



Preliminary Review

City of San Diego
Development Services Department
1222 First Avenue, MS 501, San Diego, CA 92101-4101

INFORMATION
BULLETIN

513

July 2017

This information bulletin describes the Preliminary Review service we offer to our customers. This service 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 review.

Preliminary Review is not a comprehensive plan review, nor is it intended to replace the services provided by design professionals (architects, engineers, land use attorneys, code consultants, etc.).

Before considering the preliminary review service, you should begin your project planning by obtaining your Parcel Information, (DS-302). This Parcel Information is an important tool that will assist you in determining the City of San Diego's planning, zoning, and/or building regulations that apply to your project. Additional information is referenced in the Land Development Manual, Project Submittal Requirements, Section 1 (Guide to Project Submittal Process). By evaluating this information PRIOR to designing your project, you can avoid mistakes early in the process, save time, and reduce processing costs. The Parcel Information can be obtained at the self-help computer on the 3rd floor of the Development Services Department or by faxing the request to (619)446-5050.

You may also obtain information from our Development and Permit Information staff (appointments recommended). The Development and Permit Information team has the resources available to determine the regulations applicable to your property and proposed development, to identify your property's zoning, to answer general land use and building code (electrical, mechanical, fire, etc.) questions. They can also help you evaluate your options of requesting preliminary review service or going directly to formal submittal based upon the nature and complexity of your project, and to understand the documents you need to submit for whatever service choice you make.

Documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- San Diego Municipal Code, [\(SDMC\) Section 143.0910](#)
- Land Development Manual, [Project Submittal Requirements](#)
- Parcel Information, [DS-302](#)
- Affordable Housing Requirements Checklist, [DS-530](#)
- Deposit Account/Financially Responsible Party, [DS-3242](#)

I. PRELIMINARY REVIEW

Through preliminary review, you can obtain general information on the regulations with which your project must comply, find out which permits you must obtain, the review process that applies to your development, and obtain interpretations on how the City will apply code provisions to specific situations. Staff responses to your specific questions will be documented. The service is tailored to your specific project information needs and your knowledge of the City's development requirements and processes. Preliminary Review is a limited service, and staff has a fixed number of hours to answer your questions. The information provided to you during preliminary review is valid for one year from the date of the correspondence, except if 1) the code on which this information is based is changed; 2) emergency legislation is enacted by City Council; or 3) there is a change in the project scope. Our goal is to give you the information you need to make informed decisions about how to proceed with the design of your project.

Preliminary Review is a voluntary, fee-based service. This service is offered prior to your formal submittal to the City for required permits and reviews. You will need to formally submit plans to Development Services for a complete plan review and approval before permit issuance.

II. PRELIMINARY REVIEW OPTIONS

There are two Preliminary Review options:

A. Single Discipline Preliminary Review

When your questions are best answered by only one discipline, your project could be a candidate for single discipline preliminary review. For example, steep hillside issues would be addressed by Planning Review; means of egress by Structural; grading permits by Engineering Review, etc. The Preliminary Review questionnaire and all documents will be taken in and routed to the discipline(s) based upon your specific policy question and interpretations listed in item B.15. When listing your specific questions in item B.15, keep in mind that Preliminary Review is a limited service, is not a plan check, and staff has a fixed number of hours to answer your questions.

If your questions involve more than one discipline, you have the option of submitting separate questionnaires for each discipline. Keep in mind that single discipline preliminary review does not include coordination of review between disciplines. You will be required to pay a single discipline preliminary review fee for each single discipline preliminary review.

Your project will then be assigned to a reviewer who will prepare a written response to your questions approximately five (5) working days after the submittal date. Additional charges and extended review times will be applied for more complex projects. The discipline supervisor will contact the applicant to inform them of additional fees and extended turnaround times for these complex projects.

B. Multiple Discipline Preliminary Review

When your questions and the information requested involve more than one discipline for review, the project is considered a multiple discipline preliminary review, where coordination of the review between disciplines is

requested. A Development Project Manager is assigned to all applications submitted for multiple discipline preliminary review.

Based upon the information you provide and the specific questions you ask on the attached Preliminary Review questionnaire, the Development Project Manager coordinates the staff team from the most appropriate staff to fulfill the needs of your Preliminary Review. The Development Project Manager will coordinate the reviewer's written responses to your specific issues and forward them to the applicant approximately 15 working days after the submittal date. The response will include submittal requirements, schedules and processing costs, as appropriate for your project.

III. PRELIMINARY REVIEW MEETING

Additionally, you may request a preliminary review meeting with reviewer(s) to discuss the results of the preliminary review. For single discipline preliminary reviews, an additional fee is required for this meeting, based upon an hourly rate for each staff person requested to attend the meeting. This request may be made after receiving the preliminary review written response. The assigned Development Project Manager will schedule the meeting for multiple discipline preliminary reviews. Single discipline preliminary review meetings are scheduled with the reviewer.

IV. WHAT DO I NEED TO SUBMIT FOR PRELIMINARY REVIEW?

Appointments for submittal are recommended and can be made by calling (619)446-5300. Walk-in services are also available. Check in at the Development Services Department, 3rd floor, 1222 First Avenue. At Project Submittal, you will be asked to provide the following:

A. Preliminary Review Questionnaire**B. Documents**

Submit any documents that you believe

will help staff to understand your proposed development and the current condition of your property (see Item F of the questionnaire for suggestions). The completeness and depth of our response to your specific information requests will depend largely on the amount and detail of the information that you provide to us. It will benefit your preliminary review if you carefully consider the information you are seeking and adjust the documents and level of detail provided accordingly (e.g., for exiting questions, provide a fully dimensioned and detailed exiting analysis). Plans with 6 sheets or less may be bound (stapled) and folded to 8 ½ x 11 with the Title Block facing out. Plans with 7-19 sheets must be folded separately to 8 ½ x 11 with the Title Block facing out. Plans with 20 or more sheets may be bound (stapled) and tri-folded.

C. Deposit Account / Financially Responsible Party, DS-3242, for Multiple Discipline Preliminary Review

When you are requesting a single discipline preliminary review, you only need to submit one set of documents with the Preliminary Review questionnaire. Submit a minimum of twelve (12) copies of the completed questionnaire and documents you deem necessary for multiple discipline preliminary review. In limited situations, additional copies may be required. Where this is required, staff assigned to your project will contact you directly to secure the additional copies.

V. FEE / DEPOSIT

There are examples of how to format fees in your bulletin.

A. Multiple Discipline Preliminary Review

(Deposit / Mapping Fee / Records Fee)

A Trust Fund account is established with an initial deposit. This initial deposit is drawn against to pay for the review of your project. During project review, the Financially Responsible Party (as identified on the Deposit Account / Financially Responsible Party Form, DS-3242) will receive a monthly

deposit statement reflecting the charges made against the account.

The Financially Responsible Party may receive invoices for additional deposits for subsequent reviews of the project in order to maintain the minimum balance as shown below. The payment of this invoice will be required in order to continue processing your project. At the end of the project, any remaining funds will be returned to the Financially Responsible Party.

1. Deposit

Initial Deposit\$5,000
Subsequent
Review / Minimum Balance\$3,000

2. Mapping Fee

This fee is charged when there are plans, drawings, maps or other geographical documents utilized for project review.

Mapping Fee.....\$10

3. Records Fee

This fee is assessed for imaging and archiving the documents in records.

Single Family Duplex\$45
Non-Residential / Multi-Family.....\$60

B. Single Discipline Preliminary Review

(Review Fee / Mapping Fee / Records Fee)

Reviews exceeding four hours will be invoiced an additional hourly fee after consulting with the applicant.

1. Review

Review Fee\$894

2. Mapping Fee

This fee is charged when there are plans, drawings, maps or other geographical documents utilized for project review.

Mapping Fee.....\$10

3. Records Fee

This fee is assessed for imaging and archiving the documents in records.

Single Family Duplex\$45
Non-Residential / Multi-Family.....\$60



City of San Diego
Development Services
1222 First Ave., MS-XXX
San Diego, CA 92101

Preliminary Review Questionnaire

Project No. _____

Below is typical information needed for preliminary review. Detailed and specific information provided will facilitate the project review process. It is **MANDATORY** to complete the following and, if not applicable, please indicate N/A. Incomplete information will delay processing of your request. Please print legibly or type. Attach additional sheets to provide more information, if necessary.

Review Type:

☐ Single Discipline Preliminary Review ☐ Multiple Discipline Preliminary Review

A. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____ E-mail Address: _____

B. GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Address _____

2. Assessor's Parcel Number(s) (APN): _____ Parcel Size _____

3. Legal Description: _____

4. Existing Use: _____

5. Proposed Use (check all that apply):

☐ Single Dwelling ☐ Multiple Dwelling (Number of Units: _____)
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Scientific Research ☐ Office ☐ Other

Describe the use:

6. Project Description _____

7. Describe project background (what and when was the last development activity on the site):	
8. List all permits/approvals related to the project (e.g., board of appeals approvals, lot tie agreements, easement agreements, building restricted easements, development permits, policy approvals, subdivision approvals, or other special agreements with the city), if any:	
9. Does the project include new construction?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, what is the proposed Height/Number of Building Stories:	
10. Does the project include an interior remodel (tenant improvement)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
11. List any requested permits, actions or approvals:	
12. Are you requesting a determination on whether the site has potential historic resources?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If this is your only request, you do not need to complete the rest of this Questionnaire. Stop here and provide the following:	
a. Building Record (Residential or Commercial) Please call the County of San Diego Assessor's Office at (858) 505-6262 to verify where your Building Record is located.	
b. Notice of Completion Notice of Completion is normally found at the County Administration Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, Room 103, San Diego CA 92101. If a Notice of Completion cannot be located, add the following note on the Building Record: "Notice of Completion cannot be located."	
c. Photographic Survey A photographic survey of the property should consist of color photographs of each elevation of each building on the site, a view of the front of the building or structure from the street and photographs of any additional details relevant to the project. A photographic survey key should be included as well. These photographs should be provided printed in color AND digitally on a CD.	
d. In lieu of 12.a. through 12.c above, a site specific historic survey may be provided.	
13. Are you requesting a "Will Serve Letter"?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
For which service? <input type="checkbox"/> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater	
If the "Will Serve Letter" is your only request, you do not need to complete the rest of this questionnaire.	
14. Are you requesting Cancellation of a Development Permit? If so, you must first determine that the project was built in conformance with all of the use and development regulations that applied to the site at the time of approval [126.0110 (b) (1)]. Once you have made this determination, please include with your application a letter from the applicant to Development Services Department attesting to that fact. If this is your only request, you do not need to complete the rest of this questionnaire.	

15. List specific policy questions, issues, or items needing clarification (attach a separate sheet, if necessary). Please include all supporting and necessary documents to enable staff to respond to your question (plans, calculations, reports, surveys, analysis, etc. See item F of this questionnaire for additional suggestions).
-
-
-
-

C. SINGLE DISCIPLINE PRELIMINARY REVIEW (Do NOT use for Multi-Preliminary Reviews)

A brief explanation of the Development Services Department and some Planning Department Divisions areas of plan review responsibility is provided below. Please use this information to determine which discipline(s) you would like to answer your specific questions, issues or items needing clarification. Project Submittal staff will distribute the review based upon your response to item B.15 and Part C.

- ☐ **Combined Review:** Reviews projects for water and sewer requirements, energy conservation requirements for single family residences and California Residential Code compliance for room additions.
- ☐ **Community Planning:** Reviews discretionary projects for consistency with policy documents (e.g., Community Plan, Local Coast Plan, General Plan, etc.) for process 3 Site Development Permit for Community Plan Implementation Overlay Area B and all Process 4 - 5 decisions.
- ☐ **Drainage & Grades:** Reviews ministerial grading and public right-of-way projects for conformance with policies and standards.
- ☐ **Electrical:** Reviews construction permit projects for compliance with the California Electrical Code and the lighting requirements of the California Energy Efficiency Standards.
- ☐ **Engineering Review:** Reviews all projects to determine public improvement and grading permit requirements including conformance with storm water and special flood hazard area regulations.
- ☐ **Environmental Analysis:** Provides interpretation on project related environmental issues based on the applicant's project description (note: it is usually not possible to determine the type of environmental document required during the preliminary review process). Determines need for site-specific survey and location of potential historical resources.
- ☐ **Facilities Financing:** Assess permits for Facilities Benefit Assessments (FBA), Development Impact Fees (DIF), Housing Trust Fund Fees (HTF), and Regional Transportation Congestion Improvement Program Fees (RTCIP).
- ☐ **Fire Alarm:** Reviews projects for fire alarm systems compliance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code and applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.
- ☐ **Fire Plan Review:** Reviews project for fire department access roadways and hydrant design and locations compliance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code.
- ☐ **Geology:** Reviews projects for geotechnical compliance with the California Building Code and Land Development Code.
- ☐ **Hazardous Materials:** Reviews projects for occupancy classification, control areas, and for any special hazard when hazardous materials are used or stored in compliance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code.
- ☐ **Historical Resources:** Applicants can seek early input from Historical Resources Board staff about whether the proposed modifications to designated or potentially historical sites are in compliance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the treatment of Historic Properties. Submit information required in B.12 above, in addition to plans for the proposed modifications.

E. DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AND POLICY APPROVAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Respond to the following questions if your preliminary review will include issues involving land use or property development regulations, such as subdivisions, use permits land use plan amendments, etc.

1. Which Community Planning area is the project located within?
2. Will the request include a Community Plan Amendment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please describe the amendment:
3. What is the base zone of the project premise (include the name of the Planned District, if applicable)?
4. Does the project site have any structures that are over forty-five years old? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Could the premises be historically significant for any reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, please explain:
6. Is your project located in an area of sensitive biological resources, the City's Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA), a wetland area, etc? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Will your project generate new storm water runoff? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Will there be a request for Rezone? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If Yes, what zone is proposed?
9. Proposed Parking Ratio:
10. List any deviation or variance requests:

F. SUGGESTED DOCUMENTS TO PROVIDE

- In addition to this completed questionnaire, the following materials may be necessary for distribution to the Preliminary Review Team.
1. A site analysis which includes the following information:
 - a. Conditions and land uses surrounding the site.
 - b. Circulation system in the neighborhood.
 - c. Topography of the site and of neighboring property.
 - d. Drainage patterns.
 - e. Soil types.
 - f. Location and identification of existing vegetation.
 - g. Existing use of the site and the location and size of any existing structures.
 - h. Location of existing utilities (water, sewer, drainage).
 - i. View corridors to and from the site.
 - j. Known easements on and adjacent to the property.
 2. A conceptual site plan of the proposed development on the site, with all property lines shown and dimensioned.
 3. Preliminary elevations and sections, as needed, to explain the proposed development.
 4. Existing and proposed contours.
 5. Known issues unique to the site or the community.
 6. Vicinity Map
 7. Structural Calculations
 8. Disabled Accessibility Plans
 9. Geotechnical Report/Soils Report

- ☐ **Landscaping:** Reviews projects for compliance with the Land Development Code for Landscaping and Brush Management Requirements.
- ☐ **Map Check:** Reviews Final Maps, Parcels maps, Lot Line Adjustments, Dedications, Easements, Certificates of Correction, Certificates of Compliance and other record drawings. Reviews applications for public right-of-way vacations and easement abandonments.
- ☐ **Mechanical:** Reviews projects for compliance with the California Mechanical Code and the California Energy Efficiency Standards.
- ☐ **Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP):** Reviews projects for compliance with MSCP.
- ☐ **Noise:** Reviews projects for compliance with the Land Development Code and Title 24 noise transmission control requirements.
- ☐ **Open Space / Park Development:** Reviews all projects for open space dedication requirements and impacts to open space.
- ☐ **Planning Review:** Reviews all discretionary projects for compliance with land use and property development regulations of the Land Development Code and ministerial projects within Planned Districts and some overlay zones. Reviews discretionary projects for consistency with policy documents (e.g., Community Plan, Local Coastal Plan, General Plan, etc.)
- ☐ **Smoke Control:** Reviews projects for smoke control system compliance with the California Building Code.
- ☐ **Street Lights / Traffic Safety:** Reviews ministerial projects for compliance with street lighting, traffic control and other traffic safety issues. Issues traffic control permits.
- ☐ **Structural:** Reviews projects for compliance with the California Building Code (e.g., means of egress, disabled accessibility, occupancy classification, type of construction, allowable areas, fire resistive construction, structural systems and design regulations).
- ☐ **Suppression:** Reviews projects for fire sprinkler systems, special extinguishing systems, and kitchen hood systems compliance with the California Building Code and California Fire Code and applicable National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.
- ☐ **Telecom-WCF (Wireless Communication Facility):** Reviews projects for compliance with land use and development regulations of the Land Development Code and for Spectrum Act Applications.
- ☐ **Transportation Development:** Performs discretionary reviews and reviews traffic studies for parking and right-of-way requirements.
- ☐ **Water / Wastewater:** Reviews discretionary projects for water and wastewater issues. Reviews ministerial grading and public right-of-way permits for impacts to water and wastewater facilities. Prepares Will-Serve letters. Reviews/approves Water and Sewer Studies.
- ☐ **Zoning Review:** Reviews projects for compliance with Land Development Code requirements for City-wide zones (see also Planning Review), including sign regulations.

D. CONSTRUCTION PERMITS PROJECT INFORMATION

Respond to the following questions if your preliminary review will include issues involving construction permits, such as building, grading or public right-of-way permits.

1. Will the existing/proposed building be sprinkled? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Have you done a means of egress analysis (If yes, provide plans.) ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Type of Construction (per CBC): Existing Proposed
4. Occupancy Classification (per CBC): Existing Proposed
5. Square footage of building: Existing Proposed
6. Has the site been previously graded? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Provide the earthwork quantities for proposed grading (cut, fill, import, export, in cubic yards):
8. What are the proposed public improvements?