



City of Santa Barbara

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM (DART) INFORMATIONAL PACKET

- A Guide to the Discretionary Review / Development Application Review Team (DART) Process
- Planning Commission & Staff Hearing Officer Purview
- Planning Commission & Staff Hearing Officer Flow Chart

Resources such as the General Plan, the Santa Barbara Municipal Code (SBMC), handouts, guidelines, Street and Planning Files (a.k.a. Land Development Team (LDT) Record Archives), parcel and case information can be found online via links on our [Planning Central](http://www.SantaBarbaraCa.Gov/PlanningCentral) page at <http://www.SantaBarbaraCa.Gov/PlanningCentral>.

Archive plans (available upon request) and Street and Planning files can also be reviewed at the Records and Archives Counter (located at 630 Garden St., (805) 564-5554).

Questions regarding application submittal contents and process can be answered at the Planning and Zoning Counter at 630 Garden St., (805) 564-5578, or, if you are working with a specific staff member, by appointment with that Case Planner at (805) 564-5470. Please note that we are closed every other Friday (refer to the <http://www.SantaBarbaraCa.Gov/Calendar/> for closure dates).

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City of Santa Barbara

A GUIDE TO THE DISCRETIONARY REVIEW / DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM (DART) PROCESS

The City's Development Application Review Team (DART) Process is just one step in the overall discretionary review process (see below for a list of all steps involved). Refer to the Planning Commission and Staff Hearing Officer Flow Chart for a graphical depiction of this process.

The following types of projects are subject to the City's DART Process.

- Annexations
- Coastal Development Permits (CDP)
- Conditional Use Permits (CUP)
- Conditional Certificates of Compliance
- Development Plan Approvals (DPA) (as required by the Zoning Ordinance)
- General Plan Amendments
- Hotel Conversion Permit
- Lot Line Adjustments (LLA)
- Modifications when other discretionary actions are required
- Public Street Waivers
- Rezones
- Specific Plans
- Tentative Subdivision Maps (TSM)
- Transfer of Existing Development Rights (TEDRs > 1,000 sq. ft.)
- Variances

A typical project requiring discretionary approval will follow these steps:

STEP 1: DESIGNING YOUR PROJECT – Early in the process of designing a project or planning a new business in an existing building, you should consult with Planning Staff to find out what Zoning Ordinance regulations are applicable, what types of permits may be needed, and what fees are required. For projects involving the addition of non-residential floor area, it is important to determine at the beginning of the process if square footage is available to a lot dependent on past allocations and location of the lot in the City, per SBMC Chapter 28.85, the Nonresidential Growth Management Ordinance.

Copies of the Zoning Ordinance, zoning maps, General Plan, Coastal Plan, Coastal Act, application forms, fee schedules, submittal requirements, and other information are available at the Planning Division Public Counter at 630 Garden Street or on the City's [Planning Central](#) web page.

Tip: Planning staff is available to answer questions at the Planning Counter, or by scheduling a Planner Consultation.

STEP 2: PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW – Certain types of projects require a Pre-Application Review Team (PRT) submittal. Refer to the "[PRT Submittal Requirements](#)" handout for a list of projects that **require** a PRT.

Tip: A PRT is recommended for **any** project that may have planning issues.

STEP 3: DESIGN REVIEW: CONCEPTUAL – Conceptual review by the applicable design

review board (Architectural Board of Review (ABR), Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) or Single Family Design Board (SFDB)) is required prior to consideration by the Planning Commission or Staff Hearing Officer (SHO). Noticing requirements include the posting of a yellow sign (provided by the City) on the property at least 10 days prior to any noticed hearing. Conceptual review shall generally take place no more than six (6) months prior to the date of the submission of a formal DART application (Step 4 below).

Prior to a formal action by the Planning Commission or SHO, the design review board shall provide comments on the project. In addition, for projects reviewed by the HLC or ABR, the design review board must provide comments on the compatibility criteria (SBMC §22.22.145.B and §22.68.045.B, respectively). If the applicant's design vision conflicts with that of the design review board to the extent that compatibility findings cannot be made, it is still possible to proceed to the Planning Commission or SHO; however, we don't recommend this, as the likelihood of approval without the compatibility findings is low.

Formal action by the design review board will be required after the SHO, Planning Commission or City Council action (see Step 10).

Tip: It is recommended that at least one conceptual design review hearing take place prior to submitting a DART application. For complex projects, staff may recommend a concept review by the Planning Commission.

STEP 4: DART APPLICATION – All applications are submitted at the Planning and Zoning Counter at 630 Garden Street (or by appointment if a Case Planner has already been assigned). When you submit your DART application, you will receive a yellow sign (if you didn't already as part of an earlier step). Be sure to put this sign in a visible location (as close to the public right of way as possible) on the subject property. Once you have submitted your proposed project's DART application, and it has been accepted for processing, a Case Planner will be assigned to your project. The Case Planner is responsible for coordinating the staff review of your application and will be the lead contact regarding your application. Any questions or concerns you may have relative to the processing of your application should be directed to the assigned Case Planner at (805) 564-5470.

Each application will be reviewed by DART staff (made up of staff from various City Divisions, including Fire, Engineering, Transportation, Planning, Building & Safety, etc.) to determine whether it is complete (i.e. contains all of the required information necessary for project analysis and decision). During this time, staff will also analyze the project for compliance with applicable plans, policies, ordinances, codes, etc. City staff will typically conduct a site visit shortly after your application is submitted. Your Case Planner will contact you to schedule this site visit, which is typically held on Thursday morning.

Consistent with the state Permit Streamlining Act, the City must make a "completeness" determination (for most projects) within 30 days from the date the application is accepted for processing. At the end of the 30-day period, the City will send you a letter informing you of its completeness determination. Please be aware that projects that include a request for non-residential square footage, the submittal of a complete DART Application will officially start the process for a square footage allocation.

If additional information is required, the City will specify the required additional information in the letter. The application will be placed "on-hold" until the required information is received. This cycle of applicant submittal and 30-day staff review continues until the application is deemed complete.

Tip: Prior to formally submitting plans and application forms for your project, it is advisable to meet with Planning Staff to review those materials and to determine whether any additional information may be required. In our experience, it typically takes at least two review cycles for the application to be deemed complete. Staff strives to get the application deemed complete in two cycles, but application completeness is most dependent on the responsiveness of the applicant.

STEP 5: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW – After the application is deemed complete, Planning Staff will determine the appropriate level of environmental review. If your project is found to be Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), then no further environmental review is necessary. If the project is not exempt, City staff will typically prepare an Initial Study in order to make one of the following determinations:

1. That the project will not have a significant impact on the environment, and a **Negative Declaration (ND)** will be prepared and circulated for public comment. A public hearing to receive comments on the ND *may* be required.
2. That the project may have a significant impact on the environment, but the project has been modified or mitigation has been agreed to by the applicant that will avoid or mitigate any significant impacts, and a **Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)** will be prepared and circulated for public comment. A public hearing to receive comments on the MND *may* be required.
3. That the project may have a significant impact on the environment and an **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** will be required. If an EIR is required, staff will contact you to discuss the next steps, which typically include holding an environmental scoping hearing and retaining a consultant to prepare the EIR.

Tip: Since the environmental review process can be long and expensive for projects that aren't exempt, we recommend that you consult with staff prior to submitting your application, to see if your project appears to be exempt. The ND process typically takes five to six months. The MND process typically takes six months. Time to prepare an EIR is typically 12 months or more.

STEP 6: PUBLIC HEARING AND SITE VISIT – Once environmental review is completed, the project will be scheduled for a hearing by the Planning Commission or SHO, as appropriate. Prior to the application being scheduled for Planning Commission or SHO review, additional copies of plans will be necessary. The Case Planner will notify you of the number and size of additional plans required. Please review your completeness letter for any additional information required and related timelines.

A noticed site visit will be made by the Planning Commission or SHO during the week of the hearing. Members of the public may attend the site visit. The applicant and/or the agent must be present at the scheduled Planning Commission site visit. Visual Aids (such as story poles) may be required to be installed prior to the site visit. In general, markers are required to be installed on the site for all projects that may have size, bulk and scale, visual impacts or view issues, to provide a basic visual representation of project size and scale. The Case Planner will advise you when deeming your application complete whether Visual Aids will be required (refer to the [Visual Aid Submittal Packet](#) for more information).

At the public hearing, staff will make a presentation. The applicant and/or the agent must attend the hearing, and will be given an opportunity to speak about the project, as will all other interested persons. At the conclusion of the public hearing(s), the discretionary body

will: (1) approve the request, with or without conditions; (2) continue the hearing to another day; or (3) deny the request.

STEP 7: APPEALS – Following any Planning Commission or SHO decision, there is a 10-day appeal period. SHO appeals are heard by the Planning Commission. Planning Commission appeals are heard by the City Council. Refer to the City’s [Appealable Decisions](#) handout for more information on the appeal process.

STEP 8: CITY COUNCIL REVIEW – The City Council must take final action on projects involving a re-zone, General Plan Amendment or Annexation (or any Planning Commission decision that is appealed). City Council hearings are normally scheduled to be heard approximately four weeks after discretionary approval (takes longer for appeals). Additional plans may be required.

Tip: If a project that requires one of these actions is appealed, the appeal hearing and the final action hearing will be combined into a single hearing.

STEP 9: OTHER AGENCY APPROVAL – Certain projects may also require approval by another agency following City approval (e.g. California Coastal Commission or LAFCO). Projects most likely to require such approval include annexations, re-zones or projects located in the permanent jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission. Although rarely required, these steps can add significant time to the overall process.

STEP 10: DESIGN REVIEW: APPROVAL – Following Planning Commission or SHO approval of a project (or City Council, if applicable), you will submit plans for design review approval. The applicable design review board (ABR, HLC or SFDB) will review the site plan, grading plan, elevations, landscape plan and public improvements. Project Design Approval and Final Approval will be required. Please be aware that these decisions are appealable to the City Council.

Tip: Refer to the applicable [design review board’s handouts](#) for further information on the design review process. Refer to the City’s [Appealable Decisions](#) handout for more information on the appeal process.

STEP 11: FINAL MAP PROCESS – For all subdivisions and condominium projects, the Parcel/Final Map must be submitted for review and acceptance by the Public Works Department. Once accepted, the Map will be scheduled for approval by City Council.

STEP 12: PLAN CHECK AND BUILDING PERMITS – Following all required discretionary approvals, the applicant should submit a building permit application, working drawings, and support documents (such as soils reports, Storm Water Management Program improvements, structural and/or energy calculations, etc.) to the Building and Safety Division, along with all applicable fees, including the Land Development Team Recovery Fee. The working drawings will be checked by the Planning Division for conformance with all zoning and design review requirements and conditions of approval, and will also be reviewed by other City departments and divisions for conformance with applicable codes. At the successful completion of this review process, building permits will be issued for the project and construction may commence.



City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION & STAFF HEARING OFFICER PURVIEW

APPLICATION TYPE	STAFF HEARING OFFICER (SHO) ¹	PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)
Amendments to Project Conditions of Approval	YES (for SHO-approved Projects)	YES (for PC-approved Projects)
Annexations	NO	YES
Appeals	NO	Staff Hearing Officer Actions
Coastal Development Permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-appealable jurisdiction • In appealable jurisdiction: single-family residential development < 500 s.f.; one story; and landward of 50-foot bluff setback and 75-year seacliff retreat line • Secondary Dwelling Units (no Public Hearing required) 	Any project that requires a Coastal Development Permit but does not fall under the purview of the SHO)
Commercial Condominiums	< 3,000 s.f.	≥ 3,000 s.f.
Conditional Use Permits	NO	YES
Condominium Conversions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 or fewer residential units • Non-residential 	5 or more residential units
Development Plans	<p>Small Additions of 1,000 to 3,000 s.f. of nonresidential floor area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where an EIR has not been prepared ➤ Where the application requires another discretionary action by the SHO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions of > 3,000 s.f. of nonresidential floor area • Any nonresidential construction project where an EIR has been prepared • All in P-D, R-H and C-X Zones • Buildings greater than 10,000 s.f. in C-P Zone • Others as currently required
EIR Certification	NO	YES
Hotel Conversion Permits	NO	YES
General Plan Amendment	NO	YES
Local Coastal Plan Amendments	NO	YES
Lot Line Adjustments	Involving 4 or fewer lots	N/A (5+ lots require TSM)
Modifications	YES (Where no other approval	YES (Where other PC approval

¹ If any portion of a project requires discretionary approval from the Planning Commission, then the entire project will require Planning Commission review.

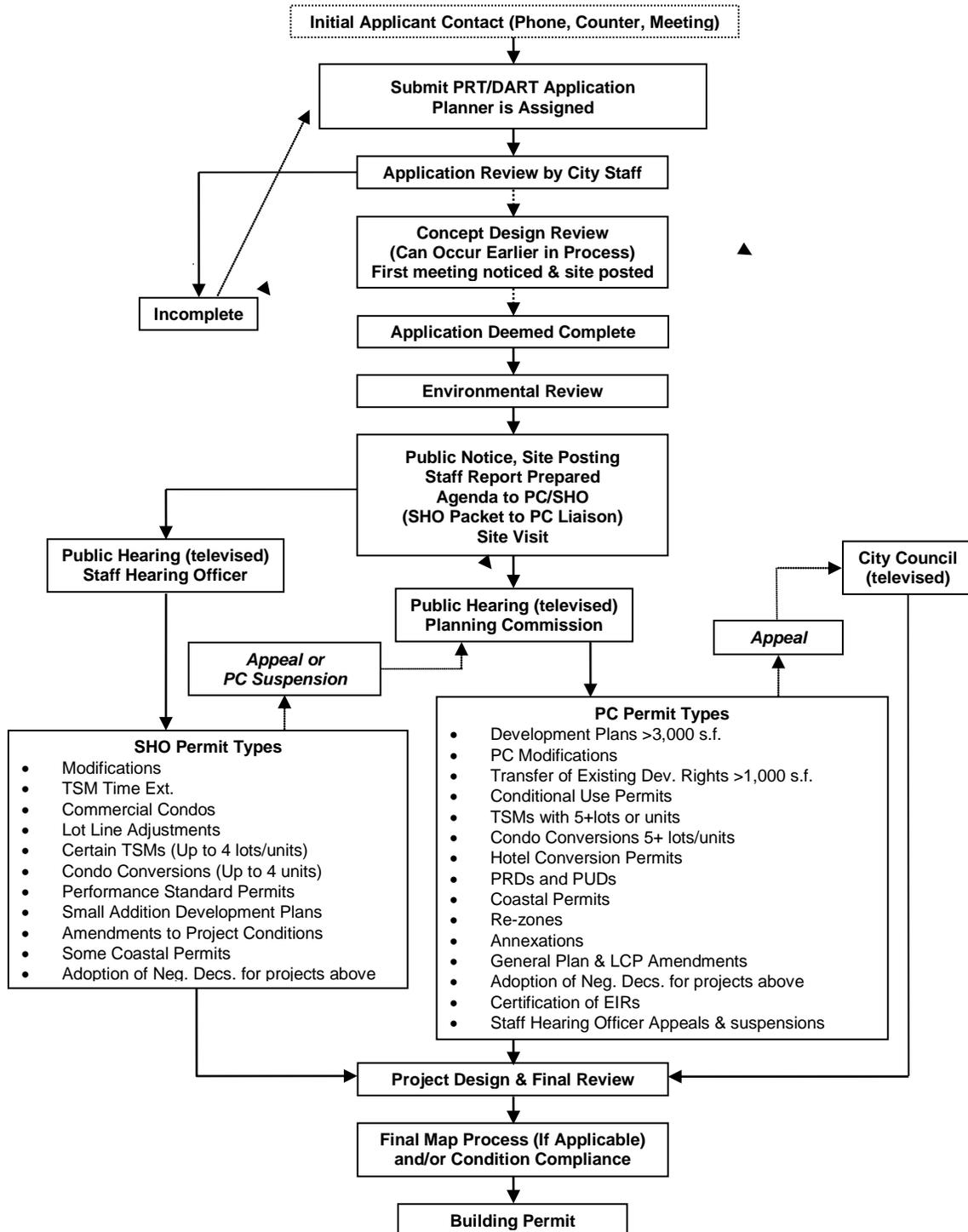
APPLICATION TYPE	STAFF HEARING OFFICER (SHO)¹	PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)
	required from PC)	required on project)
(Mitigated) Negative Declaration Adoption	YES (for projects SHO approves)	YES (for projects PC approves)
Performance Standard Permits	YES	NO
Planned Residence Developments (PRDs)	NO	YES
Planned Unit Development (PUDs)	NO	YES
Public Street Waiver	NO	YES
Rezoning of Properties (Includes Specific Plans and Amendments)	NO	YES
TSMs (Subdivisions and New Condominiums)	4 or fewer Lots/Units, <i>if</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Outside Hillside Design District; ➤ No Public Street Waiver is required (per SBMC 22.60.300); and ➤ Does not abut or intercept certain creeks (refer to SBMC 27.03.010.B.2.c) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5+ Lots/Units • All TSMs in Hillside Design District • All TSMs that need a Public Street Waiver (per SBMC 22.60.300) • All TSMs abutting or intercepting certain creeks (refer to SBMC 27.03.010.B.2.c)
Tentative Subdivision Map Time Extensions	YES	NO
Time Extensions (Except TSM)²	NO	NO
Transfer of Existing Development Rights	NO	TEDRs > 1,000 s.f.
Variances	NO	YES

² Granted administratively by staff.



City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION & STAFF HEARING OFFICER FLOW CHART



Disclaimer: This is a basic outline of the process for Staff Hearing Officer and Planning Commission review of projects. Some projects, especially those that include annexations, General Plan Amendments or Zone Changes, and those that require California Coastal Commission approval, will include additional steps. Also depending on the type of environmental review required, additional steps may be necessary.