

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY

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Processing Inactive Projects

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Purpose

To increase efficiency and decrease costs for the Department of Planning & Development Services (“Department”) and its customers by developing a program within the Department that reduces the ongoing administrative management and costs of processing privately initiated discretionary projects with a history of inactivity.

Background

The Department is responsible for continually processing several hundred discretionary projects within time parameters established by numerous state and local laws, ordinances, and policies. Currently more than one-third of the projects being processed with the Department have a history of case inactivity. In order to meet established review and processing times, the Department spends a considerable amount of time attempting to obtain requested additional information and/or funds required to move a project through the discretionary process. These types of projects result in a diversion of staff resources, affect internal efficiencies with regards to being able to process other discretionary projects in an expeditious manner, and result in periodic charges to applicants, who many times, are not able to expeditiously proceed with their project due to financial hardships or other similar external factors.

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that, effective January 1, 2010, applicants for projects considered inactive will be notified in writing that the project will be placed into an idle status within 60 days of issuance of written notification. Projects will be classified as inactive if required information and/or document(s) are not received by the Department within 12 months from the due date specified in the most recent County correspondence letter, such as a scoping or technical study comment letter.

Placement of an inactive project into an idle status means that the project will 1) be administratively placed on hold and designated as idle, 2) the Department Project Manager will be removed from the project, and 3) the project file(s) will be retained in an idle status library. Upon being designated as idle, all future project inquiries will be directed to an appointed Department Project Coordinator. Projects placed in idle status are allowed to remain in such status for a cumulative total of 2 years, unless an extension is granted by the Director of the Department.

If an inactive project is not reactivated by the expiration date of the idle status (April 30, 2022),–or there is lack of progress (including multiple written attempts by the Department to contact the applicant/applicant representative with no response), the Department will bring the project forward to the appropriate decision maker with a recommendation of denial due to inadequate progress as authorized by CEQA Guidelines Section 15109, or by Section 362 of Article XX of the San Diego County Administrative Code, Schedule B, 5 and 6.

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In order to reactivate the project, the applicant will be first required to apply for and attend an Initial Consultation Pre-Application Meeting to allow the Department time to review the project and meet with the project applicant to discuss the applicability of new and/or revised ordinances, policies, standards (including compliance with the Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements for applicable subject areas). Following the analysis and meeting, the submission of required project documentation for continued project processing will formally reactivate the project.

The financial responsible party, as identified in the project application, will be responsible for all charges related to the administrative functions identified in this policy, including charges for the time needed to become familiar with the project and process the project in accordance with the above established criteria.

This policy is not intended to be used as a tool to allow an applicant to place their project on hold when there is evidence that the project has unresolvable conflicts with applicable ordinances, codes, policies, and regulations.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to any properties, where there is a discretionary project on file with the Department of Planning & Development Services, for which a code violation has been issued or has an active codes case.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to discretionary projects that were placed into idle status before November 20, 2019. This policy will be deleted on April 30, 2022 or once the projects placed into idle before November 20, 2019 are no longer in idle status, which means each idle project has been either reactivated, withdrawn, or denied by the appropriate decision maker.

Sunset Date

This policy will be deleted by April 30, 2022.

Board Action

10/21/09 (6)

10/31/12 (4)

8/5/2020 (11)

CAO Reference

Department of Planning & Development Services