

Downtown Development Review Process: Summary of the Issues

Downtown development review thresholds

Level II projects (20,000 to 175,000 square feet and under 145 feet tall) are heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission for final approval and are *not* reviewed by City Council. Proposals that are larger than this threshold level are Level III projects and are reviewed by City Council.



Level III projects located within the traditional downtown core (TDC) are reviewed as a conditional zoning (CZ) applications. Level III projects outside of the TDC are reviewed following a conditional use permit (CUP) process.

- **Conditional zonings:** These are rezonings with specific site plans and a specific list of project conditions based on the land use proposed. Council and the developer must agree to the conditions and may have communication outside of the public hearing to consider the project. Benefit: Council can consider impacts of the project and negotiate them to some degree, with the developer before the meeting date. Concern: The developer may not know what Council will request for the project and so there are unknowns from a developer's standpoint.
- **Conditional use permits (CUP):** The proposal must meet seven conditional use standards in order to be approved. No communication can occur between the developer and Council outside of the hearing. Benefit: The developer must demonstrate through evidence and testimony how the seven CUP standards are being met through the proposal or through conditions attached to the approval and in doing so, can be reasonably sure that the project will be approved. Concern: Council may not have knowledge of the proposal or speak to the developer outside of the public hearing.

Downtown hotel development

Downtown has experienced a rebound in developer interest since the Great Recession, which has included multi-family residential development, hotels and limited commercial space. Since 2011, roughly new 700 hotel rooms have been approved in the downtown area. Today, hotel proposals are reviewed the same way with the same thresholds that other proposals follow.

Public notification process for downtown projects

During a recent community forum about development in the Central Business District, some attendees expressed interest in expanding the public notification process for downtown projects so that neighbors and the public may learn about a project earlier on.

Current notification process includes:

- Developer initiated meeting with neighborhood
- Development plans are posted to the city website
- Notice of public meetings (Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council) published in newspaper no later than 10 days before the meeting
- Mailed notices to adjacent property owners within 200 feet of the subject property
- City signs posted at the property for scheduled meetings no later than 10 days before the meeting (Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council)
- Meeting agendas posted to city website for Downtown Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council