
PROCEDURES FOR PERMIT PROCESSING

General Plan Amendments*
Rezoning/Zoning Amendments*
Planned Unit Developments
Use Permits
Tentative Maps
Design Review

Procedures for review and approval of development projects (Tentative Maps, Planned Unit Developments, Use Permits, Design Review) are regulated by State and City requirements. Many development projects may require more than one type of permit. When more than one type of permit is required, all applications should be submitted as one package which will be processed concurrently. The following is a summary of City of Martinez procedures:

Pre-Application Meeting

Applicant schedules a meeting with a staff Planner and Engineer to describe proposal and obtain General Plan policies, Zoning Requirements, engineering standards and any other applicable City policies or regulations. Staff will explain procedures for processing development applications and will indicate all items required for submittal for preliminary review by the Project Review Committee (PRC).

Preliminary Review

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit preliminary proposals for PRC review early in the process of designing the project. PRC review is intended to provide applicants direction to design projects to conform with City plans and policies to maximize chances for approval by the Planning Commission. PRC is composed of staff from the Community Development Department (Planning, Building, Engineering and Water), Police and Consolidated Fire.

Project Review Committee

To schedule a project for PRC review, submit two sets of plans to the Project Planner (Manager) containing all the information identified in "APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS, Preliminary Review" (attached) and preliminary review fee (if required). Projects are scheduled for PRC within 20 days of the submittal.

Many factors specific to each project influence staffs comments and recommendations. Applicants should provide as much additional information as possible to provide staff with a good understanding of the proposal. Submittal of additional plans and project information will provide the opportunity for more

specific staff comments and recommendations on the proposal.

PRC Comments

Prior to the PRC meeting, staff will review the plans, visit the proposed site and review City policies and regulations pertaining to the proposal. The Project Planner (Manager) will comments from the meeting to the applicant, usually by a phone call, within the week following the meeting. Comments typically include staff concerns with the project, project conformance with City policies and regulations, recommendations for revisions to the project, required applications and fees, submittal and notification requirements, approximate processing time and recommended conditions of approval (if known at that time).

Preliminary Design Review

Design Review is required for almost all development projects in the City. The Design Review Committee, consisting of two architects, two landscape architects and one other member, are appointed by the City Council, to review the design aspects of proposals and make recommendations to the Planning Commission. The Design Review Committee meets on the second and fourth Thursdays, from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Plans should be submitted for Preliminary Design Review early in the process, to make revisions to the plans to incorporate the Committee's suggestions, prior to formal submittal. To schedule a project for Design Review, submit ten full sized sets, folded to 8 ½ x 11" and ten reduced sized sets of the plans, identified in the APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS, Preliminary Review and Preliminary Design Review (attached) to the Planning Division. Projects are scheduled for Design Review within 3 - 5 weeks following the submittal.

Application Submittal

Applicant revises plans in response to staff (PRC) and Design Review comments and submits completed application forms and findings, plans, fees, notification requirements, environmental assessments and studies, soils reports, etc to the Project Planner. File numbers are assigned.

Due to our staffing levels, the number of projects and other commitments we have, we may not be able to process your application as in accordance with the time limits indicated in the Subdivision Map Act. In accordance with Section 66451.1, we have established a contract with a Planning consulting firm that specializes in providing contract staff support to assist governmental agencies. If you want to receive faster service than we are able to provide, you may use their services. They would assign a planner to assist us in the processing of your project. The planner would work under our direction in accordance with City procedures and policies. They would coordinate all aspects of the project, prepare the environmental review, correspondence and staff reports. This service is provided at cost, most likely based on a rate of \$90.00 per hour. A minimum deposit of \$10,000 is required in order for us to retain these services.

Any deposit remaining when the process is completed will be refunded to you. If services are required beyond the estimated time covered by the deposit, additional funds will be requested.

Plan Distribution

Upon receipt of the application, the planner distributes the plans to the engineering division, fire district and responsible agencies for review;

Within 30 days from receipt of the application, staff will provide a written notification indicating the status of the application. (Govt.. Code 65943)

If the application is deemed not complete, a list of information needed to complete the application will be provided. Each submittal of new information follows the same procedure for review and notification of completeness within 30 days. No further processing will occur until the application is deemed complete.

Complete Application

When the application is deemed complete, staff will review the environmental initial study checklist to determine if additional information is needed for the environmental determination. The notice of complete application will indicate if additional information is needed.

Environmental Review

The environmental determination is required to be made within 30 days after the application is deemed complete. For the majority of projects, the environmental determination will be made during the initial 30 day review period.

Almost all projects are subject to CEQA requirements. CEQA exempts some small projects which meet certain criteria. Most projects which are required to be approved by the Planning Commission are not exempt. CEQA requires the potential environment impact of projects to be evaluated prior to approval. A Negative Declaration is required for projects which have been determined to have no significant impacts. A Mitigated Negative Declaration is required for projects which could have a significant impact but won't due to mitigation measures incorporated into the project to mitigate potential impacts. An EIR is required for projects which have significant impacts or impacts that can't be mitigated.

The City will conduct the environmental assessment. Typically this is done by a consultant retained by the City at the applicants expense. In order to assist in this review any background information submitted by the applicant can be used by the consultant as appropriate.

Negative Declaration

If it is determined that the project will not have a significant impact or that

measures have been incorporated into the project to mitigate any potentially significant impacts a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration will be prepared.

Design Review Committee

During the processing of the completed application for the Planning Commission, the project will be scheduled for a second review by the Design Review Committee. The Committee will review the revised plans and make a written recommendation on the project to the Planning Commission. The Committee recommendation is incorporated in the staff report. If the Committee still has major concerns with the project, they will recommend revisions and an additional review prior to the Planning Commission review. If the Committee has minor suggestions, the suggestions are typically incorporated into the conditions of approval.

Public Hearing

Upon completion of the environmental review, the project will be scheduled for a Planning Commission hearing. The hearing is scheduled based on the required public notification. Public hearings are required for all applications except some Design Review applications. There is a minimum 10 day notification for all public hearings. There is a minimum 20 day notification for all Negative Declarations (30 days if a State agency is involved) and a 30 day notification for draft EIR's. Typically projects are scheduled for the Planning Commission within 4 weeks after the project is deemed complete for projects exempt from CEQA, and within 6 - 8 weeks from completion of a Negative Declaration or EIR.

Time Limits

State law requires preparation of a notice of exemption within 30 days of a completed application, adoption of a Negative Declaration within 105 days of a completed application and adoption of an EIR within one year of a completed application. The Planning Commission is required to consider the project within 50 days of approval of the environmental document. In order to shorten processing times, approval of the environmental document and consideration of the project are generally scheduled for the Planning Commission at the same meeting.

Planning Commission Agendas & Reports

Staff prepares a report which describes the project and discusses how the project complies with City policies and plans. When staff recommends approval of a project as set of recommended conditions of approval are prepared and attached to the report. These conditions are required prior to the issuance of permits for the project or upon completion of the project. These reports and conditions are typically completed about the time the public hearing notice is sent out, 10 days prior to the hearing. Staff will schedule a meeting with the applicant to review the draft staff report and proposed conditions of approval.

Planning Commission reports are generally sent out by Wednesday of the week before the meeting.

Planning Commission Meeting

At the Planning Commission meeting, the Chairperson introduces the item and staff gives a report and recommendation. The Commissioners may ask staff for clarification. The applicant makes a brief presentation and acknowledges concurrence with the recommendation, or concerns with specific conditions. The public hearing is opened by the Chairperson to hear testimony either for or against the project. Before closing the hearing, the applicant is given the opportunity to respond to questions or comments. The Chairperson closes the public hearing, the Commission discusses the project and discussion and a motion is made to either approve with conditions, deny or continue the project. If the Commission requires additional information to make a decision the proposal is continued usually to a specific date.

Approval Letter

Within the week following the meeting, the applicant is sent a letter confirming the Planning Commission's decision. For approved projects, the final conditions of approval are attached .

Appeals

There is a 10 day appeal period from the date of the Planning Commission decision. Appeals can be made by anyone who is not satisfied with the Commission's decision. All timely appeals are scheduled for a City Council hearing.

Permits

No permits are issued until the end of the appeal period or until an action on the appeal is final. One Year

Approval

Approvals are generally good for 1 year from the date of approval, except projects with major subdivisions which last for 2 years.

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