

Application Processing Times

Development Review

PROJECT, PRELIMINARY AND SITE PLANS

The Planning Board reviews project, preliminary and site plans as part of its development review process. Each plan must meet a different set of requirements, with site plans being the most detailed. Reviews require input from several county agencies, and delays can occur at any point in the process, including from the applicant.

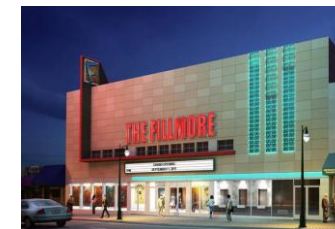
In the last two years, planners have improved review times for preliminary and site plans, even though many require greater involvement by external agencies and staff because they are proposed as infill development in already developed areas. A new online electronic submission process will expedite plan review when programming is complete. The process will allow applicants and the public to see the progress of the review, including any delays.

In the last two years, planners have improved review times for preliminary and site plans by 43 percent to an average of 64 days in FY10. Mandatory referral review time has averaged 38 days, considerably less than the 60 days required by the state. Review of forest conservation exemptions has improved 45 percent.

Development Plans			
Plan Type	Submitted		
	FY08	FY09	FY10
Preliminary Plans	54	69	42
Project Plans	5	3	8
Site Plans	89	87	59



Site plan review for the Wheaton Safeway project was completed in less than six months.



Planners reviewed preliminary and project plans for The Fillmore music hall in 90 days.

Forest Conservation / Environmental Reviews

The Planning Department’s Environmental Division reviews every development application for the presence of natural resources, including forests. The Forest Conservation Law is applied and enforced by the Planning Board when an applicant proposes to develop on land greater than 40,000 square feet.

- Forest Conservation Plans specify where applicants must save or plant forest
- Forest conservation exemptions determine whether applicants are required to prepare a plan
- All sites proposed for development undergo natural resource inventories (NRI) to determine environmental features

Average annual NRI review times have improved by 50 percent from FY08, while forest conservation exemption review times have improved 45 percent. (Forest conservation plan review times were unavailable.)

The Department recently completed an online inventory of forest conservation easements featuring easement boundaries displayed on aerial photography. Agency staff and the public can quickly identify easement locations at

www.montgomeryplanning.org/environment/forest/easements/

Environmental Reviews			
Plan Type	Submitted		
	FY08	FY09	FY10
NRI	118	100	103
Exemptions	147	148	119



Mandatory Referrals

The Planning Board reviews and makes recommendations on federal, state and local public projects such as roads, schools and libraries through mandatory referrals. The Board sends its mandatory referral recommendations to the appropriate government agency for consideration.

In the past 18 months, the Planning Department’s mandatory referral review time has averaged 38 days, considerably less than the 60-day requirement set by state law.

Mandatory Referrals	
Year	Submitted
FY09	32
FY10	36

