

THE SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS

WHAT IS A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)?

An SDP is a detailed engineered drawing of a commercial, industrial, institutional or residential development project, showing existing site conditions and proposed improvements with sufficient detail for agency review, approval and subsequent construction.

General information shown on an SDP is:

- Existing and proposed buildings and structures
- Driveways, sidewalks and paved parking areas
- Existing topography, proposed grades and retaining walls
- Drainage and storm water management (SWM)
- Sediment and erosion control
- Utilities and easements
- 100 year floodplain, streams, non-tidal wetlands and required buffers
- Forest stand delineation and forest conservation easement areas
- Landscaping and outdoor lighting
- Green neighborhood and/or green 'LEED' certified buildings
- Site conditions on adjacent properties

WHEN IS SDP APPROVAL REQUIRED?

An approved SDP is required prior to issuance of grading permits or building permits for the following development projects or uses:

1. Non-Residential Development -

- Includes new or expanded commercial, industrial, institutional and utility development, plus public buildings, schools and other public facilities.
- A change in use or expansion of a use is considered a form of development and may require an SDP.

2. Residential Development -

- Single family attached, apartment and mobile home residential development.
- Development of single family detached residential lots and deeded parcels within the Planned Service Area for both public water and sewer and only for subdivision lots recorded on or after February 7, 1976. Single family detached lots recorded on a plat prior to February 7, 1976, are exempt from this requirement unless more than 5,000 square feet of disturbance is proposed and the lots have not been reconfigured or merged through the recordation of a plat after February 7, 1976.
- Residential lots within the New Town Zoning District that do not meet the residential requirements indicated above and when the Final Development Plan criteria requires submission of an SDP.

3. Conditional Use Development -

- All conditional uses in commercial or industrial zoning districts.
- In other zoning districts, the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) may require an SDP for conditional uses which propose exterior site improvements.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The DPZ has a standard SDP application and checklist available at the Public Service Center to assist property owners and developers with the plan preparation and submittal requirements. Applications and checklists are also available on the DPZ web site at: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/projectdox> and through the "Project Dox" electronic plan processing system. "Project Dox" is a tool for plan submission, review, approval and tracking using a paperless online web-based system. All SDP plan submissions must be submitted and processed using the "Project Dox" web based system. Contact DPZ for additional information about "Project Dox."

The SDP application and checklist provide information on required items for preparation of the SDP and other supplemental documents that may be required such as a forest stand delineation and conservation plan, a wetlands analysis, a floodplain study, a noise study, a sight distance analysis, storm drain and retaining wall computations, and an adequate public facilities road test.

A Maryland registered engineer or architect must prepare the necessary plans and supplemental documents.

WHAT FEES ARE REQUIRED?

Filing fees for SDP review and approval are based on a Schedule of Fees adopted each year by Resolution of the County Council and are available at the DPZ Public Service Center. The Schedule of Fees is also available on the DPZ's web site at: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/projectdox>

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)?

The seven basic steps for processing an SDP are:

Step 1 - Pre-Submission Community Meeting, if applicable:

If the initial plan submittal is an SDP (no subdivision plan involved) for residential development (includes more than one single family unit on deeded parcels, or for condominium or rental units on a parcel which is not part of a recorded subdivision) or for new non-residential development located within 200 feet of a residential zoning district, or for existing non-residential development with a proposed expansion of more than 25%, the property owner or developer is required to hold a meeting with community residents prior to submitting the SDP to the County. This is an opportunity for community residents to learn about the plans and ask questions and express any concerns regarding the proposed development. Contact the DPZ for additional information about the pre-submission community meeting process and procedures or visit the DPZ web site at: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning>

Step 1a - Design Advisory Panel (DAP) Meeting, if applicable:

A pre-submission advisory meeting with the DAP is required for all new development or redevelopment projects located in the Route 1 Corridor that are zoned CE, CAC or TOD or that adjoin the Route 1 right-of-way and are subject to the Route 1 Design Manual; for parcels located within the Route 40 Corridor as defined in the Route 40 Design Manual; for age-restricted adult housing projects pursuant to a Conditional Use and for redevelopment projects located in the New Town Village Centers and/or Downtown Columbia revitalization area. Contact the DPZ, Division of Comprehensive and Community Planning for information about the DAP meeting process.

Step 1b - Historic District Commission (HDC) Meeting, if applicable:

A pre-submission advisory meeting with the HDC is required for new development located within a Historic District or if the site is listed in the Historic Sites Inventory. Contact the DPZ, Resource Conservation Division for information about the HDC meeting process.

Step 1c - Environmental Concept Plan (ECP), if applicable:

The pre-submission of an ECP to the Department of Planning and Zoning is required for proposed storm water management facilities to demonstrate how the environmental site design is achieved to the maximum extent practicable. An ECP is the first of three required plan approvals that includes the information necessary to allow an initial evaluation of a proposed project. The ECP includes a conceptual design for storm water management, erosion and sediment control and the delineation of environmental features. The ECP must be submitted through the "Project Dox" electronic process. Contact the DPZ, Development Engineering Division for information about the ECP Process.

Step 2 - Submittal of the SDP to the County:

Applications for SDP approval must be submitted to DPZ through the "Project Dox" electronic plan processing system. The accepted plan will be assigned a file number and distributed through "Project Dox" to the Subdivision Review Committee (SRC), an advisory group of County and State Departments, for review, comments and recommendations. The SRC is composed of the following County and State Departments:

- Planning and Zoning
- Public Works
- Health
- Recreation and Parks
- Inspections, Licenses and Permits
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Public School System
- State Highway Administration
- Soil Conservation District

Step 3 - Review of the SDP:

The SRC will review the SDP to verify compliance with County and State regulations. The DPZ will coordinate the SRC comments and determine whether the plan can be approved. The SRC meets to discuss the project within three to four weeks after the plan application is accepted by the County.

Step 4 - Decision on Technical Completeness of the SDP:

Within 60 days from submission of the plan, the DPZ will provide an electronic decision to the property owner or developer through "Project Dox" indicating that the plan is either: (1) approved, (2) approved with modifications or (3) revised plans required. A plan is technically complete if it complies with the requirements of the SRC agencies. If revised plans are requested, revisions must be made to the SDP and the revised plans must be resubmitted through "Project Dox" to the DPZ within 45 days of receiving comments.

Step 5 - Adequate Public Facilities Testing (APF), if applicable:

SDP's for residential units not part of a recorded subdivision are tested for road intersection adequacy during the review of the plan and are tested for housing unit allocation availability and for adequate public school facilities based on charts adopted each year by the County Council once the plan is determined to be technically complete. If housing unit allocations are not available or school capacity does not exist, the SDP will be placed on hold awaiting a change in status. Non-residential SDP's take the road intersection adequacy test, but not the allocations and school test.

Step 6 - Planning Board Approval, if applicable:

For SDP projects located in zoning districts that require Planning Board approval, the DPZ will advise the property owner or developer of the Planning Board meeting date with notification that the SDP is technically approvable.

Step 7 - Submission of the SDP Originals (Mylars) for Signature Approval:

Within 180 days of receiving notice that the SDP is technically complete, or within 180 days of Planning Board approval, the applicant must:

- Execute Developer Agreements, if required. This process involves submission and execution of a Developer's Agreement associated with the development plan to the DPW, Real Estate Services Division for installation of public water and sewerage, forest conservation, landscaping, SWM, roads, and a Declaration of Covenants and Maintenance and Right of Entry Agreement for private storm water management, if applicable.
- Pay all required fees to the County
- Submit the SDP original mylars to the DPZ for signature approval processing

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE SDP RECEIVES SIGNATURE APPROVAL?

Within one year of signature approval of the SDP mylars, the property owner or developer must apply to the Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits for building permits to initiate construction on the site. For single family attached, apartment and non-residential developments with multiple buildings, the property owner or developer must apply for building permits for all construction authorized by the approved SDP within two years of signature approval. For single family detached developments involving multiple lots, the developer must apply for building permits for all construction authorized by the approved SDP within five years of signature approval.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE . . .

Howard County land use regulations are intended to promote the health, safety and general welfare of County residents. This brochure is meant to provide a basic understanding of the SDP submission, review and approval process in Howard County. It is not intended as a substitute for the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

For more information contact:

The Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning at: (410) 313-2350, TTY (410) 313-2323; View the DPZ web site at: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning> or visit the Public Service Center of DPZ on the first floor of the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD. 21043, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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