



Agenda Item Report

Legislative Board: City Council
Date: December 16, 2025
Contact: Angela Kennedy, Director
Agenda Item ID / Number: 2025-1108- / G.13

ITEM TITLE: Approval of a Resolution amending and approving updates to the Designated Plan Review Policy and Procedures (Development Services Director Angela Kennedy, P.E., CFM)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current Designated Plan Review Policy & Procedure ("Policy") was approved by the City Council on July 20, 2021, to establish a process for expedited permit review with contracted technical consultants. These proposed revisions are needed to the current policy to better align the program with the types of applications that are actually using it, to clarify roles and procedures as the City's organization and development activity have evolved, and to ensure the fee and escrow structure fully covers the cost of third-party review without shifting expenses to the City's general fund. The updates also refine timelines and intake rules to provide greater predictability and transparency for applicants while maintaining compliance with the City's Unified Development Code and applicable provisions of the Texas Local Government Code.

2. BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Since its adoption in 2021, the City's Designated Plan Review Policy has functioned as a successful, optional tool for applicants seeking an expedited and more collaborative review of complex development permits. By pairing City staff with qualified third-party professionals under this alternative review process, the program has allowed applicants to keep large public improvement construction plans and other intricate projects on schedule while still meeting all applicable code requirements.

The policy is structured to apply to higher impact and technically demanding submittals such as subdivision construction plans, utility and drainage plans, traffic impact analyses, and high-volume building permits where specialized expertise and predictable timelines are especially critical. Use of third-party review has enabled staff to manage workload more effectively during periods of heavy development activity, while providing applicants with clearer expectations about review timelines, comment cycles, and meeting opportunities to resolve issues.

3. ANALYSIS

The revised Designated Plan Review Policy primarily (1) broadens which applications are eligible, (2) clarifies roles, timelines, and holidays, and (3) refines the escrow and fee structure to better match actual review costs. The list of eligible development applications is expanded beyond plats and site plans to explicitly include construction plans, utility and drainage plans, environmental studies, traffic impact analyses, and building permits. This change is intended to align the policy with the full range of plan types that actually use third party review in practice.

The first third-party review remains 30 calendar days and subsequent reviews 15 calendar days, but the revision clarifies that City holidays within those windows do not count toward the review period and that due dates move to the next business day when the final day falls on a non-business day. This is justified to provide predictable, legally defensible timelines for both the City and applicants, reduce disputes about deadlines, and reflect real staffing constraints on holidays.

The revised policy specifies that applications must be submitted by noon on Mondays (or the next business day after a City holiday) and that subsequent submittals to the third-party reviewer are deemed received at 5 p.m. Monday to Thursday and noon on Friday, with weekend/holiday submittals recorded on the next business day. This is justified to prevent "after hours" submittals from informally shortening review time, to allow predictable internal scheduling for staff and third-party firms, and to treat all applicants consistently.

The policy refines the requirement for an initial escrow deposit (nominally \$25,000 per application) by tying it to a calculated Level of Effort plus a 5 percent factor, and clarifies that applicants may be asked for supplemental deposits when projected costs exceed the initial amount. The policy adds detail that the City will charge a 5 percent administrative fee on third-party invoices to cover staff time and materials in managing those contracts, that this fee may be processed through escrow with the applicant's authorization, and that these fees will be deposited to the General Fund separately from permit fees. These changes are needed to recover the City's actual overhead for administering the third-party review program, avoid shifting these program costs to the City's general fund, and give applicants transparency on how administrative fees are calculated and collected.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed changes to the policy ensure that costs for administering the Designated Review Program are supported by escrow deposits made by applicants.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN/GOALS

EXCEPTIONAL CITY SERVICES

6. STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

Become a more business-friendly City government - regulations, codes and processes

7. PROS AND CONS

Pros: Improves the current process.

Cons: Clarified procedures and roles may require initial staff and applicant training or outreach to ensure everyone adjusts to the revised process.

8. ALTERNATIVES

Council may approve the revised policy as presented, make additional changes, or deny changes to the policy.

9. REQUESTED ACTION / SUGGESTED MOTION / RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the proposed changes to the Designated Review Policy and Procedures.

Attachments:

[Resolution - Designated Plan Review Policy Amendment.pdf](#)
[Revised Designated Permit Review Policy.pdf](#)