



Administrative Regulations for Chapter 50 and Chapter 59, Development Review Procedures



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Completed: 6/7/17

Recommendation

Adoption of the proposed administrative regulations for Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 of the County Code with the revisions discussed during the Planning Board's May 11, 2017 work session and transmittal to County Council for approval under Chapter 2A, Method 2.

Summary

In December 2007, the Planning Board adopted a "Manual of Development Review Procedures" that was forwarded to, and approved by, the County Council under Method 2 procedures. The manual contains Planning Department practices related to the review and processing of development applications that are acted upon by the Planning Board or Planning Director under Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 of the County Code. When Chapter 59 was rewritten in 2014, these practices were changed and codified as part of new provisions for Administration and Procedures (Article 59-7). We recognized that similar updates would be needed as part of our recent rewrite of Chapter 50, but we decided to include them as regulations rather than put them in the chapter. The provisions of Chapter 59, and these regulations once adopted, will formally replace the existing manual.

The purpose of the original manual and these proposed regulations continues to be to:

- Clearly explain the Planning Department's overall regulatory review process for applicants, staff, residents and other interested parties.
- Clarify standards and procedures for submission of timely and relevant information by applicants.
- Provide for timely participation by public agencies in the review of applications.
- Provide for participation by interested parties so their views can be known by staff and the Planning Board before action is taken.

The plan applications covered by these regulations include: pre-preliminary submissions, preliminary and administrative subdivision plans, sketch plans, site plans, amendments to such plans, and record plats. The provisions from Chapter 59 that cover sketch plans and site plans are referenced for information and the benefit of users, and are expanded upon by other provisions of these regulations.

Changes Included in the Final Planning Board Draft

The highlighted changes in the attached version of the draft regulations reflect proposed revisions that were presented and accepted as part of the Board's work session, and some additional revisions that are in response to the work session discussion. As of the date of this memorandum, no comments have

been received on the previous drafts of the regulations and there was no testimony at the scheduled public hearing.

The new and modified provisions in this final draft of the regulations include:

- On page 7, clarification that the requirements of the notice table may be modified by other provisions of the County Code.
- On page 9, footnote 4 has been replaced per the Board's recommendation that the previous language was unnecessary. The footnote indicated that the Planning Department's Interactive Map tool could be used to obtain SDAT property owner addresses for adjacent and confronting property owners, with the caveat that the SDAT database had to be checked as well since our information may be less up to date. Now the footnote has been moved and simply provides a link to obtain the relevant civic and homeowners association addresses using our Association Finder Map tool.
- Also on page 9, possible revisions have been included in the highlighted text to expand the Notice List requirements to include the individual unit owners within a condominium building located on properties that are adjacent to, or confronting a development property.

Discussion of this item:

The Board suggested at the work session that notice should be expanded to include both the owners and renters of individual units within a multi-unit building. At the Board's request, we researched how other jurisdictions in the area are handling public notice; as well as, how difficult it would be to identify these individuals if we decide to include them. Based on the difficulty there would be in obtaining the information for the expanded notice list and the potential increase in number and expense of mailing the additional notices, staff does not recommend adding individual unit owners and renters to the notice list.

Our research revealed that most of the jurisdictions in the area provide the same type of notice that we currently do. A couple jurisdictions only notice by posting the development sites, and a couple have a requirement to include individual unit owners. We did not find any jurisdictions that require renters to be notified.

As far as the mechanisms for obtaining addresses for individual unit owners and renters, there are lists that can be purchased from both USPS and private sources like the Haines Directory. A problem with such lists is that staff would have to get access to the same data sources to check that the provided lists are accurate. The department obtains individual unit owner information from SDAT that could be used and made available, however, the information would have the same possibility of being out of date as the property owner information discussed in the bullet above. We also get annual copies of the Haines Directory which includes unit numbers within rental buildings, but these would only be as current as the print date of the edition.

- On page 25, the table covering plan approval authority by plan type has been modified to clarify that either the Planning Board or the Planning Director may act upon a minor site plan amendment. The previous language incorrectly gave the authority to act on minor site plan amendments to the Director, but that is not always the case.

- On page 27, language has been added to clarify that the Board may include plats as one item on a consent agenda and act on them without discussion or individual motions. Staff would continue the current practice of scheduling plats as a separate hearing item if they involve issues that require specific Board discussion and findings before action.
- On page 28, administrative subdivision plans have been added to the plans that require certification of plan drawings after they are approved.
- On page 33, the procedures for voluntary Concept Plans have been added per the work session discussion.

Additional Discussion Item

An additional item discussed during the work session for these regulations was the potential need for amendments to the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations chapters of the Code, to add provisions that would permit certain *de minimis* site plan and preliminary plan amendments that are now described as major to become minor amendments that the Board can act upon without a public hearing. The initial drafts of these amendments have been completed and are being reviewed within the department prior to bringing them to the Board. Although we had discussed the need to combine these proposed amendments with the subject Development Review regulations when they are transmitted to the Council, in staff's opinion that is not necessary because the provisions of the regulations that cover action on plan amendments would remain unchanged whether or not the proposed amendments move forward.

Conclusion

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the final draft of the Development Review Procedures regulations for Chapters 50 and 59 of the County Code with the modifications outlined above, and give staff approval to transmit them to the County Council for approval under Chapter 2A, method 2.

CHAPTER 50 and CHAPTER 59 – Regulations

COMCOR 50/59.00.01 Administrative Procedures for Subdivision-Plan Development Review

50/59.00.01.01 Purpose and Applicability

- A. *Purpose.* These regulations define administrative procedures for the submission and review of all plans submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Department, under the Subdivision Regulations and the Zoning Ordinance of the Montgomery County Code. These procedures are designed to provide accurate and complete information and to ensure a thorough and timely review process as a basis for decisions. These regulations were adopted by the Planning Board and approved as regulations by the County Council under Chapter 50, Section 10.1 ~~by the County Council.~~ and as contemplated by Chapter 59, Section 7.3.4.F.3. These regulations supersede the Montgomery County Planning Department's Manual of Development Review Procedures (December 2007).
1. These regulations:
 - (a) define a process that is comprehensive, clear, transparent, and understandable to citizens, developers, applicants, review agencies, staff, and other interested parties;
 - (b) clarify standards and procedures for submission of timely and relevant information by applicants;
 - (c) provide procedures for timely participation by government agencies in the review of applications; and
 - (d) provide procedures for participation by interested parties, such as owners of properties adjoining the project site, so that their issues and concerns can be submitted to staff and the Board for consideration during the review process before the Board decides and acts on the proposed land development project.
 2. These regulations are intended to identify the steps that an applicant must take to apply for the review and approval of specific types of development approvals that are acted upon by either the Board or Director, and to provide a comprehensive explanation of what is involved in processing a development application, including the steps to ensure a thorough and timely review.
- B. *Applicability.* The development review process covered in these regulations apply to all development applications submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Department and acted upon by the Board or Director under Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 of the County Code.
- C. *Definitions.* All terms used in these regulations that are defined in Chapter 50 or Chapter 59 have the same meanings as the definitions in those Chapters.
- D. *Rules of interpretation.* The rules of interpretation contained in Chapter 50, ~~Section 2.1~~ also and Chapter 59 apply to these regulations. Footnotes used in these regulations are a part of the requirements.

50/59.00.01.02 Basic Planning Department Policies for the Development Review Process

- A. In processing and reviewing the application, the *Planning Department staff* must:
1. Appoint a lead reviewer to coordinate the review of the application and the receipt of inquiries related to the application or the regulatory process.
 2. Review the application carefully, fairly, and in a timely manner.
 3. Apply the applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines consistently.
 4. Work with all parties to present a recommendation to the Board that complies with the applicable standards of review.
 5. Attempt to identify issues early in the process and strive to resolve them as early as possible.
 6. Cooperate with other agency and utility company staffs, the applicant, and the public to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution when issues arise.
 7. Collaborate with other review agencies and other parties, actively seeking solutions that achieve the County's planning and community-building goals.
 8. Carry out County and Planning Board policies, with special attention to:
 - (a) adopted Master Plans;
 - (b) applicable land use, transportation, and environmental laws, regulations, and guidelines;
 - (c) the Subdivision Staging Policy;
 - (d) standards of professional responsibility; and
 - (e) promotion of design excellence.
- B. *Planning Department staff and other government agency and utility company staff who participate in the review of development applications* must:
1. Review each application carefully, fairly, and in a timely manner.
 2. Participate in scheduled Development Review Committee (DRC) and pre-DRC meetings, either in person or by transmitting written comments to the DRC chair.
 3. Make reasonable efforts to participate, when necessary, in supplemental meetings on specific cases, as requested by either the lead reviewer or the applicant.

4. Work collaboratively to identify and seek mutually satisfactory resolutions, using the lead-agency protocol for conflicting recommendations created through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Planning Department and several of the agency members of the DRC to involve appropriate managers or chiefs from the conflicting agencies.
5. Report recommendations to the Board that are contrary to Planning staff's in the rare event that agencies with conflicting comments are unable to timely reach a mutually satisfactory recommendation on issues related to a development application after following the protocol referenced above, ~~the agency recommendation that is contrary to the Planning staff's recommendation must be reported to the Board.~~

C. *Applicants* must:

1. Select a development team, consultants, and representatives appropriate for the project.
2. Follow Planning Board and County policies, procedures, and regulations related to the proposed development project.
3. Submit complete and accurate applications.
4. Refer questions, issues, and all revisions concerning the filed application to the lead reviewer.
5. Notify the lead reviewer promptly if there is a major change to the development project under review.
6. Work with review staffs and the public in a cooperative manner to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution when issues arise.

50/59.00.01.03 Overview of the Application Types

These regulations specify the submission, notice, review and approval procedures that must be followed for all development applications and associated requests that are submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Department and acted upon by the Board or Director. The types of application that may be required before an applicant can apply for permits to disturb land and construct are dependent on many factors, such as, the zoning on the subject site, the legal status (i.e., recorded lot, unplatted parcel, etc.) of the site, and the type of land use proposed for the project. This section includes an overview of the various application types.

- A. *Land Development Plan Applications.* The land development plan applications covered by this manual include: pre-preliminary submissions, sketch or project plans, preliminary and administrative subdivision plans, site plans, and record plats. Figure 1, below summarizes these plans, including references to the specific sections of the County Code that contain their requirements, and how they fit into the overall regulatory review process.

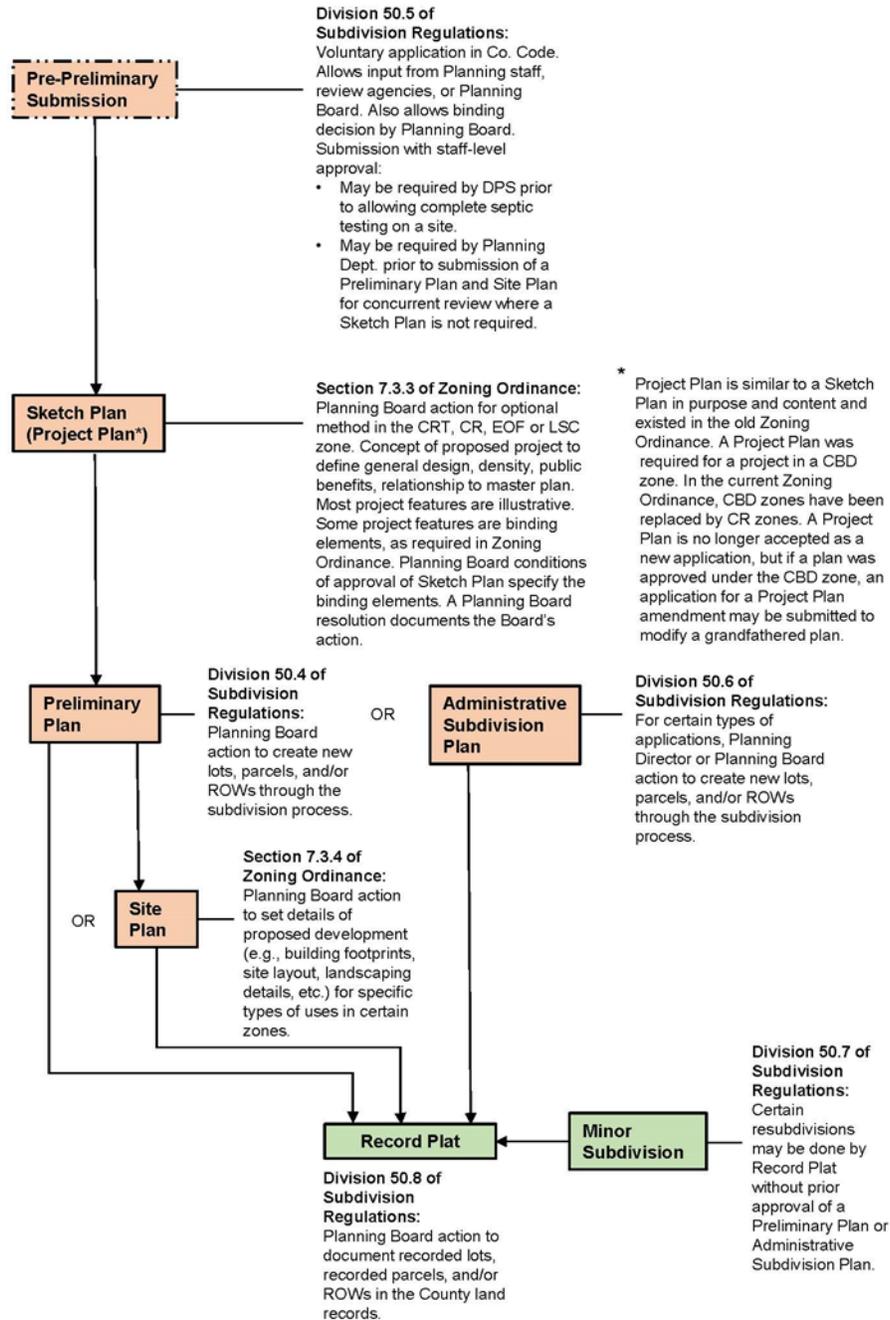


Figure 1. Land Development Plan Application Types

B. *Plan Amendments.* Proposed changes to a plan that has been approved and certified by the Board or Director must be approved as a plan amendment. A plan amendment may be filed to request changes to features of an approved plan drawing, or to specific

conditions of the Board's or Director's approval for the plan.¹

1. *Classification of Preliminary and Site Plan Amendments.* An amendment to a preliminary plan or site plan may be classified as major or minor depending on the purpose of the proposed amendment and as specified by the Subdivision Regulations (Section 50.4.2.F) or the Zoning Ordinance (Section 59.7.3.4.J).
 - (a) Major amendments must be reviewed and acted on by the Board ~~in a hearing.~~
 - (b) Minor amendments to a preliminary plan ~~may must~~ be acted on by the Board; ~~however, as part of its consent agenda. If~~ if the amendment is to change the validity period of the approved plan's phasing schedule, the Director may act on the proposed amendment.
 - (c) Minor site plan amendments may be acted upon by the Director under certain circumstances.
 - (d) A new preliminary plan or administrative subdivision plan is required to resubdivide previously approved and recorded lots, or change a previous plan application that was denied.
2. *Amendment to a Preliminary or Site Plan to change an associated Forest Conservation Plan.* Preliminary or site plan amendments that involve amendments to associated forest conservation plans may be filed as minor amendments.
 - (a) Per the Forest Conservation regulations (COMCOR 22A.00.01, Section 22A.00.01.13.A(1)), a forest conservation plan amendment that proposes no more than 5000 square feet of additional forest clearing may be acted on by the Director.
 - (b) A proposed forest conservation plan amendment that involves changes to recorded conservation easements approved by the Board must be acted on by the Board. Corresponding amendments to the associated preliminary or site plan to reflect any easement changes must also be filed.
3. *Changes to Site Plan-approved structures.* A structure located on property covered by an approved site plan may be replaced without applying for a site plan amendment if the replacement conforms to the specifications approved as part of the site plan; for instance, replacing an existing fence or retaining wall, in kind. Changes that do not conform to approved specifications must be filed as a minor site plan amendment, except for those changes allowed under 59-7.3.4.G.2.
 - (a) *Playground areas and equipment.* Many approved site plans that have residential uses include details for playground areas and equipment. For the purposes of site plan review, the term "playground equipment" includes benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles, in addition to structures that are used for outdoor recreation activities by children, such as swing sets

¹ A plan amendment is different than a plan revision. A plan revision is a change to a submitted application that an applicant chooses to make prior to action. Significant revisions may, on a case-by-case basis, require re-notice of the application.

and slides. Over time, playground equipment may become old and outdated and need to be replaced; or a resident association may want to change its location or configuration, or remove it entirely.

- i. Installation of a new playground or removal of an existing one requires review and action under the Minor Site Plan Amendment process.
- ii. Replacing playground equipment requires review and approval by Planning Department staff. Such a change is not classified as a site plan amendment. The following rules apply to the substitution of playground equipment for a site that has an approved site plan showing specific playground equipment requirements:
 - a. A request for a playground equipment substitution must be made by submitting a complete [Recreational Equipment Substitution Request Form](#).
 - b. The form may be filled out by the provider of the proposed playground equipment, but the project developer must also submit a cover letter confirming that the current Site Plan applicant supports the proposed substitution.
 - c. Staff must review the substitution request to determine if the proposed equipment is equal in capacity, features, age group served, and quality² (including conformance with CPSC and ASTM³ safety standards.)
 - d. If staff does not render a decision as to whether the proposed substitution meets the “or approved equal” standard within 45 calendar days after the applicant’s complete submission of a Recreational Equipment Substitution Request Form, the substitution is automatically approved.
 - e. After deciding, staff must reply, in writing, to the current Site Plan applicant. If the request is denied, the staff must specify, in writing, each reason for the denial. Staff must place a copy of the reply letter in the Site Plan file. The Site Plan applicant may appeal a denial to the Board.

C. *Other Application Types.* An application must also be submitted to the Planning Department for the following:

1. *Request to Extend a Validity Period for an Approved Plan.* A request for approval of an extension to the validity period of an approved plan or the validity period of an Adequate Public Facilities determination.
2. *Subdivision Waiver Request.* A request for a waiver from the requirement to submit a preliminary plan or administrative subdivision plan under Division 50.9 of Chapter 50.

² The equipment proposed must also be able to fit in the space shown on the Site Plan. If the proposed substitution becomes so big that it no longer fits in the “play area” shown on the Site Plan, a Site Plan Amendment will be required.

³ If there is a conflict between Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards, ASTM standards will govern.

3. *Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) Review at Building Permit.* A request for Planning Board APF review and finding required under Chapter 8 before issuance of a building permit for development on an existing recorded lot that is not subject to a previous preliminary plan approval, and does not require a site plan under Chapter 59, Section 7.3.4.
4. *Request to Extend a Hearing Date.* A request for extension of a Board hearing date pursuant to Chapter 59, Sections 7.3.3.C or 7.3.4.C, and Chapter 50, Section 4.1.E.
5. *Exemption to Platting.* A request for exemption under Chapter 50, Section 3.3 from the requirement to record a plat prior to the division or conveyance of land, or to support issuance of a building permit under Chapter 8.

50/59.00.01.04 Notice

Certain types of notice must be provided by both the applicant and Planning Department staff at specific steps during the regulatory review process. The individuals receiving these notices vary depending upon the notice type, but include: owners of adjoining and confronting properties; nearby civic and homeowners’ associations; “interested parties” who request notice during the process; and the general public.

Individuals, groups, and interested parties receive notice in writing, either by mail, or by email if they have indicated email as their preference. The general public receive notice from signs that are required to be posted on a project site, and for applications that are acted upon by the Board, from the weekly Planning Board agenda on the Board’s website.

A. Notice Standards

1. *Notice Required.* Notice is required for each application per the following table or as otherwise specified in the Code:

APPLICATION TYPE	Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Site Posting		Written Notice from Applicant		Written Hearing Notice from Planning Department	Planning Department Website Posting	
		Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Application	Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Application		DRC Agenda	Planning Board Agenda
Sketch Plan ¹	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pre-Preliminary Submission			X		X	(only if Planning Board hearing is scheduled)	X	(only if Planning Board action is scheduled)
Preliminary Plan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Major Preliminary Plan Amendment			X		X	X	X	X

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APPLICATION TYPE	Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Site Posting		Written Notice from Applicant		Written Hearing Notice from Planning Department	Planning Department Website Posting	
		Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Application	Pre-submittal Community Mtg.	Application		DRC Agenda	Planning Board Agenda
Minor Preliminary Plan Amendment					X	(only if Planning Board hearing is scheduled)		(only if Planning Board action is scheduled)
Administrative Subdivision Plan			X		X	(only if Planning Board hearing is scheduled)	X	(only if Planning Board action is scheduled)
Site Plan ¹	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Major Site Plan Amendment ¹			X		X	X	X	X
Minor Site Plan Amendment ¹					X	(only if Planning Board hearing is scheduled)		(only if Planning Board action is scheduled)
Record Plat								X
Validity Period Extension Request					X	X		X
Subdivision Regulations Waiver					X	X		X
Building Permit APFO					X	X (only if Planning Board hearing is scheduled)		X (only if Planning Board action is scheduled)

¹ Notice shown in this table is per Section 7.5.1 of Chapter 59.

2. *Notice List.* Applicants must create and submit a Notice List as part of applications that require written notices to be sent. The Notice List must be:

- compiled using the latest available records;
- compiled no more than 30 calendar days before the pre-submittal community meeting; and
- updated no more than 30 calendar days before the date the Application is accepted by the Planning Departments, Development Application and Regulatory Coordination (DARC) Division, Intake Section staff.

(a) *Individuals and groups included.* Individuals and groups that must be on the

Notice List are defined as follows:

- i. *Abutting and Confronting Property Owners.* The applicant must compile the names and addresses of the owners of properties that are adjacent to the project site or directly across a right-of-way, of a width of less than 80 feet, from the project site. This list must be based on tax assessment ownership records from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT), Real Property Database. **If an abutting or confronting property includes a multi-unit building (residential, non-residential, or mixed use), the Notice List must include the property owner, the building management company, and the condominium association, if any. But the list need not also include any individual unit owner in the building, but not a renter.** If an abutting or confronting property is a recorded open space parcel for a subdivision, the applicant's Notice List must include the homeowners' association, condominium association, or renters' association and any individual owner of a **single-unit** property in that subdivision that is located within 300 feet of the subject property.
- ii. *Civic, Community, Condominium Associations, Homeowners' and Renters' Associations, and Municipalities.*
 - a. The civic, community, condominium and homeowner's associations that have registered with M-NCPPC⁴ and are either: a) located within a half-mile radius of the center point of the subject property; or b) an association that has requested to receive notices for all development applications. At staff's discretion, this list may be expanded for large or unusually shaped properties to include associations within a half-mile radius from a point or points along the property boundary, or to include a larger radius from the center point.
 - b. For a project that proposes to amend only a part of a site which is covered by an approved preliminary and/or site plan, and the site has been partially constructed, sold, and occupied, the project's Notice List is generated from the boundary of the amendment area. **Property owners, including any individual unit owner in a multi-unit building within the area being amended must be included in the Notice List. And residents and who are not** property owners within the constructed part of the site must be notified of the proposed project through their HOA or

⁴~~To help identify specific properties that meet the definition of an abutting and confronting property for a project, the a-Applicants may use the Association Finder Interactive Map tool, a GIS-based map created and maintained by the Planning Department for convenience. Property information (e.g., property owner, tax account number, legal description of property, etc.) that is provided by the map is taken from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) database. The Planning Department's GIS property data is updated monthly. This data update schedule may create limited instances where information for specific properties may be temporarily out of date compared to property data directly available through the online SDAT database; it is incumbent upon the applicant to double check with SDAT. The Interactive Map tool may also be used to generate lists of homeowners, renters, and civic groups to include in a project's notice list.~~

Community Association.

- c. Planning staff may require the applicant to add to the applicant's Notice List any common ownership association or civic association listed in the Planning Department's records that abuts or confronts a public facility not adjacent or close to the project site, but which may require construction or improvement because of the proposed project. If required during plan review, as opposed to initial application, this notice must be directed to each designated association no later than 30 calendar days before the Board's hearing on the application.
 - iii. *Pre-Submittal Community Meeting Participants.* An applicant for certain plan types is required to hold a community meeting before the application is submitted to the Planning Department. Only meeting participants who have asked to receive future notices are required to be on the Notice List.
 - iv. *Parties of Record from Previous Plan Applications.* If a project site has an approved plan, and an applicant applies for a plan amendment, individuals or groups that were identified as Parties of Record in the earlier plan application must be added to the Notice List of the current plan application. For example, a Notice List for a preliminary plan Amendment would include all individuals and groups who were identified as Parties of Record for the original preliminary plan application, in addition to those who meet the criteria covered above.
 - v. *Others.* The DARC Division – Intake Section must be included on the applicant's notification list. The applicant and members of the applicant's team who wish to receive notices should also be included.
- (b) *Updates Required.* The applicant must update the notice list of adjoining and confronting property owners if the application is pending for more than 6 months after the final application is accepted, and provide the new list to the DARC Division for use in sending hearing notices.
- B. *Pre-submittal Community Meetings.* For a sketch plan, preliminary plan, or site plan, the applicant must hold at least one public pre-submission meeting no more than 90 calendar days before the initial application date. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the proposed project, address concerns about its impact on the community, and notify those attending of their right to participate in the review process. The applicant must expressly invite all individuals on the Notice List and must also post one or more signs that are visible from the street on the property. The meeting must be held on an evening or a weekend, in a location convenient to the proposed development site. The applicant must provide a sign-in sheet at the meeting so that attendees can identify themselves.
- C. *Site Posting.* In addition to site posting required for notice of the pre-submission meeting, the applicant must post one or more signs at the development site for the plans noted above, indicating that an application has been filed. The applicant must:
- 1. pay all costs associated with the sign posting requirements;

2. monitor the signs and replace any damaged or illegible signs; and
3. maintain posted pre-submittal meeting signs until the date the meeting is held, and application signs throughout the review of the application⁵.

(a) *Timing.*

- i. *Pre-Submittal Community Meeting signs* must be posted at least 15 days before the meeting is held.
- ii. *Signs to advertise the filing of the application* must be posted before the application is accepted.

(b) *Sign Specifications.* The applicant and its sign vendor, if any, must follow the [Sign Template](#) for sign content and lettering specifications. The Planning Department may modify these requirements in special circumstances to assure that all signs will be visible to the public.

(c) *Posting specifications.* The required number and location of posted signs are as follows:

- i. A minimum of one sign must be placed parallel to each public or private street that is adjacent to the property.
- ii. If the frontage for a street adjacent to the project site is more than 500 feet long, an additional sign must be posted adjacent to the street for every 500 feet of frontage.
- iii. Signs are not required to be placed along and adjacent to a freeway.
- iv. Signs must be placed on the property in the most visible location available in such a manner that landscaping or other features do not impair or obstruct the visibility of the signs from the street.
- v. Signs must be posted within the project site, no more than 10 feet behind the property line adjacent to a street right-of-way or the access easement covering a private street.
- vi. Signs must not be placed within a street right-of-way or private street access easement.
- vii. For a large site or one with unusual constraints, the requirements listed above may be modified by Planning Department staff to provide good visibility of posted signs.

(d) *Posting information.* Posted signs must contain the following information.

⁵ If an applicant does not maintain a properly posted sign on the project site, the Board may postpone a hearing on the application until the applicant has demonstrated that the site has been properly posted for at least 30 consecutive calendar days. Signs may be removed from the property after Board or Director action, as required, has been taken on the application.

- i. *Signs advertising a Pre-Submittal Community Meeting* must include:
 - a. meeting date, time, and place;
 - b. purpose of the meeting; and
 - c. applicant contact information.
- ii. *Signs advertising the submission of the application* must include:
 - a. project name as it appears on the accepted application;
 - b. project number, as assigned by the Planning Department at the time of the application submission;
 - c. type of plan (i.e., preliminary plan, site plan, etc.);
 - d. size and zoning of the site;
 - e. each proposed use, and its associated proposed number of dwelling units, if residential use is proposed, and/or square footage of all non-residential buildings identified by type (i.e., office, retail, etc.); and
 - f. Planning Department contact information.

D. *Written Notice.*

1. *Timing.* Required written notice must be sent per the following table:

Requirements	Pre-submittal Community Meeting ¹	Application Notice	Hearing Notice	
			Planning Board action after a public hearing	Planning Board action on its Consent Agenda
Sign Posting	At least 15 days before meeting	Before application is accepted		
Written Notice Sent ²	At least 15 days before meeting	No more than 5 days after application is accepted	At least 10 days before hearing date	
Posting on Planning Board Agenda			At least 10 days before hearing date ³	At least 10 days before the meeting date
Responsible Party	Applicant	Applicant	Planning Department Staff	Planning Department Staff

¹ Must occur no more than 90 days before an application is filed.

² By First-Class Mail or email. To receive email, the party receiving the notice must have specifically requested it.

³At least 7 calendar days before the Board meeting for a plan application that will be reviewed by the Board but acted on by another agency.

2. *Standards.* Written notice sent by the applicant and Planning Department staff must meet the following standards:

(a) *Pre-submittal Community Meeting.* The notice letter must be sent to everyone on the Notice list and must contain:

- i. date, time, and place for the meeting;
- ii. date that the notice is sent;
- iii. name and contact information of applicant or applicant's representative. The listed individual must be available to provide further information about the proposed project and respond to any reasonable public request;
- iv. proposed project name;
- v. type of application that will be filed;
- vi. property street address or other easily understood geographical reference to the location of the project site;
- vii. property size and zoning;
- viii. proposed use and density of development; and
- ix. website and phone number for the DARC Division.

(b) *Application Notice.*

- i. *Notice letter.* The notice letter must be sent to everyone on the Notice list and any individuals who requested notice at the pre-submittal community meeting and must contain:
 - a. application number, as assigned by the Planning Department;
 - b. date that the notice was sent;
 - c. project Name;
 - d. plan type;
 - e. property street address or other easily understood geographical reference to the location of the project site;
 - f. property size and zoning;

- g. proposed use and density of development, and if the application is an amendment to an approved plan, the changes that are proposed;
 - h. tentative Board hearing date scheduled by the Planning Department, if applicable;
 - i. deadline date for receiving comments on the application, if applicable; and
 - j. contact address and phone number for the DARC Division.
- ii. *Notice letters for applications submitted for Director approval.* The applicant must expand the notice list under subsection 50/59.00.01.04.A.2 above, to include all other parties of record noted in any previous files related to the current amendment, and mail the notice to all parties. In addition to the items in subsection 50/59.00.01.04.D.2(b)i above, the notice letter must include a deadline (at least 15 days after the mailing date of the notice) for the submission of comments regarding the application.
- iii. *Additional items.* The following attachments must be included with the notice letter:
- a. Separate, legible 11" x 17" copy of the applicant's proposed plan drawing for the project.
 - b. Latest version of the Planning Department's brochure, entitled "How to Participate Effectively in the Development Review Process".

(c) *Hearing Notice.*

- i. *Written notice.* The notice must be sent to everyone on the notice list, anyone who requested notice at the pre-submittal community meeting or any other time during application review, and any individuals who submitted written comments regarding the application. The notice must contain:
 - a. date and location of the meeting;
 - b. project name;
 - c. application number;
 - d. plan type;
 - e. property size and zoning;
 - f. project location; and
 - g. description of the proposed development.

- ii. *Website posting.* The Board holds hearings ~~and consent items~~ to review and act on some Plan Applications that are under its jurisdiction. It also holds hearings to provide comments on a Plan Application that is to be acted on by another body. ~~These Hearings~~ ~~and~~ items are assigned listed in an agenda that typically occurs weekly, on every Thursday, through most of the calendar year. Specific times are set aside during the year for breaks in the agenda schedule. The Board's Weekly Agenda provides a notice for the general public of items to be reviewed by the Board, and public access to a staff report for each item where one is required. Information that can be found for each item on the agenda includes:
 - a. project name and plan number;
 - b. brief description of the application and project site;
 - c. area Team lead review staff name;
 - d. staff recommendation and link to the staff technical report, if required; and
 - e. item number on the agenda and approximate time of day that the Board will ~~hear~~ take up the item.

50/59.00.01.05 Requirements for Application Submittal

A. Pre-submittal.

1. *Required Meeting with the Community.* The applicant must hold at least one pre-submittal community meeting before submitting a project plan, sketch plan, preliminary plan, or site plan.
 - (a) *Requirements of the meeting.*
 - i. The applicant must schedule the meeting no more than 90 calendar days before the initial application date, on an evening or weekend, at a location that is convenient to the proposed project site.
 - ii. The purpose of the meeting is to present information about the proposed project and allow members of the community and the larger public to ask questions.
 - iii. The applicant must provide a sign-in sheet at the meeting so that attendees can identify themselves, provide a mailing or email address, and indicate whether they want to be added to the Notice List.
 - iv. The applicant must take meeting minutes that include a summary of any issues or concerns raised by attendees.

2. *Optional Meeting(s) with Staff.* If site constraints or other issues related to the proposed development of a property raise questions about a future development application, an applicant may request one or more pre-submittal meetings with staff.
- B. *Application.* All applications covered by this manual must be filed with the DARC Intake Section staff. The applicant or its representative must fill out and sign the application form and checklist certifying that application and checklist are complete and ready for processing.
1. *Applicant's Responsibility.*
 - (a) *Required submittal items.* Applications for review and action by either the Board or Director are typically submitted and processed electronically through *Montgomery Planning ePlans*⁶. Filing an application includes submittal of an application form, followed by uploading electronic copies of required drawings and documents. The application must include all information required in the application checklist.
 - (b) *Meeting required before plan amendment application.* The required items for a plan amendment vary depending upon the specifics of the case. For each plan amendment, the applicant must contact the appropriate Area Team supervisor to determine the exact submission requirements. The amendment must clearly identify the items or areas of the approved plan proposed for revision.
 2. *Staff's Responsibility.*
 - (a) *Intake Review.* Staff must review the application and within 10 days, either accept the application, or provide initial comments containing all revisions or additional materials required to make the application consistent with the submission requirements. Staff's review consists of a Pre-screen step to make any necessary corrections on the application form and compute the appropriate application fee, and then Intake Review of the initial application materials to determine if the information submitted is complete and meets the requirements of the application checklist. Intake Review is not a review of the merits of the application. Applicants should strive to ensure that each application is complete and correct at the time of initial submission. Staff must not accept an incomplete application for review.
 3. *Items Required for all Applications.* Applications filed with the Planning Department must contain:
 - (a) plan drawings, documents, and other items as required by the application checklist;
 - (b) a certificate of compliance;
 - (c) a statement of justification; and
 - (d) documentation of notice, including pre-submission meeting and site

⁶ Complete instructions for making an application, including application forms and checklists are available on the Planning Department's website at <http://montgomeryplanning.org/development/>.

posting.

The following are also required before an application is accepted:

- (e) a paper copy of the application form signed and dated by the property owner or applicant; and
 - (f) payment of the appropriate fee⁷.
4. *Plan drawings and documents.* A digital copy of all submittal items required by the application checklist for each application type must be provided with the application in the appropriate file format, with the appropriate file name, and prepared following the submittal requirements on the [Planning Department Webpage](#). Plan drawings must be legible and include appropriate notes and specifications and proper certification by a licensed professional or other qualified preparer.
5. *Certificates of Compliance.* The Certificate of Compliance⁸, signed and dated by the Applicant, attests that, to the best of the applicant's knowledge, information, and belief after reasonable investigation, the application conforms to all applicable Federal, State, and County laws and regulations, including standards of the applicable zone. The certification also confirms that the plans and documents in the application package provide complete and correct information on boundary, ownership, and other information on properties, topography, historic resources, etc.
6. *Statements of Justification.* The Statement of Justification is a written statement listing the facts and reasons that the applicant believes would support Board or Director approval of the application. The statement must address each finding that is required in either Chapter 50 or Chapter 59, depending on the type of application.
- (a) *Waiver requests.* If the application includes a request for any waiver of any law or regulation, the statement must specifically identify the applicable code section and provide details of the facts and legal basis that support the granting of the requested waiver. If a waiver is requested for environmental reasons, the applicant should refer to the latest approved Planning Board's Guidelines for the Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County, Maryland. If a proposed development application requires approval of a variance of a zoning standard by the County Board of Appeals, M-NCPPC will not process the application until the Board of Appeals acts.
 - (b) *Supporting information.* The applicant must attach any diagrammatic or illustrative materials that support the facts asserted in the statement of justification. The Applicant, or the Applicant's representative, must certify that the information set forth in each statement of justification is true, complete, and correct to the best of their knowledge, information, and belief.

⁷ Fees paid by check must be made out to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC).

⁸ Standard Certificate of Compliance template available at:
<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/forms/>

7. *Documentation of Notice.*

- (a) *Notice List.* The submitted application documents must include a copy of the notice list, satisfying the requirements above. After mailing written notice, the applicant must retain each item of mail returned undelivered and produce any item retained for inspection by the staff or the Board upon request. If DARC Division staff has not received a copy of the required written notice, the Development Review Committee meeting on the application must be postponed until the applicant demonstrates that each required notice was mailed. **If an application is pending for more than one year**, the applicant must update the notice list and re-send notice (with the latest plan drawings) to each party on the updated list before the plan is scheduled for Board action.
- (b) *Pre-submittal community meeting.* The applicant must provide the following pre-submittal meeting documentation with the application:
 - i. a signed and notarized affidavit attesting to the date, time, and location of the meeting;
 - ii. a dated copy of the invitation notice letter;
 - iii. a copy of the sign-in sheet, and a typed summary list that identifies each attendee, the attendee's contact information, and identification of each attendee who wants to receive all future notifications concerning the proposed application; and
 - iv. meeting minutes that include a summary of issues or concerns raised by attendees.

8. *Documentation of Site Posting.* The applicant must provide the following documentation of site posting:

- (a) *Initial application.* When an application is initially submitted, the applicant must include a template of the proposed sign and a drawing showing the proposed posting locations on the development site.
- (b) *Before application acceptance.* A document file containing the following items must be submitted before application acceptance to demonstrate that site posting requirements have been met:
 - i. a signed and notarized affidavit attesting to the date and location of the posted signs;
 - ii. date-stamped photographs of each posted sign;
 - iii. the staff-approved sign layout plan drawing; and
 - iv. a photograph of one of the actual signs.

C. *Acceptance of an Application.*

1. *Terms of acceptance.* A final application must be complete and comply with all filing procedures to be accepted for review. DARC Intake staff must give the applicant written confirmation when acceptance occurs. The acceptance of a plan means that it is complete and accurate for purposes of filing. Acceptance for filing does not constitute approval of the submitted plan; it allows the application to move forward to evaluation by the participating review agencies and others.
2. *Regulatory clocks.* After application acceptance, Code-required review clocks for the plan application are started and tentative Board hearing dates are assigned, as applicable. If the application is going to be discussed at a Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting, it is added to the next available meeting agenda.
3. *Public record.*⁹ All information contained in the accepted application, or added during application review is part of the public record. In addition, all supporting materials presented to the Board or Director or otherwise incorporated into the plan as part of the action taken on an application, become part of the public record. By submitting a plan application, the applicant agrees to complete the checklist of standard plan requirements included with each application form.

D. *Rejection of an Application.*

1. *Inaccurate, misleading or false certifications.* At any point in the review process, if staff finds that information certified by an applicant or a licensed professional¹⁰ is materially inaccurate, misleading, or false, staff must report the matter in writing to the Director. The Director must review the report, give the applicant or professional an opportunity to respond in writing, and consider any other relevant information. If the Director finds that the applicant or professional submitted materially inaccurate, false, or misleading information, the Director must reject the application and take appropriate action, which may include reporting the facts to the appropriate licensing board.
2. *New application needed.* Any plan rejected for these reasons must be returned to the applicant without any refund of the initial application fee. The application must be dropped from the queue of pending plans, and the applicant must submit a new application with associated fees to be considered further.

- E. *Filing of Concurrent Applications.* Many types of land development projects require the filing, review, and Board approval of more than one type of plan. With the agreement of Planning staff, some of these plans may be filed concurrently. Depending upon the application types, concurrent filing may require extensions of the mandatory review timeframes required by law to facilitate concurrent action on the applications.

50/59.00.01.06 Evaluation of Applications

After a final application is accepted, it must be reviewed to determine if it meets the

⁹ [The public record is not the same as the legal record that the Board bases its decision upon for purposes of a petition for judicial review.](#)

¹⁰ Licensed professionals include engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, attorneys, and any other profession licensed by the State of Maryland.

requirements of the County Code and other applicable laws and adopted guidelines. Individual reviewers must provide their recommendations regarding the approval of the application. These recommendations are part of the basis for the eventual Board or Director action on the plan.

A. *Referral and Inter-Agency Consultation.* When a final application is accepted, the planning staff must:

- provide a copy of the plan and necessary supporting information to designated offices of the Commission, other government or public agencies, and utility companies for comment or approval, as required by applicable law; and
 - if applicable, schedule a discussion of the application between reviewers and the applicant before the Development Review Committee (DRC) chaired by the DARC Division Chief, or designee, within 15 days after the copies are sent.
1. *Lead Reviewer.* For each plan application, the appropriate chief or supervisor must assign a Planning Department lead reviewer. The lead reviewer ensures that the following steps are coordinated and occur in a timely manner.
 - (a) Comments and recommendations from the reviewers are included in the application file and conveyed to the applicant team.
 - (b) Documentation is added to in the application file noting assigned reviewers that do not participate or provide any substantive comments.
 - (c) Potential conflicting comments are identified.
 - (d) Plan revisions and information from the applicant in response to comments are provided to reviewers.
 - (e) The adopted protocol for resolving any agency conflicts is applied when necessary.
 2. *Responsibility of all reviewers.* Comments from any reviewers must be made in writing before the end of each designated review period. A reviewer who is unable to meet this timeframe must complete their review by stating their need for additional time and providing an estimate of when their review will be provided.
 3. *Consultation during review.* Reviewers may hold meetings during the application review period to help evaluate the application as necessary or appropriate. These meetings may include the applicant, other interested parties, and the public. Minutes for each meeting must be prepared by the meeting organizer and included in the application file. Each set of minutes must include the date, time, meeting location, and a list of participants, major issues discussed, and any decision or recommendation made.
 4. *Review Steps.* Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 establish review periods for the different applications, but these may be extended depending upon the number of issues identified as part of the review and the need for plan revisions. The typical review for most applications consists of the following steps:

- (a) Agency review before DRC meeting
 - (b) DRC meeting
 - (c) Applicant revisions after DRC meeting
 - (d) Agency review and approval of each final revised plan
 - (e) Planning Staff prepares a written report
 - (f) Staff report is posted 10 days before a Board hearing
 - (g) Board or Director Action
5. *Extended review.* Review and action on the application types covered in these regulations involves approval of certain required plan components by other agencies, such as, fire access and road grade plans; and concurrent review of related applications, such as, stormwater management concept and Special Protection Area (SPA) water quality plans, water and sewer category change requests, well and septic permits, or conditional use applications. Obtaining these related approvals may require extension of the review timeframes specified above. Delays may also result if an applicant does not submit adequate revisions under section 50/59.00.01.06.B.
6. *Extension of a Board hearing date or Director decision date.* Review deadlines may be extended for sketch, site, preliminary, and administrative subdivision plans under Chapter 59, Sections 7.3.3.C and 7.3.4.C, and Chapter 50, Sections 4.2.E and 6.3.B.3, respectively, by rescheduling the required decision date. A request must be made in writing to the Planning Department for such extension¹¹. Per Chapter 50 and Chapter 59, the Director may postpone the decision date by up to 30 days one time without Board approval. The Board may act to grant extensions of more than 30 days upon request from the Director or applicant. Any extension of a hearing date acted upon by the Board must be noticed on the hearing agenda with the new hearing date indicated. The new hearing date must be identified for individuals on the notice list as part of the written hearing notice.
7. *Extension of plat review.* An applicant may consent to waive the 90-day review period required under Chapter 50, Section 8.2.B to gain time to obtain the necessary approvals from the reviewing agencies; otherwise, staff must base their required recommendation on the latest version of the plat. When staff's final recommendation on a plat is denial, the applicant must be permitted to submit a final plat and staff must prepare a staff report and schedule a Board hearing on the next available agenda.
8. *Application lapse deemed withdrawal.* An application that has been inactive for 365 days with no substantive response to review comments, or that has not been properly extended under Chapter 50 or 59 must be treated as withdrawn unless the applicant can demonstrate good cause to extend the application. The staff must send written notice to an applicant whose plan has been inactive that the applicant

¹¹ Template for the [Regulatory Extension Request Application](#).

has 30 calendar days to request an extension of the staff review. Any request for an extension must:

- (a) be in writing;
- (b) show good cause to grant an extension; and
- (c) propose a timeframe to finalize the application.

If the applicant does not request an extension by the due date, staff must send the applicant written notice that the application has been withdrawn by default. A new application and fee must be submitted to re-file any plan that is withdrawn by default.

B. *Plan Revision*¹². Each applicant is responsible for timely response to reviewer comments. The response may be by resubmitting plans and other documents with revisions, requesting a meeting with reviewers to discuss the comments, or indicating the desire to proceed to Board or Director action without any revision. Resubmitted materials should be submitted within 14 days after the comments are received, unless staff and the applicant agree on an extended deadline. Depending on the size and complexity of the proposed project, a plan may be revised multiple times during the application review. Any final revised plan for an application that is scheduled for Board action must be submitted not less than 65 days before the scheduled Board meeting date.

1. *Major revision*. If the lead reviewer determines that an applicant's revised plan or any other related revised document constitutes a major change¹³ from the original submission, the applicant must:

- (a) re-send written notices to all parties on the Notice List; and
- (b) revise and resubmit an application form if the revision involves a change in:
 - i. acreage of the application site;
 - ii. type of use or units proposed;
 - iii. proposed density of any use;
 - iv. proposed method of development; or
 - v. ownership, applicant, or engineer.

¹² A plan revision is distinct and separate from a plan amendment. A plan revision incorporates changes that are made as part of the plan review process (i.e., before a plan is approved by a regulatory body). An amended plan incorporates changes made to a certified or approved plan.

¹³ A major revision includes any increase or significant decrease in density or number of units, an increase in the limits of disturbance, a significant change in lot layout, or an increase in building height or scale. The lead reviewer determines if an applicant's proposed plan revision is a major or minor revision.

The submittal of a major application revision should be discussed with the assigned lead reviewer before they are submitted, and will require extension of any minimum review timeframe specified by law. The lead reviewer must decide how the revised plan will be reviewed after submittal, and may schedule another DRC meeting.

C. *Public Participation.* Any individual or organization with an interest in or concern about a proposed development or specific application may participate in the review and approval process by:

- attending the pre-submission community meeting organized and held by the applicant before an application is submitted to the Planning Department.
- reviewing information about the submitted plan application online at the [Planning Department website](#); and
- attending the DRC meeting scheduled for the application¹⁴, if applicable. The DRC meeting is not open to public participation; but members of the public may attend and listen the discussion. Groups should notify DARC staff about their interest in attending the DRC meeting before the scheduled date so that space accommodations can be made.

1. *Public comment.* Members of the public who have questions or concerns should contact the Planning Department's lead reviewer at any time during the review process. Public comments should be submitted in writing by letter or email, and become part of the public record of the application. The Planning staff must make every effort to address issues raised by the public during the plan review, and address the issues that are not resolved in their recommendations on the plan. Public comments may also be presented directly to the Board if a public hearing is scheduled.
2. *Community meetings during review.* Meetings with members of the public may be scheduled for a case upon request to the lead reviewer, or for particularly complex or controversial cases, staff may initiate a community meeting. These meetings must include other agency representatives and the applicant, as appropriate.

D. *Staff Reports.* The lead reviewer, after completing the application review and receiving all required agency recommendations or approvals, must prepare a report summarizing the proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law that the Board or Director must make and recommend approval, approval subject to conditions, or denial of the application.

1. *Contents of the staff report.* A staff report ~~must~~ should include the following elements:
 - (a) a site description, including a vicinity map and aerial photograph of the site;
 - (b) an overview of the project, and a plan drawing;
 - (c) a summary of previous approvals, if any;

¹⁴ The DRC meeting is generally held every 2 weeks, on Tuesday. A [DRC Agenda](#) containing items and the times they will be discussed, is posted on the MNCPPC website.

- (d) a summary of the major issues and concerns related to the application and staff's proposed resolution;
 - (e) staff's recommended action, including for an approval, any recommended conditions; and
 - (f) staff's findings of fact and conclusions regarding each applicable requirement of law related to the plan under Chapter 50, Section 4.2.D and Chapter 59, Sections 7.3.3.E and 7.3.4.E; and the basis for each finding and conclusion.
2. *Staff Reports for Board action.* The staff report for a Board action plan or plan amendment application under Chapter 50 or 59 must be published on the Board's website as part of the Hearing Agenda at least 10 days before the date of the scheduled meeting. ~~The Director may direct that the staff report be made available more than 10 days before the scheduled hearing in exceptional circumstances. These circumstances are generally limited to:~~
- ~~(a) exceptionally complicated applications with staff reports that require more review time because of their length and amount of supplemental information; or~~
 - ~~(b) applications that are particularly controversial and involve large numbers of interested parties who require time to coordinate their responses to the staff report.~~
3. *Staff Reports for a minor plan amendment.* A staff report for a minor plan amendment involving limited aspects of the original plan must include the elements listed above and details on each item that is proposed to be changed. ~~Approval of a minor amendment must include a finding that the change will not alter the intent of other aspects of the Board's prior approvals.~~
4. *Objections to a staff report scheduled for Board action.* The applicant or other individuals may submit objections to any finding or conclusion in a staff report that is scheduled for Board action no later than one full business day before the scheduled Board meeting that includes the application. Each objection must be made in writing to the Board Chair and must clearly identify and fully explain the basis for each disagreement. The applicant or any other party may also object to any finding or conclusion in the staff report during the scheduled public hearing on the application.
5. *Request to postpone a public hearing agenda item.* The applicant or any other party may request postponement of a scheduled public hearing after the staff report has been published; ~~however, t~~ The request must be made in writing to the Chair of the Planning Board no later than one full business day before the scheduled Board meeting that includes the application. Each request for postponement must clearly identify and fully explain the basis for postponement. The staff must notify the applicant of each postponement request, and the applicant must be given an opportunity to respond. A decision to postpone a public hearing may only be made by the Planning Board Chair or the Planning Board.

6. ~~*Request to Removing items from the Consent Agenda. The Planning Board may only approve a plan amendment under Chapters 50 and 59 on its Consent Agenda if the amendment is unopposed. If any individual or party opposes an amendment scheduled on the Consent Agenda at any time before the Board votes on the amendment, the Board must remove the item from the Consent Agenda and schedule it for a Full Hearing. If comments from other parties or the public are received on a consent agenda item, the Director must decide whether any comment is substantive enough to require that the amendment be given a public hearing. If the Director finds that a public hearing is not necessary, staff must notify each person who submitted comments of the date the item will be on the consent agenda and that any person may ask the Board to remove an item from the agenda on or before that date. If a request is made before the scheduled meeting date, the Board Chair may remove the item from the consent agenda. Any Board member may also remove an item from the Consent Agenda on the day it is to be heard by making a motion in open session.*~~

50/59.00.01.07 Action on a Plan

A plan application is acted on by the Board or Director, depending on the application type. The Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 requirements for action on a plan are as follows:

Application Type	Approval Authority
Pre-preliminary Submission	Planning Board <i>(when a binding decision is requested by the applicant)</i>
Sketch Plan (and amendments to previously approved Project Plans)	Planning Board
Administrative Subdivision Plan	Planning Director <i>(Director may decide to cede authority to the Board)</i>
Preliminary Plan and Preliminary Plan Amendment	Planning Board <i>(Director may act on changes to validity period phasing)</i>
Site Plan and Major Site Plan Amendment	Planning Board
Minor Site Plan Amendment	Planning Board or Planning Director <i>(depending upon the elements of the plan that are being amended)</i>
Record Plat	Planning Board

A. *Board Action.* Board action as part of their regularly scheduled meetings is required for sketch plans, preliminary plans, site plans, and record plats; and may be required for pre-preliminary submissions and administrative subdivision plans.

1. *Board Meeting Agenda.* The Board votes to act on a plan during their meetings in one of two ways:

- (a) *After a public hearing.* The Board typically acts on development

applications immediately after a hearing¹⁵. The hearing provides an opportunity for testimonial evidence to be presented to the Board by staff, the applicant, and other interested parties.

- (b) *On a Consent Agenda.* Items that are reviewed and acted on as part of a Consent Agenda without any discussion. ~~All items listed in the same Consent Agenda may be approved by the Board in one vote without discussion or individual motions.~~

2. *Scheduling.* Board action on a development application must be scheduled per the requirements of Chapter 50 and Chapter 59. Depending on the plan type, the hearing or consent agenda action dates must be scheduled either 90, or 120 days after a complete plan application is accepted by DARC Intake staff. The following table contains the scheduling requirements for the applicable plans.

Application Type	Maximum Days Between Application Acceptance and Decision ¹	Reference to County Code
Pre-preliminary Submission	90 <i>(if applicant requests a Board hearing)</i>	Ch. 50, Sec. 5.2
Sketch Plan	90	Ch. 59, Sec. 7.3.3.C
Administrative Subdivision Plan	90 <i>(if Director determines a Board hearing is necessary)</i>	Ch. 50, Sec. 6.3
Preliminary Plan and Amendments	120	Ch. 50, Secs. 4.1.E and 4.2.F
Site Plan and Amendments	120	Ch. 59, Secs. 7.3.4.C and 7.3.4.J
Record Plat	30 <i>(this timeframe is measured from submittal of final plat)</i>	Ch. 50, Sec. 8.3.F

¹ This column does not include hearing date extensions that may be granted under Chapter 50 and Chapter 59.

- (a) *Start of clock.* For a pre-preliminary submission, sketch, preliminary or site plan application, the plan action date must be scheduled at the time of application acceptance, and noted in the Application Notice letter sent by the applicant. If the Director determines that an administrative subdivision plan requires a Board hearing and action, the hearing must be scheduled on the next available agenda date.
- (b) *Possible extension.* Depending on the complexity of the plan and the degree of controversy, Board hearing dates may need to be extended, as discussed above, to have sufficient time to identify and understand the issues of the proposed project and sufficiently explore and incorporate features to address these issues.

¹⁵ Rules for the conduct of hearings before the Board are found in the [Board's Rules of Procedure](#).

- (c) *Minimum requirements for scheduling a Board hearing.* Action on a plan application must not be scheduled until the lead reviewer determines that:
- i. a final plan has been submitted by the applicant and date stamped by the lead reviewer to identify it as the official plan for Board consideration;
 - ii. all agency reviews are completed and written recommendations have been received; and
 - iii. all relevant issues and concerns have either been resolved or will be presented to the Board for resolution.

3. *Visual exhibits.* Applicants must submit digital copies of the following visual exhibits to the lead reviewer for use in the Board hearing, at least 3 business days before the scheduled date of the hearing:

- (a) a rendered copy of the applicable land development plan (pre-preliminary, sketch, preliminary, administrative subdivision, and site);
- (b) a rendered forest conservation plan and landscape plan, if applicable; and
- (c) other exhibits, depending upon the issues of the plan, as requested by the lead reviewer.

Visual exhibits may be presented at the hearing by any participant. They should be prepared in digital form and saved on an electronic medium (e.g., USB flash drive, CD, etc.) so they are viewable by all at the meeting and can be retained as part of the meeting record¹⁶.

4. *Testimony.* Any interested party may present testimony for consideration as part of the Board's hearing by signing up in advance, or at the hearing.
5. *Action on a record plat.* Staff must schedule action for a record plat immediately after the final plat is accepted. Action is generally taken by the Board as part of ~~their~~ its Consent Agenda. A staff memorandum that includes a summary of staff's review and recommendations and a copy of the proposed plat must be posted on the Commission's website at least 10 days before the scheduled Board action date. Staff may add record plats to the Consent Agenda not later than 5 days before the scheduled action date in limited circumstances. Plats may be listed in the same Consent Agenda item and approved by the Board in one vote without discussion or individual motions.

- B. *Director Action.* Action on administrative subdivision plans and certain minor amendments to preliminary plans and site plans may be taken by the Director instead of the Board. A public hearing is not required before the Director acts, but the Director may determine that a hearing is warranted in some cases. When such a determination is made, the Director must cede their authority to act on the application to the Board and

¹⁶ With advanced notice before the day of the scheduled hearing, DARC Division staff will scan paper copies of visual exhibits and create digital copies for use in the meeting.

schedule the public hearing on the next available Board meeting agenda.

1. *Public participation for a Director action.* The required written application notice for an application that will be acted upon by the Director must include the fact that a public hearing will not be scheduled. The notice must also state that comments concerning the application must be submitted to the Director, and specify the time within which the comments must be received to be considered as part of the Director's decision. Any comment period must be a minimum of 15 days from the date the written application notice is sent.
2. *Timing.* The timing of a Director action is subject to the scheduling requirements of subsection 50/59.00.01.07.A.2, above.

C. *Documentation of action.* Written documentation of a Board or Director action is required.

1. *Resolutions.* Resolutions documenting a Board action required under Chapter 50 and Chapter 59 must be adopted per the Board's Rules of Procedure. The resolution mailing date is the basis for calculation of the plan validity periods specified in Chapter 50 and Chapter 59.
 - (a) *Resolution notice.* A copy of the resolution must be sent by staff to the applicant, the applicant's engineer and attorney, and all parties of record for the hearing¹⁷, and included in any certified plan drawing set.
2. *Written Director action.* The Director's action on an application may be by letter or memorandum, or as part of the staff report. When the Director accepts all findings in the staff report and staff's recommendation, the Director's counter-signature and action date on the staff report is sufficient documentation of the action. The Director's action date is the start of the plan validity periods of the approved plan.
 - (a) *Notice of Director action.* A copy of the Director's approval must be sent to the applicant, placed in the public record of the case, and included in any certified plan drawing set.

50/59.00.01.08 Plan Certification

Certification of plan drawings is required for preliminary plans, administrative subdivision plans, and site plans (and any amendment to either) that have been approved. The certified plan set must include all plans associated with these approvals, including: forest conservation or tree save plans, landscape and lighting plans, architectural plans, and impervious surface plans approved as part of a SPA water quality plan.

- A. *Steps for certification.* After the Board or Director, as appropriate, approves a project application that requires a certified plan to confirm the approval, the following steps must be taken:
 1. The applicant must make any modifications to the application drawings that were

¹⁷ The parties of record for a hearing include the applicant, the applicant's engineer, the applicant's attorney, any individual or group that testifies at the hearing, and any individual or group that submits written testimony after a staff report has been posted.

required by the conditions of the approval, add a copy of the signed Board Resolution or Director approval, and submit the plan drawing set to the Planning Department.

2. Staff ~~must~~ should review the submitted application drawing set within 15 days and either accept the plans or provide review comments to the applicant outlining necessary corrections.
 3. Accepted drawings must be stamped approved, signed, and dated by the Director or designee.
 4. The applicant must produce and submit one paper copy of the stamped certified plan set with original developer and professional certification signatures and submit it to the Planning Department for archiving.
 5. A copy of the fully executed certified plan must be posted electronically on the Planning Department's website for viewing by all interested parties.
- B. *Separate exhibit required for ownership units.* Ownership units may not be included on a certified preliminary plan or site plan drawing set. When an applicant intends to create ownership units within a lot included on such plans, a separate ownership unit drawing must be submitted for certification along with the preliminary plan or site plan.

50/59.00.01.09 Post-Approval Requirements

- A. *Inspections.* The applicant must schedule all Planning Department inspections that are required by conditions of any approved preliminary plan, administrative subdivision plan, or final forest conservation or tree save plan with a Planning Department inspector per the approved inspection schedule. The inspection must confirm that land development activities occurring on a project site will conform to all requirements of the approved plans. Required pre-construction inspections must be coordinated with the DPS inspector and an applicant's representative to ensure that requirements for sediment and erosion control and stormwater management do not conflict with approved requirements for forest conservation and protection of environmentally-sensitive areas.
- B. *Surety and bonds.* The applicant must enter a Surety and Maintenance Agreement¹⁸ with the Board as required by any approved application, submit a cost estimate¹⁹ of the materials and facilities that are required to establish the surety amount, and provide a performance bond²⁰ or other form of surety.
1. *Timing and elements included.*
 - (a) *Subdivision and site plan surety.* Surety and bonding for the required elements of a preliminary plan, administrative subdivision plan, or site plan must be provided per the timing specified in the conditions of approval;

¹⁸ Template for a [Subdivision and Site Plan Surety and Maintenance Agreement](#) and Forest Conservation Plan Maintenance & Management Agreement: [Onsite](#) and [Offsite](#).

¹⁹ Template for the [Cost Estimate Table](#).

²⁰ Template for a [Subdivision and Site Plan Bond](#), [Subdivision and Site Plan Letter of Credit](#), [Forest Conservation Plan Bond](#), and [Forest Conservation Letter of Credit](#).

generally, before the issuance of building permits or sediment control permits. The elements include: landscape plant material, on-site lighting, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, site furniture, mailbox pad sites, trash enclosures, retaining walls, fences, railings, private utilities, private roads and associated improvements, including sidewalks, bikeways, storm drainage facilities, street trees and street lights.

(b) *Forest conservation and tree save plan surety.* Surety and bonding for the required elements of a forest conservation plan or tree save plan must be provided before the Planning Department inspector authorizes any clearing or grading of the development site. The elements include: plant materials, tree protection measures, invasive species control measures, planting site preparation, fencing, and boundary signage.

2. *Review and approval.* The required surety and bonds must be submitted to the DARC Division for distribution to the appropriate review staff.

C. *Other.*

1. *Before submittal of a Record Plat.* An application for a record plat will not be accepted without verification that the following requirements have been met.

(a) *Certified plans.* The applicant must submit a copy of the certified preliminary plan and associated forest conservation plan, and the Board's resolution on the preliminary plan, with the record plat application. The applicant must also submit a copy of the certified site plan and associated forest conservation plan, and site plan resolution for any property that is subject to site plan approval.

(b) *Road improvements.* The applicant must comply with Chapter 50, Sections 4.3.E.2.b, 4.3.E.3.b, 4.3.E.4.e, and 4.3.E.5.d by:

i. *Public roads.* Applying to DPS for right-of-way permit(s) or satisfying any alternative requirements of DPS to ensure proper design of public roads.

ii. *Private roads.* Obtaining the certification of an engineer that each private road has been designed to meet the requirements of Chapter 50, Section 4.3.4.

(c) *Forest conservation easements.* Documentation needed to create all conservation easements must be prepared in at least draft form.

(d) *Street naming and address plan.* The applicant must request an Address Plan or Address Verification from DARC Division staff before the initial submission of the Record Plat application. Staff will work with the applicant to assign addresses for newly created lots and verify addresses for existing properties that are to remain in their original configuration. If the approved subdivision includes new streets, the applicant must submit a list of proposed street names for staff review and approval to ensure that: new streets are not assigned names that are already in use in the County; the

assigned names do not cause confusion in locating addresses for properties or structures; and they meet other Board guidelines for street names²¹.

- (e) *Other necessary covenants or agreements.* All covenants, agreements and easements required by Board conditions of approval must be prepared in at least draft form.
 - (e) *Required agency approvals.* Regulatory approvals that are conditioned as part of the Board's approval of an application, such as, a DPS well and septic permit or stormwater management concept, must be obtained before a plat is submitted.
2. *Before issuance of Building Permit.* The applicant must verify for DARC Division staff that all conditions of a Board approval that were required to be met before the issuance of a building permit have been satisfied.

50/59.00.01.10 Alternative Procedures and Additional Requirements

Certain types of applications have additional requirements not covered by Chapter 50 or the sections above, or are subject to alternative procedures for submission and review. These alternative requirements and procedures are described below.

A. Administrative Subdivision Plan.

1. *Board action required.* The Director must cede their authority to act on an administrative subdivision plan application and schedule action by the Board if:
 - (a) an objection to the application is received during the review, and the Director determines the objection is relevant;
 - (b) the project site is within a Special Protection Area and required to submit a Water Quality Plan;
 - (c) the application includes a request for a waiver under Section 50.9 of Chapter 50;
 - (d) the application includes a request for abandonment of land dedicated for public use under Section 50.8.4.A.2 of Chapter 50; and
 - (e) the application includes a change to a recorded conservation easement on the project site.
2. *Director participation in application review.* The Director may not participate in the DRC meeting or any other meetings that occur on an application before acting on the plan.
3. *Effect of an appeal to an Administrative Subdivision Plan.* An appeal of an

²¹ Rules and guidelines for assigning addresses and street names in the County are provided in the latest version of the [Addressing and Street Naming Guidelines and Procedures Manual for Montgomery County, Maryland](#) (DARC Division, Montgomery County Planning Department, M-NCPPC).

administrative subdivision plan filed under Section 6.3.C of Chapter 50 stays the Director's action on the plan until the Board acts on the appeal after a public hearing.

- B. *Validity Period Extension Requests.* The date when the Planning Board's resolution for a preliminary plan is mailed establishes both the plan validity period and the validity period for the associated adequate public facilities review. The Board may extend these validity periods under Chapter 50, Sections 4.2.H and 4.3.J.7.
1. *Application.* An application filed for extension of a validity period must include a letter from the applicant, or the applicant's representative, which identifies the facts, conditions, and provisions of law relied upon by the applicant to justify an extension.
 2. *Review and Action.* Planning Department staff may review an application filed for extension of a validity period without referring it to other government or public agencies, and utility companies. A DRC meeting on the application is not required. Staff must prepare a staff report for the application as noted above, and schedule action per the timing required for the plan under which the validity period was established.
- C. *Subdivision Regulations Waiver Requests.* Chapter 50, Division 50.9 specifies waivers that the Planning Board may grant. Waivers are generally reviewed as part of an application for a preliminary plan of subdivision. However, a waiver of the requirement to submit a preliminary plan of subdivision may be requested. In that case, a separate subdivision waiver application is required.
1. *Application.* Each application for waiver must include a letter from the applicant or the applicant's representative which specifies the facts, conditions, and provisions of law on which the applicant relies to justify a waiver.
 2. *Review and Action.* An application for a subdivision regulations waiver must be reviewed per the requirements of Chapter 50, Section 9.5.A and acted upon by the Board.
- D. *Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) Review at Building Permit.* Per Chapter 8, Section 8-31, a building permit must not be issued for lots that do not have a valid APFO approval from the Board. If such approval is not granted by the conditions of an approved preliminary plan, administrative subdivision plan, or site plan, the Department of Permitting Services refers the building permit application to the Board for a determination that public facilities will be adequate to serve the proposed development. In these cases, an application for APFO review ~~is required~~ should be filed under these procedures.
1. *Application.* Each application for a building permit APFO review must include an application form, and applicable fee, and sufficient information to demonstrate the expected impact on and use of public facilities by the development.
 2. *Referral of the application.* Immediately after accepting the application, the Director must send a copy to DOT, MCPS, DPS Fire Department Access and Water Supply, and any other applicable reviewing agencies for their comments concerning the plan. Per Chapter 8, each recipient must respond to the Board

within 30 days after receiving the application from the Director.

3. *Review and Action.* After receiving the recommendations of the participating reviewers, staff must prepare a staff report for the application as noted above, ~~and schedule the application for Board review and action on the next available agenda.~~
 4. *Action.* Action on an application for APFO review at building permit may be taken by either the Director or Board, depending upon the circumstances of the request.
 - (a) If a complete and adequate traffic statement is submitted and the proposed development generates less than 50 total peak hour person trips, the APF determination may be approved administratively by the Planning Department Director or designee.
 - (b) If a complete and adequate traffic study is submitted and the proposed development generates 50 or more total peak hour person trips, the APF determination must be approved by the Planning Board following a public hearing.
- E. *Request to Extend a Hearing Date.* The Director and Board may extend the hearing date that is required to be set at the time certain applications are accepted under Chapter 59, Sections 7.3.3.C and 7.3.4.C, and Chapter 50, Section 4.1.E. A request for such extension must be made in writing by the applicant or the Planning Department lead reviewer. The [Regulatory Extension Request Template](#) may be used for this purpose.
1. *Board action on the request.* If the Board is required to act on a request to extend a hearing date, staff must prepare a memorandum immediately after receiving the request and schedule the action on the next available agenda.
- F. *Request for an Exemption to Platting.* When DPS requires verification from the Planning Department that a property is exempt from the requirement to be recorded by a plat per Chapter 50, Section 3.3, a written request must be submitted to the DARC Division. The request must include copies of all information needed to support the exemption as outlined in Section 3.3.
- G. *Concept Plan.* A concept plan is an optional, voluntary application that may be filed before a sketch, preliminary or site plan application to obtain advice concerning a proposed development project from the Development Review Committee (DRC).
1. *Application.* Each application for a concept plan must include an application form, a narrative statement from the applicant, or the applicant's representative, that identifies the aspects of the proposed development on which advice is being sought, and sufficient information on accompanying plan drawings to show existing conditions and the extent of proposed development.
 2. *Referral of the application.* Immediately after accepting the application, the Director must send a copy to the DRC reviewing agencies for their comments concerning the plan.
 3. *Review.* The application must be scheduled for discussion at the next available DRC meeting after acceptance. Planning Department staff must prepare a summary of the DRC comments and provide it to the applicant within two weeks

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from the DRC meeting.