Plan and Architectural Review (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) online at: [www.zoom.us/join](http://www.zoom.us/join)

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

- Or -

Enter the meeting by phone by dialing: (###) ####-####

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

*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 (for Tier III project)/1000 feet (for Tier IV project) – (select the one that apply) of the project site have been mailed this notice. This meeting will be recorded and shared with the City via a recorded video link. (Add this sentence for Tier IV project: City staff will upload the video link to the project's What's Happening webpage.) 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.

# Sample Meeting Minutes (Tier III and IV Projects)

## NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING SUMMARY

ADDRESS

Month, Date, Year

**PLANNING APPLICATION:** Project Description

**PROJECT LOCATION:** XXX

**MEETING DATE/TIME:** XXX

**MEETING LOCATION:** XXX

**ZOOM LINK:** XXX

**MEETING RECORDING LINK:** XXX

**ATTENDEES:** Approximately XX members of the community signed in (see sign- in sheet for participants)

**APPLICANTS AND/OR TEAM:** XXXX

### **PURPOSE OF MEETING:**

Neighborhood meeting to share information on the project proposal and for neighbors to ask questions and provide feedback.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

XXX opened the meeting and presented the project description, site plan, elevations, and tree removal plan. The project is XXXX (provide a brief introduction of the project).

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:**

1. **Q:** (e.g.) The proposed building appears to be out of scale to the neighborhood. Is it possible to reduce the proposed massing?  
**A:** XXX.
2. **Q:** XXX?  
**A:** XXX.
3. **Q:** XXX?  
**A:** XXX.
4. **Q:** XXX?  
**A:** XXX.

\*Note: The submitted meeting summary may be uploaded to the projects' [What's Happening Webpage](#) for Tier IV and certain Tier III projects.

# Planning Commission Study Session

The Planning Commission Study session helps the Commission identify issues they want addressed prior to the formal hearing process for the project, and helps the applicants revise and further develop the proposal based on early input from the Commission and the public.

## Whether to Request a Planning Commission Study Session?

- It is optional for Tier IV projects.
- Should the applicant choose not to schedule the optional study session, the Zoning Administrator has the authority to determine, whether the project necessitates a Planning Commission Study Session after the formal planning application.
- Housing projects, as defined by the California Housing Accountability Act, and non-Tier IV projects would not typically require a Planning Commission study session.

## Applicants' Responsibilities:

- **Additional Noticing Requirements:** The applicant must post placards prepared by staff on the project site at least ten (10) calendar days before the meeting.
- **Presentation at the Study Session:** Applicant is scheduled to make a short (5-10 minutes) presentation after staff's presentation and to respond to questions from the Planning Commission. The Commissioners will provide individual comments on the project for future consideration and revision.

## Timing:

The applicant may request the Planning Commission Study Session before or after the formal planning application submission.

### Procedures – BEFORE formal application

- If the applicant requests the study session prior to the neighborhood meeting, staff is able to assist with selecting both meeting dates and mail and email a combined notice for both meetings. No need to purchase separate mailing list for the neighborhood meeting.
- Staff will schedule the Planning Commission study session typically within 90 days upon the request.
- Preliminary plans are acceptable (see Page 8).
- Staff will route the project to other divisions (Public Works, etc.) and will prepare a comment letter.
- Staff will prepare an agenda report analyzing significant issues and will publish the report prior to the study session.
- Applicants can revise or further develop the plans for formal application.

### Procedures – AFTER formal application

- Application submittal follows the checklist of planning application.
- Staff will route the project to all divisions for a thorough review and provide a comprehensive incomplete letter within the 30-day review period.
- Staff schedule the Planning Commission study session within 90 days upon the request from the applicant or the Zoning Administrator and will mail out appropriate meeting notice.
- Staff will prepare a staff report highlighting significant issues and will publish the report prior to the meeting.
- Applicants can work with staff on the formal application simultaneously before the study session.



## Required Materials for Optional Planning Commission Study Session Prior to Formal Planning Application

- Planning Application Form.** This application must be signed by all current property owner(s).
- Preliminary title report** that is no more than a year old, showing the current property owner(s).
- Payment** of the deposit per the Fee Schedule or consult with the Development Review Technician at the City.
- Written Description** of the Proposed Project on the cover sheet of the plan set. For multi-family residential projects, please indicate whether the applicant wants to subdivide the property, including the creation of condominium units, with the formal planning application. A Tentative Parcel Map or Tentative Map is required.
- Preliminary plans** including, at a minimum, an existing and proposed site plan, exterior elevations of all sides of the proposed buildings with dimensions, proposed floor plans with dimensions, colored renderings, and tree removal plans. A digital submittal is preferred through a single PDF of the plans with a file size no larger than 10 MB. If a hard copy submittal is made, provide 6-8 bound and folded sets of full-size project plans, including CD or flash drive (will not be returned) with a single PDF file of the plans no larger than 10 MB.
- Completed Density Bonus & BMR Unit Information Request Form and written justification for developments consisting of 5 or more residential units, or projects seeking the State Density Bonus program.
- Tenant Relocation Assistance/Allowance & Replacement Housing Information:**
  - Documentation of rental or ownership status for the existing dwelling units
  - Unit size (bedroom count)
  - Monthly rental rates at the time of the planning application submittal in accordance with San Mateo Municipal Code Section 27.02.180.

# Planning Application Procedures

There are three different decision-making bodies for Planning Applications in the City of San Mateo (Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission and City Council). The approval body is determined based on the application type and size of the project. To determine the approval body for each project, please refer to Page 1 of this document or consult with a planner.

## PROCEDURES BEFORE PROJECTS ARE DEEMED COMPLETE

1

### Tier I and II Projects:

Submit the planning applications to the City online per Planning Application Submittal Requirements.

### Tier III Projects:

Refer to Pages 3-6 of this guide to complete the notice and neighborhood meeting. **Applicant shall submit the planning application per the checklist to the city no later than 60 calendar days of meeting.**

### Tier IV Projects:

If the applicant decides not to request a Planning Commission study session before formal application, follow the above instruction for Tier III projects. If the applicant decides to request the study session before formal application, refer to Pages 7-8 of this guide to complete the process before the formal application. **Applicant shall submit the planning application per the checklist to the city no later than 6 months of meeting.**

2

Project review by the City Development Review Board for code compliance, CEQA status, and preparation of Incomplete Letter (within 30 calendar days of submittal). If the application is deemed incomplete, an incomplete letter is sent to the applicant with detailed comments from all reviewing City departments.

3

### Tier IV Projects Only:

If the applicant or the Zoning Administrator request a Planning Commission Study Session after the formal application submittal, the meeting will be scheduled after the first 30-day incomplete letter.

If the applicant fails to provide response in 120 days, the planning application is closed out due to inactivity unless an extension request is granted.

5

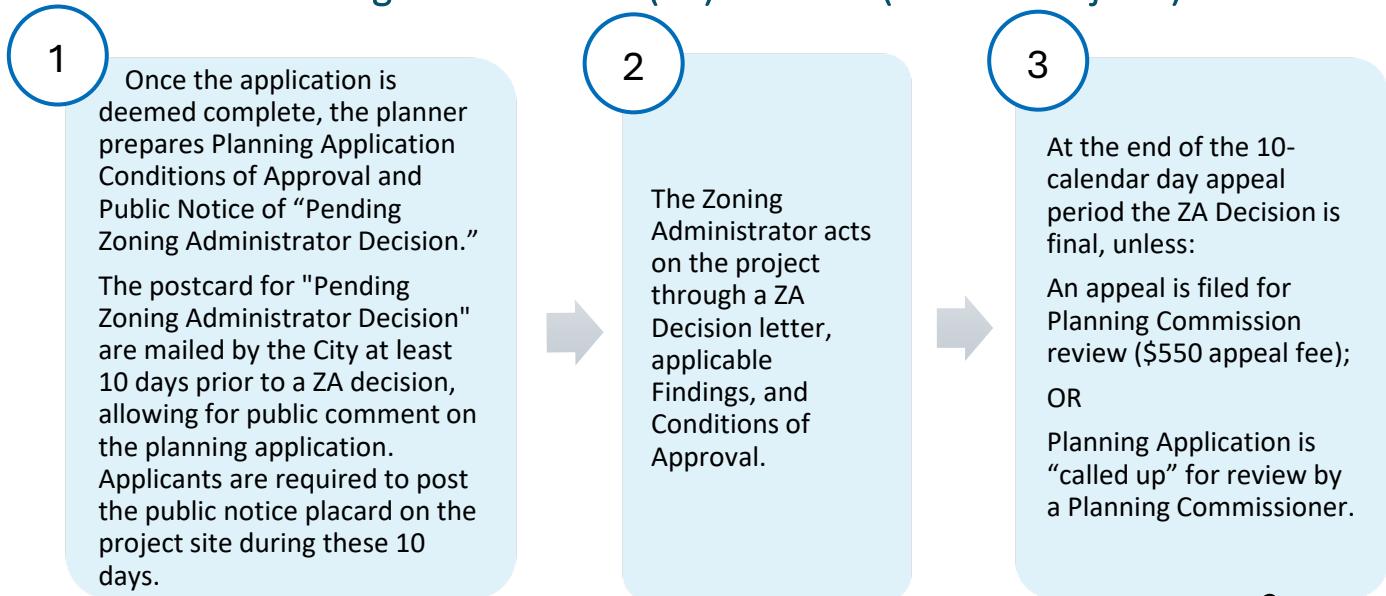
If an **Initial Study/Negative Declaration** are required for the project pursuant to CEQA, additional processing time is required for the preparation and public review of these environmental documents. The public Notice of Availability and Intent to Adopt the Negative Declaration is mailed by the City. The public review period for the environmental document is 20 – 30 calendar days.

4

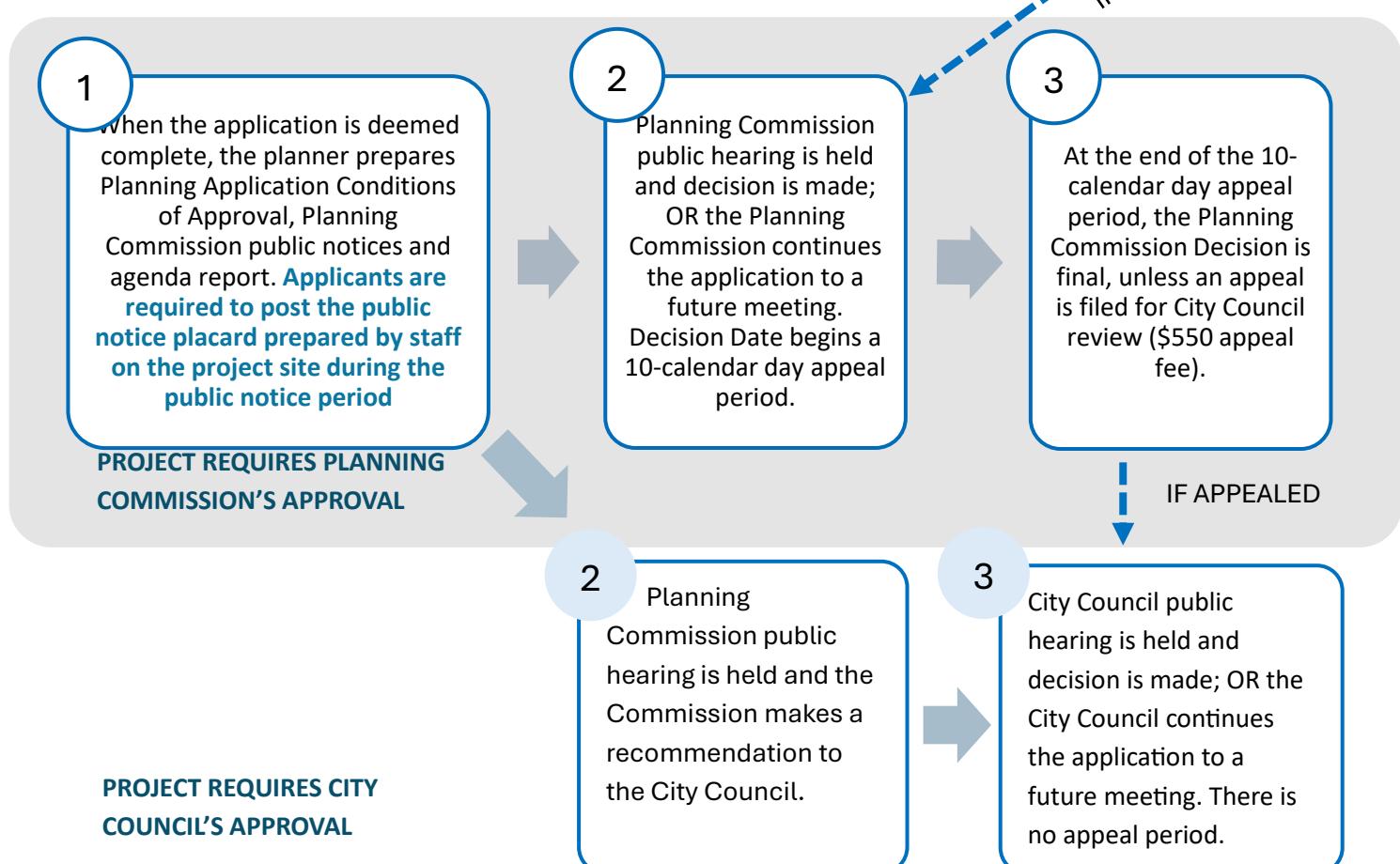
If incomplete, applicant resubmits revised plans/additional information and there is a subsequent review by City staff; preparation of revised Incomplete Letter within 30 calendar days of re-submittal. *Multiple rounds of resubmittals may be required before planning application is complete. Each round may take up to 30 calendar days. Applicant is responsible for resubmittal within 120 days.*

## PROCEDURES AFTER PROJECTS ARE DEEMED COMPLETE

### Zoning Administrator (ZA) Decision (Tier I-III Projects)



### Planning Commission and/or City Council Decision (Tier IV)





# FILE FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS FOR DIGITAL PLAN SUBMITTAL

To ensure an efficient and successful digital plan submittal process, **only submittals following the below file formatting requirements will proceed through digital review.** These requirements are for file formatting only, for further information on requirements when preparing plans and documents for plan review, please see the "Plan Submittal Checklist" at the city web site.

## Submittal Requirements

- Please combine plans into a single file. Each sheet shall not be submitted as a separate file. See file naming conventions below.
- Only files for the current submittal are to be provided. If your project is a resubmittal, do not include files from the original submission.
- Files must be unlocked and not password protected. Zip files are not accepted.

## Formatting Requirements are Outlined Below:

1. **PDF or PDF/A** - Digital documents must be PDF (portable document format) or PDF/A, compatible with Adobe Acrobat Version 10 or higher.
  - **Exported PDFs required for most projects** - Drawing files shall be first generation vector-based PDF's which have been directly converted from the computer aided drafting (CAD) applications (e.g. AutoCAD, ArchiCAD, MicroStation, TurboCAD etc.) in which they were created. PDFs of scanned documents are accepted only for supporting/reference documents or hand-drawn plans for single-family additions or alterations at 150dpi to 300dpi for acceptable legibility and file size.
  - **Scanned or non-searchable PDF exports**: Apply Optical Character Recognition to your documents
  - **Separate sub-trade PDFs** - Create a separate PDF for each sub-trade or plan review item; see reverse.
  - **Supporting documents** - Calculations, reports, etc. must be separated from the plan sheets in a separate file(s).
  - **Drawings** - All layer of information and comments must be removed and flattened into a single layer.
2. **Unsecured setting** - Choose "unsecured" on your security settings for plan reviewers' mark-ups.
3. **Landscape and upright orientation** - All drawings must uniformly use landscape and upright orientation where the top of the pages are at the top of the monitor. All supplemental information must be oriented upright in either portrait or landscape orientation.
4. **Scale, legibility and color** - Plans shall be drawn to scale, fully dimensioned, and legible. Do not apply color to differentiate linework on the plans; instead use symbols, hatches, line-type, and line-weights to relay information. Include a legend that defines all symbols.

## File Naming Conventions:

Use these conventions for naming all files. Use hyphens and spaces in the name: C#-[File Name].PDF

Multiple hyphens and spaces can be included in a file name. Do not include project number, street address, or property owner's name in file name.

**C#** - This is the submission cycle number where **C1** = first submittal; **C2** = second submittal; each subsequent resubmittal becomes **C3, C4, C5** etc.

**File Name** – short description of the plans and required materials as applicable to your project:

Plan Set	Title Report	Planning Application Forms
Project Description	Address Assignment Application	Neighborhood Meeting Documents
Arborist Report	Tree Evaluation Schedule	Tree Planting Form
Density Bonus Form	Density Bonus Letter	Tenant Relocation Documents
Geotechnical Report	Phases I and II Report	Lead and Asbestos Survey
Archaeological Report	Historic Resources Evaluation	Historic Compliance Report
Noise and Vibration Report	Air Quality Assessment Report	Greenhouse Gas Emission Report
Traffic Impact Analyses	CCAG Checklist	Variance Request Form
Traffic Demand Plan	MTC Checklist	

The following information can be included in the plan set:

Site Photos	Material Board	Renderings/Photo Simulations
Site Survey	Tentative / Condominium Map	Floor Area Calculation
CC Notice +date	PC Notice +date	PCSS Notice +date
Bi-fold Postcard Notice +date	Adjacent Neighbor Notice +date	ZA Decision Notice +date
SB 9 Notice +date	Tree Evaluation Schedule	Tree Planting Form