

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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General Plan Amendment Initial Review

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Purpose

To specify the manner in which amendments to the San Diego County General Plan sought by private parties shall be initiated pursuant to Government Code Section 65358.

Background

In recognition of the role of the General Plan as a comprehensive, long-term plan for the preservation, development and enhancement of the County, and in consideration of the significant investment that is required to fully initiate a development application, a process should be in place to assure the applicants are fully informed of potential issues and risks associated with filing a privately initiated General Plan Amendment.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that any privately initiated amendments to the County General Plan are given a preliminary review for conformance with the County General Plan. Potential issues which may make the General Plan Amendment request infeasible should be identified before a formal application for a General Plan Amendment is filed with the County. Accordingly, the following two processes are available to an applicant seeking to initiate a General Plan Amendment. Prior to commencing the two step process indicated below, it is highly recommended that individuals interested in amending the General Plan first contact the Department of Planning & Development Services Zoning Counter about their desired use for their property so that they can be informed of all options available to them and any relevant details for undertaking this process.

Step 1: General Plan Amendment Initial Consultation (Optional). Property owners wishing to file a General Plan Amendment have the option of requesting an Initial Consultation with the Department of Planning & Development Services. Those deciding to bypass this process and the benefits of an early initial review must acknowledge their decision when applying for a Pre-Application Meeting (Step 2). The Initial Consultation meeting between the property owner and staff shall take place within 30-days from the date the request for an Initial Consultation is made.

The scope of the General Plan Amendment Initial Consultation would be limited to:

- Conformance with General Plan Guiding Principles;
- Conformance with General Plan Goals and Policies;
- Conformance with applicable Community Plan;
- Availability of public facilities and planned infrastructure including primary and secondary access; and
- Identification of known major environmental constraints including but not limited to biology (MSCP, wetlands) and steep slopes which may impact the requested density or intensity of use.

Within two weeks following the Initial Consultation meeting, the Department shall issue a letter to the property owner identifying any project issues identified from the Initial Consultation that pose

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challenges to the approval of the General Plan amendment request. Upon submittal of the General Plan Amendment application, applicants who have completed the Initial Consultation process shall provide a copy of the Department letter signed by the financially responsible party indicating their acknowledgment of the potential major project issues. The Initial Consultation application submittal shall only include information as specified within the application packet available at the Department of Planning & Development Services. The request shall be accompanied by the appropriate fixed fee paid pursuant to Section 362 of the San Diego County Administrative Code applicable to General Plan Amendment requests. Applicants may alternatively choose to pay the standard Initial Consultation meeting fee available to other project types (time and material costs) in lieu of the General Plan Amendment Initial Consultation fixed fee when a simpler General Plan Amendment is being requested.

Step 2: General Plan Amendment Pre-Application Meeting (Required). Prior to filing an application for a General Plan Amendment, a property owner shall file a request to conduct a Pre-Application meeting with the Department of Planning & Development Services. Those deciding to bypass an early initial review described in Step 1 must acknowledge their decision when applying for a Pre-Application meeting. This process would follow existing Department procedures and timelines for conducting Pre-Application meetings. The applicable Community Planning Group shall be notified of the Pre-Application request. The Pre-Application meeting may be waived by the Director of Planning & Development Services pursuant to the specified criteria in the Department's Pre-Application meeting procedures.

The scope of the General Plan Amendment Pre-Application Meeting includes and is not limited to:

- General Plan conformance (results from the Initial Consultation, if conducted, will be relied on to the extent practicable to avoid any duplication of effort);
- Review of applicable codes and ordinances (eg. Zoning Ordinance, Fire Code, Subdivision Ordinance, Groundwater Ordinance.);
- Review by relevant departments (Public Works, Environmental Health, Parks and Recreation, etc.); and
- Identification and scoping of needed technical environmental studies.

The Department of Planning & Development Services will issue a Scoping letter within two weeks following the Pre-Application meeting. The Pre-Application Scoping letter will provide a comprehensive review of the General Plan Amendment request and other project components and identify potential major project issues that could render the General Plan Amendment request infeasible. A copy of the scoping letter shall be sent to the applicable Community Planning Group.

The party financially responsible for processing the General Plan Amendment shall be required to provide a signed copy of the Pre-Application Scoping letter acknowledging that they reviewed the Scoping letter when filing their application for a General Plan Amendment with the County. The request for a General Plan Amendment Pre-Application Meeting shall be accompanied by the appropriate deposit paid pursuant to Section 362 of the San Diego County Administrative Code. The

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deposit for a General Plan Amendment Pre-Application Meeting may be reduced if an Initial Consultation meeting was conducted and the General Plan Amendment request remains unchanged.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by December 31, 2021.

Board Action

9-14-76 (11)	12-3-86 (6)	2-8-95 (1)	12-07-11 (1)
5-22-79 (150)	8-10-88 (22)	4-30-03 (1)	09-25-12 (11)
6-9-82 (14)	11-20-91 (15)	7-23-08 (22)	12-03-14 (4)
3-12-86 (19)	1-11-95 (1)	12-09-08 (33)	

CAO Reference

Department of Planning & Development Services