

CITY COUNCIL REPORT
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TO: Mayor and City Council Members

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CC: Josh Copley, City Manager; Barbara Goodrich, Deputy City
Manager

SUBJECT: Recent History of the Development Review Process

A request was made, at the September 5, 2017 City Council meeting, for information on design review. Design review is part of the overall development review process. This report will provide information on the current development review process which includes the administration of the architectural design standards. The report also details the review process from when design standards were first adopted in 2002.

DRB and IDS

Prior to adoption of the 2011 Zoning Code, projects were reviewed by a City Staff Development Review Board (DRB). DRB was comprised of the same staff members and provided the same level of review as the current Interdivision Staff (IDS) process. The applicant was informed, at the DRB meeting, of the Board's decision on the case. Staff would discuss the project with the applicant and provide guidance on requirements and standards. Once the project was in compliance with all the standards, the DRB would approve the project. The DRB did not include members of the public.

Development review is currently conducted by the IDS team. Applicants and members of the public do not attend the IDS meeting. The Planning Development Manager (PDM) assigned to the project informs the applicant of the IDS decision in writing. The PDM then works with the applicant and IDS team members to coordinate follow-up efforts.

IDS meets every two weeks and includes city staff, Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transit Authority (NAIPTA), and local utility providers. IDS includes staff from Current Planning, Development Engineering, Traffic Engineering, Building Safety, Water Services, Public Works, Economic Vitality, and Fire.

Administrative Reviews by IDS

Concept Plans (10-20.30.050), Site Plans (10-20.40.140) and Architectural Design Standards (10-50.20) are reviewed at the IDS meeting. Concept Plans and Site Plans are administrative reviews that staff approve. During Fiscal Year 16/17 IDS processed 29 site plan applications.

Subdivisions, Annexations and Zoning Map Amendments are reviewed by IDS and then sent for Planning & Zoning Commission review and, finally, City Council action.

Concept Plan

Projects that require a Site Plan must first process a Concept Plan. Duplexes and most change of uses are required to process a Concept Plan, but can then proceed directly to a building permit without a Site Plan.

This process ensures the applicant is aware of the procedures and substantive requirements. It identifies potential problems or concerns prior to submitting for Site Plan review and approval. Concept plans are intended to help applicants decide whether to proceed with new construction. Concept plans for a change of use determine if improvements need to be made to a building or site in order to comply with standards for the new use. A change of use that does not increase required on-site parking typically proceeds from a concept plan to building permit.

Site Plan

Site Plan review and approval is required for all new construction, change of uses and conditional use permits. Exceptions that do not require a site plan include single family homes, duplexes, interior alterations or a change of use that does not increase parking requirements or alter exterior building appearance. Once a Site Plan is approved, an applicant may then obtain building permits for the project.

Site plan applications entail a comprehensive review of the standards required for new construction in Flagstaff. Required application materials include a site plan with parcel size, existing zoning, size or intensity of the proposed building, vicinity map, contour lines of existing and proposed final grades, building footprints, street improvements, points of access and parking lots. Site plans must also include location

of utilities, open space, dumpster enclosure, walls and fences, natural features, area of disturbance and phasing lines. Site plan also requires location of the 100-year floodplain and floodway limits, existing and proposed impervious surfaces, low impact development (LID) features and detention facilities.

In addition to the information required on the site plan, applications must include architectural drawings of building elevations, building floor plans, grading and drainage plan, title report, preliminary drainage report, drainage impact analysis, landscape plan, resource survey and Natural Resource Protection Plan, preliminary exterior lighting plan, preliminary signage plan, Cultural Resource Study, sewer and water impact analysis and traffic impact analysis.

Architectural Design Review

The Design Review Guidelines were a recommended strategy of the Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan dated November 1, 2001. The Design Review Standards were adopted into the Land Development Code on February 1, 2002. Architectural Design Standards are included in the current Zoning Code.

Architectural Design Standards are applied to all commercial, multi-family (duplex and greater), business park, and institutional construction (greater than 1,000 square feet). Building expansions that increase the gross floor area greater than 25% are required to comply with the Architectural Design Standards as well. All projects within a Heritage Preservation Overlay must comply with the Architectural Design Standards and the Heritage Preservation design guidelines for that overlay district.

New construction and exterior alterations to buildings within a Heritage Preservation Overlay are reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission. Staff analysis and recommendations to the Commission for projects within the overlay are provided by the Historic Preservation Officer, currently housed in Economic Vitality.

Outside of the Heritage Preservation Commission, Flagstaff has not had a design review board comprised of residents.

Citizen Development Review Board

Many cities in Arizona have a Citizen Development Review Board. These Boards review and approve/deny Site Plans and Architectural Designs. They provide an additional layer of review and allow the public to comment on proposals. Public development review requires staff to provide an analysis of compliance with the standards (as we do today) and create a report for the Board. A citizen review board would hold a public hearing, receive the staff recommendation, receive public input and then make a determination of compliance with the standards.

Creating a Citizen Development Review Board would require significant additional resources, including both staff time and funds. There would be resource expenditures to prepare and present staff reports, advertise meetings, prepare the DRB packets, distribute the packets to board members and applicants, staff the meetings and prepare/post the meeting minutes.