



# Issue Resolution

County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services

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## Goal of Issue Resolution

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The County is committed to helping customers navigate the land use permit process and ensuring customer satisfaction. The County recognizes that land development can be complex and that each project is unique. Planning & Development Services (PDS) takes great pride in training staff to be problem-solvers and to elevate issues to management or senior staff as soon as possible during the land development process. In order to provide simple, accessible, and transparent methods for customers to resolve issues, PDS has adopted two Issue Resolution processes: 1. Second Opinion and 2. Project Issue Resolution (PIR) Conference. The goal of the Issue Resolution processes is to help facilitate completion of each permit application in an efficient and timely manner by elevating technical project issues and policy interpretations to our Executive Management Team or other County staff. PDS wants to ensure that your concerns are heard, taken into consideration, and evaluated whether you are a one-time or frequent customer.

## Types of Issue Resolution

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### Second Opinion

The first Issue Resolution process is Second Opinion. Applicants can request a Second Opinion from senior staff or management when there is a disagreement with a project manager or County staff involving the interpretation or relevance of a code. PDS uses Second Opinion to provide a clear determination relevant to their field of work. Second Opinion is commonly used by counter staff in order to provide a quick answer when possible during a short visit to the PDS lobby. If a Second Opinion requires input from employees outside of PDS or the feedback from County Counsel, the second Issue Resolution process may be required.

### Project Issue Resolution (PIR) Conference

The second Issue Resolution process is a PIR Conference. A PIR Conference is a scheduled meeting where a project manager and their supervisor identify appropriate County staff and a member of Executive Management to attend a meeting with a customer and their team in order to reach a resolution. The project manager and their supervisor will introduce the project and related issues, and the attendees will discuss potential processing solutions. Following a PIR Conference, meeting minutes and a determination will be issued providing a summary of the meeting. PIR Conferences are intended for situations after issues or concerns have been communicated and reviewed by a project manager and their supervisor or if a determination cannot be reached through Second Opinion.



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## PIR Conference Guide

### How do I schedule a PIR Conference?

In the event that a PIR Conference is requested, a copy of a completed Project Issue Resolution Conference Request Form must be submitted to the assigned project manager. Once a completed form has been submitted, the project manager will determine the appropriate staff to attend the meeting.

[PROJECT ISSUE RESOLUTION CONFERENCE REQUEST FORM](#)



click here

### Who attends the PIR Conference?

Depending on the issues discussed during PIR Conferences, different attendees may be required to attend. Below is a list of potential attendees:

- Project Manager / Project Contact
- Senior Staff (Planning Manager, Senior Civil Engineer, Divisional Chief)
- Executive Management
- Outside Department County staff
- County Counsel
- Members of the applicant teams

If the applicant wishes to bring an attorney or legal counsel, a representative from County Counsel is required to attend the meeting. In some circumstances it is beneficial to have County Counsel attend a PIR Conference in order to assist with interpretations of a code. County Counsel may also assist in reaching a determination.

### Timing of the PIR Conference

When a PIR Conference is requested, County staff will schedule it as soon as possible. On average, a PIR Conference can be scheduled in two weeks, however, some may take several weeks to schedule depending on the complexity of the issue or the involvement of other County Departments. County staff will evaluate if alternative employees can attend a PIR Conference if other staff cannot attend due to scheduling conflicts. In some circumstances and to ensure efficient processing, a request for a PIR Conference will be placed on the agenda of an internal Executive Management meeting and a PIR determination may result following the briefing.



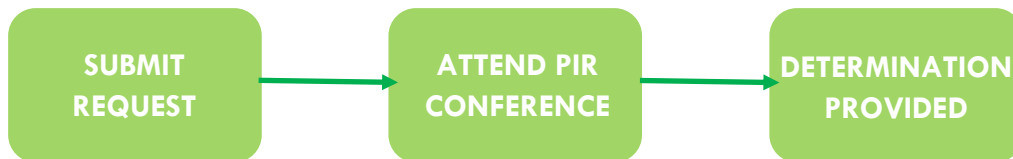
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## Decision and Outcome

Following a PIR Conference, the project manager or primary County staff contact will prepare meeting minutes and a determination consistent with what was discussed during the PIR Conference. The meeting minutes and determination will be sent out to the customer following review by senior staff or County Counsel when necessary. If new information or action items following a meeting require the need for a follow-up PIR Conference or a senior staff review, the project manager or primary County staff contact will coordinate with the customer. Please note that determinations cannot be appealed and are not bound to any County decision-making body such as the Director of PDS, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or the Board of Supervisors.



## Project Applicability, Eligibility, and Expectations

The Issue Resolution processes are for customers of PDS when there are disagreements over interpretations of a particular code or general project-related processing requirements. PDS is a co-authorizer of various types of permits subject to state regulations and requirements. The Issue Resolution process is not intended to make determinations related to state regulations or other agency/jurisdictional requirements.

The Issue Resolution processes do not apply to the following situations or stakeholders as there are separate appeal processes to address concerns:

- Reconsideration of final decisions (including appeals) or recommendations made by the Director of PDS or any other formal County of San Diego decision-making body.
- Replacement of any other appeal mechanisms, such as California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determinations or administrative appeals.
- Opponents of a project.
- Code Compliance case citations and warnings.



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## Applicable Costs

PDS understands that issue resolution may occur in times of frustration during the processing of a permit or an interpretation of a code. PDS is committed to minimizing costs during either Issue Resolution process. Project managers and Executive Management will not charge for Second Opinion or a PIR Conference, and no separate fees specific to either process will be charged. However, billable staff, County Counsel, and staff from other County Departments that are required to attend (Department of Public Works, Department of Parks and Recreation, etc.) may need to charge for the issue resolution process.

## Helpful Links and Documents

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- [PDS Issue Resolution Website](#)
- [Issue Resolution Elevation Flowchart](#)
- [Project Issue Resolution Conference Request Form](#)