



## Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning

Amy Gowan, Director

### **“Fast-Track” Site Development Plan Process”**

(Revised September 2021)

The Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) offers a customized “*Fast Track Site Development Plan (SDP) Process*” to accelerate the review and approval of critical economic development projects in Howard County. The following criteria have been established as minimum standards to qualify for the Fast-Track process.

#### **‘PROJECT QUALIFICATIONS’**

1. The project must be for non-residential development including research/office/flex or manufacturing/distribution uses. Retail uses will not be granted Fast Track processing.
2. The project must generate a minimum of 50 jobs for new employees OR the project building(s) must consist of a minimum of 50,000 square feet.
3. The project will not require subdivision of the property. Existing platted parcels that require a Plat of Revision to add or delete easements can be Fast-Tracked.
4. The project will not require rezoning change approval from the Zoning Board or a variance or conditional use approval from the Hearings Examiner unless such approval has already been obtained at the time of SDP application.
5. The project will not involve any major environmental impacts requiring wetlands or water quality certification permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), unless permit approval has already been obtained at the time of SDP application.
6. The project will not require a waiver to the Subdivision Regulations.

#### **‘AUTHORIZATION AS A FAST TRACK PROJECT’**

All requests for Fast Track SDP processing must be **in writing** to the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning. Projects not meeting the above qualifications may be considered eligible based on a case-by-case basis. The Department of Planning and Zoning will determine eligibility after consultation with the Director of the Economic Development Authority. **A pre-submission meeting with the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC) is required for all potential Fast Track plans.** At this meeting, the applicant must provide to the review agencies a written development schedule (working backwards from their proposed construction completion date). If all agencies confirm the plan meets Fast Track criteria, the Department of Planning and Zoning will issue written authorization to the applicant. When the applicant submits the plan to the Department of Planning and Zoning for review and distribution, he/she should bring this authorization letter so that the appropriate SRC meeting date can be scheduled.

## **'GENERAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE FAST-TRACK PROCESS'**

**(SEE ATTACHED FLOW CHART FOR COMPLETE DETAILS)**

In order for this Fast-Track process to be successful, it requires coordination and cooperation between the applicant, the engineering and architectural plan consultants and participating government agencies throughout the entire process. It is imperative that the owner and the plan consultants adhere to the processing schedule (see attached flow chart), if the Fast-Track schedule is to work.

## **'OTHER FAST-TRACK POLICIES AND ADVISORIES'**

1. A 2-week deadline is necessary whenever revised plans for direct submissions are required by the SRC and a 2-week review period is necessary for the SRC agencies to generate amended comments in response to revised plan or direct submissions. **If the developer or consultant does not adhere to the deadline requirements, the plan may be removed from Fast Track processing.**
2. If the SRC requires revised plan or direct plan submissions, the SRC will continue an expedited review schedule and will work with the applicant and consultant to achieve plan approval within an approved project schedule.
3. Plans that require Planning Board approval (New Town Zoning) must factor in at least 3 weeks of additional time to the schedule.

*If you experience any problems or difficulties with the Fast-Track process or time schedule described herein, please do not hesitate to contact Amy Gowan, Director, at 410-313-2350. If you believe your project qualifies for the Fast-Track SDP Process, please contact Julia Sauer at 410-313-2350.*

## **FAST-TRACK SDP PROCESS SCHEDULE**

### **PRE-SUBMITTAL MEETING**

Applicable SRC agencies, property owner, engineering consultant and architect meet to gather information and discuss the plan and process. If accepted for Fast-Track processing, DPZ will send an authorization letter to the owner.

### **WEEK 1: PLAN SUBMITTAL AND DISTRIBUTION**

1. The SDP application package is submitted to DPZ, including a copy of the Fast-Track authorization letter. Plans and a copy of the authorization letter are then distributed to the various SRC agencies.
2. The Division of Land Development (DLD) Coordinator will send a letter to the owner and consultant, indicating the SRC meeting date and the schedule time for the post-SRC interactive meeting, if applicable.
3. The Owner is advised to contact Real Estate Services (RES), to initiate the Developer's Agreement (DA) process and to determine what information is to be provided to RES with respect to a current property title report.
4. If the plan involves an extension to a public water or sewer line, the consultant **shall** submit the preliminary water/sewer plan to the DED and pay the preliminary review fee.

### **WEEKS 2 AND 3: PLAN REVIEW**

The SRC agencies review the SDP to verify compliance with County and State regulations. All field reviews are also completed by the SRC agencies. Water and Sewer Plans need to be reviewed.

### **WEEK 3: SRC MEETING AND PLAN RECOMMENDATION**

Within approximately 15 days of the SDP submittal date, the SRC meeting is held and all review agencies provide plan comments to DPZ. SRC meets with the owner and consultant at the conclusion of the meeting to discuss the plans and provide typed plan comments. A formal action letter will be provided within 1 to 2 days.

### **WEEKS 3 THROUGH 12: OWNER/CONSULTANT ACTION FOR TECHNICALLY COMPLETE PLANS**

- A. Water/Sewer Plans are finalized, reviewed and approved by DED.
- B. Owner/Consultant can submit architectural construction plans to DILP for preliminary review for building permits.
- C. If a DA is required, all sureties and cost estimates must be forwarded by DLD (landscaping and Forest Conservation (FC)) and DED (construction cost estimate, water/sewer estimate) to RES, who can then prepare the DA.
- D. Owner/Developer must execute the DA and return it to RES.
- E. The consultant revises the SDP in accordance with SRC comments and direct plan submissions.

### **\*IF REVISED PLANS OR DIRECTS SUBMISSIONS ARE REQUIRED\***

Revised plans or direct submissions are to be submitted within two weeks of the date of the action letter. SRC agencies then have 2 weeks to review the revised plans and generate new comments. If another revised submission is requested by any agency, then another interactive review meeting may be set up to discuss any outstanding issues.

This cycle will be repeated until all agencies have granted Technically Complete approval.

### **WEEK 12: ELECTRONIC PLANS ARE SUBMITTED FOR SIGNATURE**

The consultant/owner uploads the electronic SDP to ProjectDox and schedules an appointment with DLD to submit the required processing fees.

### **WEEK 13: SIGNATURE APPROVAL**

Electronic SDP drawings complete the signature approval process. The electronic SDP is scanned and can be accessed by the applicant on the DPZ website.

**OWNER MAY NOW COMPLETE THE BUILDING AND/OR GRADING PERMIT PROCESS WITH DILP.**