

33.800 General Information on Land Use Reviews

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33.800.010 General

The zoning code uses a combination of nondiscretionary and discretionary reviews to evaluate land use proposals for compliance with the use and development requirements of the code. The combination is necessary to provide a comprehensive set of implementation tools. The nondiscretionary reviews provide the certainty needed in most situations by providing straight-forward, clear, and objective standards. Discretionary reviews provide needed flexibility by allowing more subjective standards and objectives, and providing for the modification of regulations in response to specific site conditions. This chapter addresses discretionary reviews. Nondiscretionary reviews are addressed in 33.700.010.

33.800.020 Explanation of Discretionary Reviews

A discretionary review is one that involves judgment or discretion in determining compliance with the approval requirements. The review is discretionary because not all of the approval requirements are objective. That is, they are not easily definable or measurable. The amount of discretion and the potential impact of the request varies among different reviews. Some have less discretion or impact, such as the reduction of a garage setback for a house on a hillside. Others may involve more discretion or potential impacts, such as the design review of a new downtown building or the siting of a new school in a residential zone. Discretionary reviews must provide opportunities for public involvement.

33.800.030 Procedures and Review Bodies for Discretionary Reviews

Procedures are the type of processing a land use case receives. Discretionary reviews are assigned either to a quasi-judicial or legislative procedure. The type of procedure is stated with the review. A description of the procedures are stated in Chapter 33.730, Quasi-Judicial Procedures and Chapter 33.740, Legislative Procedure. The assignment of review bodies is stated in Chapter 33.720, Assignment of Review Bodies. A description of quasi-judicial and legislative decisions is found in 33.700.070. When formulating zoning regulations, the determination of which of the quasi-judicial procedures to assign a review to is based on consideration of the type of approval criteria, the potential impacts, and a balance between the need for prompt decision-making and the need for public involvement.

33.800.040 The Land Use Review Chapters

The land use review chapters state the review process and approval criteria for most of the discretionary reviews. They include the reviews that apply to many zones or situations. Some reviews, which relate only to a specific topic or to a limited area, are located in the chapter on that topic. The information in this chapter applies to all discretionary reviews regardless of where they are located in this Title.

33.800.050 The Function of Approval Criteria

- A.** The approval criteria that are listed with a specific review reflect the findings that must be made to approve a request. The criteria set the bounds for the issues that must be addressed by the applicant and which may be raised by the City or affected parties. A proposal that complies with all of the criteria will be approved. A proposal that can comply with the criteria with mitigation measures or limitations will be approved with conditions. A proposal that cannot comply with the criteria outright or cannot comply with mitigation measures will be denied.
- B.** The approval criteria have been derived from and are based on the Comprehensive Plan. Reviews against the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are not required unless specifically stated. Fulfillment of all requirements and approval criteria means the proposal is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
- C.** When approval criteria refer to the request meeting a specific threshold, such as adequacy of services or no significant detrimental environmental impacts, the review body will consider any proposed improvements, mitigation measures, or limitations proposed as part of the request when reviewing whether the request meets the threshold. All proposed improvements, mitigation measures, and limitations must be submitted for consideration prior to a final decision by a review body.

33.800.060 The Burden of Proof

The burden of proof is on the applicant to show that the approval criteria are met. The burden is not on the City or other parties to show that the criteria have not been met.

33.800.070 Conditions of Approval

The City may attach conditions to the approval of all discretionary reviews. However, conditions may be applied only to ensure that the proposal will conform to the applicable approval criteria for the review or to ensure the enforcement of other City regulations.

33.800.080 Land Use Reviews Involving Signs

The discretionary review processes and approval criteria described in the land use review chapters may also be applied to signs. Signs are regulated under Title 32, Signs and Related Regulations. Modifications may be made to the objective standards of Chapters 32.32 and 32.34 of the Sign Code, as described in the land use review chapters. In addition, conditions of approval may be adopted as part of a land use review which modify the objective standards of Chapters 32.32 and 32.34 of the Sign Code.

(Amended by: Ord. No. 175204, effective 3/1/01; Ord. No. 176469, effective 7/1/02; Ord. No. 179980, effective 4/22/06.)

