Permit Streamlining

SITE PERMIT REFORM PROJECT

Joint Hearing: Building Inspection Commission & Planning Commission

May 11, 2023
Current State / What is a Site Permit?

Appealable

- FULL PERMIT
  - Complete Plan Set

SITE PERMIT

- Architectural Plan Set
  - Foundation Addenda
  - Superstructure Addenda
  - Architectural Addenda
  - Etc.
Current State: Site Permits Today

- Large Projects: 96% of new build projects
- Discretionary Projects: Section 311 projects
- Complex Projects: Unique circumstances
Current State: Areas for Improvement

**It’s a long process**
San Francisco’s permit process is one of the longest in California.

**It’s uncoordinated.**
Plans get to the agencies who need to see them, but City staff don’t coordinate on timelines or responses. Applicants get responses from each agency separately.

**Next steps are unclear.**
The next steps for an applicant after a Site Permit is issued are not defined, and the applicant is left to figure it out themselves.
A project could need dozens of permits to build.

**We use old tools.**
Permits and workflows are tracked in an aging system that does not enable staff to be proactive.
Project Goals

- Fast & efficient, end-to-end
- Consistent & predictable results
- Organized & accountable to the public
Development Review Permits

Apply online with Planning.

Get a Plan Check Letter with all City comments.

Complete any processes requirements.

Receive a Development Review Permit.

Photo: Public Works
Development Review Permits

DBI Intake is eliminated and applicants apply directly to Planning using Accela Citizen Access.

- DBI Submission
  - Submits site permit application
  - Building completes permit intake

- DBI Intake

- CPC Submission
  - Applicant submits permit application
  - Planning completes permit intake
  - Planning, Building, & other depts. complete plan check
  - Planning completes Entitlements
  - Building & other agencies complete plan check

- CPC Intake
  - Applicant responds to comments

- Plan Check
  - All agency plan checks will happen concurrently, applicant responds to all comments at once.

- Issuance
  - Responds to comments
  - Building & other agencies complete plan check
  - Planning Issues Development Review Permit
Applying for a permit

**File Online**
Submit your application online from work or home without needing to visit the Permit Center.

**Submit Payments**
Pay review fees online through the same application portal.

**Track Status and Comments**
Track the progress of your permit through the portal or the Property Information Map and have access to review results in real-time.

**Submit Revisions**
If corrections are needed, submit revisions and respond to comments online.
Applying for a permit

How to Apply

Apply in-person or via email with attachments.

Apply online through an application portal.

Getting “Accepted”

Intake by Building, then again by Planning.

One intake with Planning.

Keeping Track

Permit statuses and City review comments are difficult to track.

Permits tracked in a modern system, creating accountability, oversight, and automation.
Getting plan check comments

One Combined Plan Check Letter
Submit your application online from work or home without needing to visit the Permit Center.

Comprehensive Plan Check by Planning
Planning Code compliance, Design Review, and Environmental Review are checked.

Preliminary Plan Check by Building, Public Works, and Fire
Checklists guide the review, so you know what will and will not be checked.

Proactive Management
With Accela, we can run automated reports to identify when something needs attention and fix the issue.
Getting plan check comments

**TODAY**

**Plan Check**
Two stages of Plan Check; Planning first, then everyone else.

**City Approvals**
Planning approves, THEN DBI conducts a preliminary Plan Check.

**What is Reviewed**
What is checked during a Plan Check is not consistent.

**FUTURE**

**Plan Check**
One combined Plan Check with all comments provided at once.

**City Approvals**
DBI Plan Check happens concurrent with Planning review, before approval.

**What is Reviewed**
Checklists are used (and made public) to guide review and ensure consistency.
Getting your permit

**Permit Issuance**
Your permit is issued automatically, and you don’t need to visit the Permit Center.

**Defined Implementation**
Applicants and the public understand what comes next.

**Construction Document Review**
When construction is proposed, Construction Documents are reviewed under the existing Addenda process.

**Appeals**
A Development Review Permit is appealable to the Board of Appeals. Construction Documents that follow are not appealable.
Getting your permit

**The Permit**
- When approved, get a “Site Permit”

**Appeals**
- Site Permits are appealable, Addenda are not.

**Next Steps**
- Development Review Permits are appealable, Construction Documents are not
- Next steps are not defined.
- The permit includes a roadmap of implementation steps.
Construction Document Review (only for Construction)

Submit Construction Documents to Building
Follows the existing Addenda process.

Not Appealable
Construction Documents

Objective & Consistent
Based on objective standards and consistency with the approved project.

Impact Fees Apply Here
Just like today, you pay impact fees when you can start construction, not at the preliminary review phase.
PRELIMINARY PLAN CHECK
CRITERIA
Accessibility
Provide a preliminary review of compliance with ADA Accessibility requirements.

Construction Type
Review the proposed construction type and verify that it aligns with the size and height of the proposed building.

Fire Protection
Review if firewalls or other fire protective designs are required based on the location of the building and setbacks to property lines.

Egress
Verify that adequate egress is provided, particularly if fixing any deficiency may impact the building layout.
Mapping Actions
Determine if the proposed project will require any mapping actions and define the process and requirements.

Tree Removals
If the design impacts any existing street trees, provide feedback on whether that is supported or if another design is preferred.

Transformer Vaults
If a transformer is needed, review the proposed location and if the location is appropriate.

Changes to or Use of Streets & Sidewalks
If the project requires changes to public streets, provide a preliminary review of those changes.
Fire Department Preliminary Plan Check - DRAFT

1. **Fire Features**
   Determine if the proposed building will require any specific features, such as sprinklers or an on-site fire tank.

2. **Safety Access**
   Review if safety personnel have adequate access to the site in the event of an emergency.
PROJECT TIMELINE

Photo: Jason O'Rear
Project Timeline

- **Project Launched**
  - Project Charter Published & Case Studies Completed

- **Stakeholder Interviews**
  - Frequent Applicants and Internal Stakeholders

- **Stakeholder Outreach Event**
  - Frequent Applicants, Neighborhood Organizations, Department Contact Lists

- **Joint Hearing**
  - Building Inspection Commission & Planning Commission

- **Introduction of Legislation**
  - In development

- **August 15, 2022**
- **January - April 2023**
- **April 19, 2023**
- **May 11, 2023**
- **Summer 2023**
THANK YOU