DISCRETIONARY PERMIT PROCESS PRELIMINARY REVIEW (BEFORE APPLICATION SUBMITTAL) 1. INITIAL CONSULTATION WITH **A PLANNER** 2. PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION 3(A). DISCRETIONARY PERMIT OR **3(B). DISCRETIONARY PERMIT REQUIRED NOT REQUIRED** 4. CASE PLANNER ASSIGNED SUBMIT DIRECTLY FOR (The next business day) **BUILDING PERMITS** 5. PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF **OPTIONAL PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW MEETING APPLICATION MATERIAL BY CASE PLANNER** (All City Departments) **FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS** (APPLICATION SUBMITAL) 6. APPLICATION SUBMITTAL (By Appointment) **Planning and Building Safety Public Works** 7. APPLICATION REVIEW BY **OPTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALL CITY DEPARTMENTS** Fire **SERVICES GROUP MEETING** (Within three weeks of submittal) (All City Departments) **Police Recreation and Parks** 8. APPLICATION DEEMING LETTER 9(A). APPLICATION COMPLETE OR 9(B). APPLICATION INCOMPLETE 10. CEQA DETERMINATION **REVIEW OF APPLICATION** (California Environmental Quality MATERIAL **BY CASE PLANNER** Act) OR 11(B). CEQA REVIEW REQUIRED 11(A). EXEMPT FROM CEQA 12(B). PUBLIC HEARING **12. ADMINISTRATIVE CEQA REVIEW** OR **DECISION ISSUED SCHEDULED** INITIATED

- 1. Initial Consultation. During the initial consultation a resident, business owner, or developer ("the applicant") discusses a potential project or business with a Planner. The initial consultation may occur in person at City Hall, by phone, or by email.
- **2. Preliminary Determination.** During the initial consultation, the Planner will ask for information regarding the proposed project or business to determine whether it is permitted "by right," or whether a discretionary permit is required.

Useful Information to have. Applicants should have some basic information about a project when discussing with a Planner. Some useful information to make a preliminary determination includes:

- The property address
- The property zoning
- The existing and proposed use
- The number of lots involved
- The size of the property
- The size of existing or proposed buildings or additions

Discretionary Project Definition. Discretionary projects are projects that are subject to qualitative standards in accordance with the City's adopted zoning regulations and the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Discretionary projects typically require a public hearing or issuance of a decision by a public official (typically the Director of Planning and Building Safety). Examples of some of the more typical types of discretionary permits include, but are not limited to: Administrative Use Permits, Conditional Use Permits, Subdivisions, Design Review, Coastal Development Permits, Adjustments, and Variances. Discretionary projects usually include conditions of approval that relate to operational characteristics and/or construction requirements.

Building permits for a project can be issued and a new use can be established only after the discretionary permit process has concluded and any applicable appeal period has expired.

Residential Projects. Residential project types that may require a discretionary permit include, but are not limited to:

- Operation of a large family daycare facility on residential property
- Construction of a wall or fence that exceeds the maximum permitted height
- Construction of multiple residences

Nonresidential Projects. Nonresidential project types that may require a discretionary permit include, but are not limited to:

- Outdoor dining areas for restaurants or cafés
- Alcohol sales at restaurants, bars, or markets
- Assembly uses
- A change of use
- Construction of new buildings or parking lots
- Additions or modifications to existing buildings, businesses, or parking lots
- Installation of new or modification of existing signs
- New construction or modification to existing Wireless Communications Facilities

<u>3(A). Discretionary Permit Required</u>. If a Planner determines that a discretionary permit is required for a proposed project or business, the Planner will:

- Describe the discretionary process (application material, fees, and time).
- Explain that an appointment is required for all application submittals.
- Explain that a case planner must be assigned to help the applicant with the entire process.
- Explain the role and benefits of a Case Planner.
- Explain how to obtain a Case Planner.

Case Planner Role. The Case Planner will be the applicant's primary point of contact and work with applicants prior to application submittal through completion of the process. The Case Planner will:

- Provide a step-by-step roadmap of the application process.
- Review the City's application requirements and assist the applicant with preparation of application material and plans.
- Coordinate with other City Departments and Divisions involved in the process.
- Provide regular status updates.
- Assist with the steps following the discretionary permit process (plan check review, inspections, legal documents, etc).

<u>3(B). Discretionary Permit Not Required</u>. If a Planner determines that a discretionary permit is not required (the project or business is permitted by right), the Planner will assist the applicant with the regular building permit process and with the business license process (if necessary).

- 4. Case Planner Assignment. To obtain a Case Planner, an applicant must:
- Obtain and complete a Case Planner request form. Any Planner can provide and assist with completing the form.
- Submit the form to a Planner in person, by email, or online.

A Case Planner will be assigned and contact the applicant by the end of the next business day.

<u>5. Preliminary Review</u>. After a case planner is assigned, the Case Planner will meet with the applicant and review the application material and plans to ensure it is complete for processing. During the Preliminary Review process, the Case Planner (and the applicant) will also work with other departments to make sure any potential issues/problems related to the project are identified and addressed early.

Pre-Application Review Meeting. The applicant may request a pre-application meeting with staff from all City departments to review and discuss the project.

- Pre-Application Review meetings will be scheduled if a project is particularly complicated and requires additional coordination among departments and/or if the applicant requests such a meeting.
- Pre-Application Review meetings are subject to a separate fee.
- A portion of the fee will be credited towards the cost of a formal application if the applicant proceeds with a formal application.

6. Application Submittal. At the application submittal appointment the Case Planner confirms that the application forms, plans, fees, and other requested material is complete and accepts the application for processing. Please note:

- Application submittals are done by appointment. The applicant should contact their Case Planner in advance to set a convenient time for submittal.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

- Additional material may be requested after the application has been submitted
- <u>7. Application Review by all City Departments.</u> Within one week after the submittal the Case Planner will distribute the application material (forms, plans, studies, etc.) to all relevant City Departments for review. Those typically include the Fire Department, the Planning and Building Safety Department, the Public Works Department, the Recreation and Parks Department, the Police Department. However, some projects may not require involvement of all departments.
- Each Department will review the application material and plans for compliance with its policies and regulations.
- Each Department will prepare written comments and return them to the Case Planner within **three weeks after the submittal**. The comments will address compliance with the City's policies and regulations, design improvements, and potential conditions of approval for the application/project.
- The Case Planner will compile each Department's comments and transmit them to the applicant within three weeks after the submittal.

Development Services Group Meeting. In addition to the normal distribution of the application material for comments, the Case Planner may schedule a Development Services Group (DSG) meeting with staff from all City departments to review and discuss the project. DSG meetings will be scheduled on the **Wednesday three weeks following the application submittal**.

- Development Services Group meetings will be scheduled if a project is particularly complicated and requires additional coordination among departments.
- If a DSG meeting is scheduled, all the draft comments from City departments will be sent to the applicant in advance.
- At the DSG meeting, the applicant can discuss specific issues or questions regarding the draft comments with the departments that are present.
- If additional issues are raised during a DSG meeting that were not addressed in the draft comments, the departments will revise and submit final comments to the Case Planner.

8. Application Deeming Letter. The Case Planner will send a letter to the applicant within **30 days after the submittal**. The letter will deem the application:

- · Complete and include a tentative decision or hearing date, or
- Incomplete and list all the additional information and/or corrections needed to "complete" the application.
- All the Departments final comments will be included with the deeming letter.
- **9(A).** Application Complete. If the application is deemed complete, the Case Planner will determine whether it is subject to environmental review pursuant to CEQA.
- **9(B). Application Incomplete.** If the application is deemed incomplete, the Case Planner will meet again with the applicant and review the application material and plans to ensure it is complete for processing. When the application material is complete for processing, the Case Planner will schedule a formal submittal appointment with the applicant and repeat the application review process until it is deemed complete.
- **10. CEQA Determination.** The California Environmental Quality Act (14 California Code of Regulations) requires government agencies that review and approve projects to also review the potential environmental impacts of projects. Certain classes of projects are categorically exempt from CEQA provisions. These classes of projects include, but are not limited to:
- Existing Facilities. This includes the operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing structures where there is no expansion.
- Replacement or Reconstruction. This includes replacement or reconstruction of existing structures or facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.
- New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. This includes construction and locations of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.
- A complete list of categorically exempt projects can be found in Article 19, Section 15300 of CEQA.

Projects that are not exempt from CEQA provisions require an environmental review process that can require three months to a year to complete.

- **11(A).** Exempt from CEQA. If the project is exempt from CEQA, that completes the environmental review process and the Case Planner will continue to process the application. This will involve an administrative decision by the Planning and Building Safety Director and/or a public hearing by the Planning Commission and/or the City Council.
- **11(B). CEQA Review Required.** If the project is not exempt from CEQA, the Case Planner will initiate the environmental review process consistent with CEQA guidelines. The environmental review process involves the preparation of an Initial Study to identify the potential environmental impacts of a proposed project. The Initial Study is made available to the public for review and comment for a period of 20 to 45 days depending on the significance of the identified environmental impacts. After the review period is complete, the Initial Study and the environmental review process are finalized and a public hearing is scheduled to review and approve or deny the project.
- **12(A).** Administrative Decision Issued. If a discretionary project does not require a public hearing <u>and</u> is exempt from CEQA, the Planning and Building Safety Director may issue a decision letter administratively. If the decision is not appealed within the prescribed appeal period (typically 10 days), the decision is final.
- **12(B). Public Hearing Scheduled**. If a discretionary project requires a public hearing and/or requires CEQA review, City staff will schedule a public hearing date and provide notice to the public as required by the El Segundo Municipal Code (typically 10 days in advance).