

Permit Processing and Timeline changes

November 12, 2024

Critical Areas Review/Health Permits

WCC 22.05.022 Critical Areas Review and Determination.

- 1) Prior to the submittal of any application for any ~~septic system or water availability approvals to the Health Department, or~~ preapplication conference or project or building permits to Planning and Development Services, and unless waived per subsection (5) ~~(6)~~, applicants shall undergo a critical areas review.
- 2) Such review determines the absence, or presence and type, of critical areas and/or their buffers on-site and adjacent to a subject property that may affect the design of intended development. The evaluation area can either be a portion of the subject parcel, the entirety of the subject property, and/or any offsite areas that may be impacted by the proposed development. A critical areas review and determination is not considered a permit, as it does not allow development, but is a precursor to designing a project.

Historical Permit Review Issues

- ▶ PDS had high staff turnover in 2022-2023
 - ▶ We lost ten staff over a two year period
 - ▶ Most of those staff were in the Natural Resources division
 - ▶ Hire and train new staff
- ▶ Broadened our use of a Prescreen to guide applicants through the development review process
 - ▶ This year we have done over 730 prescreens

Critical Areas Review Purpose

- ▶ Reduce Notice of Additional Requirements (NOAR's) issued
- ▶ Reduce the number (and cost to applicant) of redesigns submitted to PDS
- ▶ Reduce number of staff touches for a single project
- ▶ Not require delineations for all applications
- ▶ Address permit timeframes for 90% of our permits through this code

Current Process Example

- ▶ Submit Prescreen, staff lets the applicant know a site plan review is required
- ▶ Submit Site Plan Review
 - ▶ Staff issues NOAR for wetland delineation and residential stormwater
 - ▶ Staff issues NOAR for wetland mitigation report
 - ▶ Staff issues NOAR for corrections to mitigation report
 - ▶ Approval or denial of the permit
- ▶ Submit Building Permit Application

Proposed Process Example

- ▶ Submit Critical Areas Review Application
 - ▶ Natural Resource staff reviews and accepts delineation
 - ▶ Zoning staff review to inform applicant of requirements for Site Plan Review application
- ▶ Submit Site Plan Review Application
 - ▶ Staff review proposed development
 - ▶ Ensures the development is outside of critical areas
 - ▶ Ensures the development meets all other required items - stormwater, driveway, firetruck turnaround, encroachment, tree canopy protection, etc.
 - ▶ Staff issues NOAR
 - ▶ Staff reviews and approves permit
- ▶ Submit for Building Permit Application

Critical Areas Review

- ▶ The Critical Areas Review process will also identify
 - ▶ General land use and zoning setbacks
 - ▶ If located within a stormwater special district
 - ▶ Regulated flood zone
 - ▶ Require archeology report
 - ▶ Project likely to need mitigation

Site Plan Review

- ▶ Utilizing 2023 numbers, PDS had 254 site plan review applications
 - ▶ 65% required at least one Notice of Additional Requirements
 - ▶ 50% for wetlands/habitat conservations areas
 - ▶ 50% for residential stormwater

Critical Areas Review - Exemptions

- ▶ Mechanical
- ▶ Plumbing
- ▶ Burn
- ▶ Nonconforming use
- ▶ Wireless - Eligible Facility Request
- ▶ Lot of Record
- ▶ Encroachment Permit
- ▶ Fire System Construction
- ▶ Open Space Classification
- ▶ Notice of Activity
- ▶ Commercial Sign
- ▶ Demolition Permit
- ▶ Re-roof, re-side and re-window

Critical Areas Review Waiver

- ▶ For all other permits, a waiver will be required if:
 - ▶ No expansion of existing structural footprint
 - ▶ No addition of bedrooms or sleeping quarters
 - ▶ On a parcel subdivided and recorded within the last five years

Next Steps for PDS in 2025

- ▶ Comprehensive permit timeframe review at 6 months and at 9 months, reporting to Commerce at 1 year
- ▶ Review our process and procedures internally
- ▶ Present new code changes

Questions?

