

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW 3-STEP PROCESS

and How to Register & Log-In to the NEW Planning Application Online Portal to Submit or View the Progress of a New Planning Project

This explanation details the Development Review Process that became effective in March 2025 with the updated Calvert County Zoning Ordinance. Process Charts are attached at the end of this document. Site Plans and Subdivisions now follow similar paths, with different terminology, but both utilize a three-step process which guides projects beginning with Concept submittal and follows the project through until it has reached Final approval.

The Development Review Coordinator (DRC) is the primary contact for navigating this process and may be reached at DevRev@calvertcountymd.gov.

All NEW Planning Applications (Site Plans-Subdivision-Administrative Plats), regardless of the step they are in, are to be submitted electronically via the Encompass Portal.

How to Use the New Planning Application Online Portal

- **Accessing the portal:** Using your internet browser, go to <https://encompass.calvertcountymd.gov>
- **Log in or register:**
 - If you don't have an account and would like to register, please [view a brief guide](#) on creating an Encompass account.
 - If you are an applicant, you can log in to your account and track all projects and applications associated with your profile from your dashboard.

All projects require review by the Environmental Health Department, for all review cycles, as part of the Development Review Process. A separate fee and a set of paper plans are also required by their Agency and are the responsibility of the applicant/agent to deliver to their office. Failure to do so WILL delay review of the projects.

Required Documents: Each step (Concept / Detailed Site Development Plan or Preliminary Plan / Final or Final Plat) and project type (Site Plan / Subdivision / Administrative Plat) has a checklist that lists required supporting documents. Please verify submissions include the appropriate supporting documents: forms, information sheets, checklists, and fees schedules are available [here](#).

Fees: A project's size and complexity determine its category: Category I Site Plan / Category II Site Plan / Major Subdivision / Major Tier 3 Subdivision / Minor Subdivision / Administrative Plat. The category determines applicable fees and whether Planning Commission approval is necessary. Fees are generated during the application submittal process and can be paid via the Online Portal. **Please Note: If you feel the Planning & Zoning fees may not be correct, please contact [Development Review Staff](#) prior to paying questionable fees.** Thank you.

The [Planning & Zoning FY 2026 Fee Schedule](#) can be viewed online at https://www.calvertcountymd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/51793/PZ_IP_FEE_FY26_Full_Fee_Package

Public Works' guidance, including Stormwater Management requirements—which begin at the Concept level, is available [here](#).

Payment for both Planning & Zoning and Public Works' fees are payable in the portal via e-check or credit card. Checks may be made payable to:

Calvert County Treasurer
Attn: Development Review Coordinator
Department of Planning & Zoning
150 Main Street, 3rd Floor,
Prince Frederick, MD 20678

Note: The Environmental Health Department (EH) is a state agency, and it is the applicant's responsibility to fulfill their requirements. Their fee is a separate payment and is required with every submittal to EH. Checks should be made payable to Calvert County Health Department. If you feel that Environmental Health Review

Step 1. Concept

Timeline: Once basic information is provided via the portal, a project number will be assigned to the project. A Concept plan application may then be submitted by clicking on the assigned number and providing more detailed information (Concept Details, Environmental Details, Agent/Applicant/Owner Details, Customer Acknowledgement, etc.) as prompted by the system. The system will then indicate what documentation to upload as well as the fees currently due for the submittal.

If the submittal is incomplete, missing documents or fees, staff may return the submittal to the applicant during their intake review. Notification will be sent to the applicant via email and through the portal advising what will need to be provided for the project to move forward. Staff has three business days to confirm all necessary documentation and fees were received. Once Environmental Health fees are paid by the applicant, EH staff will pay them in the system at which time the project is distributed to the appropriate reviewing agencies to begin a 30-business day review cycle. This distribution indicates acceptance of the project at Step 1. At the end of each review cycle, staff has three business days to gather and distribute the reviewers' comments to applicants.

Board of Appeals: A project or parcel may require a variance or special exception. Variances, special exceptions and expansion or replacement of non-conforming uses are all items that can be brought to the Board of Appeals (BOA). The BOA has the authority to:

- Hear and decide appeals where it is alleged that there is an error in any order, requirement, decision, or determination made by an administrative officer in the enforcement of ordinances adopted under Section 4-305 of the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland;
- Hear and decide special exceptions to the terms of the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance (CCZO); and
- Grant variances from the terms of the CCZO (see Article 30).

BOA referrals are provided by reviewing staff. Recognizing the need for BOA referrals early in the process allows the applicant to avoid spending time and money on a project that may or may not be feasible under the current regulations. Additional information on the BOA can be found at <https://www.calvertcountymd.gov/797/Board-of-Appeals>.

Step 2. Detailed Site Development Plan (DSDP) or Preliminary Plan

Timeline: This second step follows the same timeline for intake review, and review cycles as in Step 1. The Detailed Site Development Plan or Preliminary Subdivision Plan must be accepted for review (i.e., found complete and fees paid) within twelve months of receiving its approval to move forward under Step 1. Detailed Site Development Plan projects shall expire 24 months after it has been accepted for review at Step 2, unless final approval is granted.

Step 2 requires more detail and as such, may require multiple revisions and review cycles. Again, the first review cycle is 30 business days. Later review cycles can be 30/20/10 days at the determination of the primary reviewer based on progress of the project, after discussion with other reviewers. Up to three-days are permitted for Development Review Staff intake review and post-review distribution of reviewers' comments.

Adequate Public Facilities: Adequate Public Facilities involve review by roadways; schools; water and sewer; stormwater management; solid waste and recycling; law enforcement; and fire, rescue, and emergency management services. Applicants will work with the overseeing department by submitting the applicable [Adequate Public Facilities Form](#) to the responsible party at the involved agency(s) to develop mitigation strategies. The applicant should then forward any completed APFO Forms via the Online Portal along with a completed [Adequate Public Facilities Tracking Sheet](#) for the Primary Reviewer to review.

Planning Commission: For large and complex projects, there may be requirements for approval by the Planning Commission Administrator or Planning Commission. In turn, Planning Commission approval may require a Public Hearing, which will require additional time for public comment. Additional forms and fees may apply.

Step 3. Final Site Plan or Final Plats

Timeline: This final step includes three business days for confirmation of required documents and fees, and then a 10-day review cycle. Upon review, the DRC has three additional business days to distribute comments to the applicant.

When the applicant is notified that they are approved to submit the final Site Plan, they must provide the Health Department with their fee and two sets of the Entire Site Plan set for their signature/stamping process. Once their approval is given, the printed paper plan set will need to be retrieved and scanned by the agent/applicant and submitted via the Online Portal. Once the remaining reviewing agencies have authorized the plan set as well, the EH Approved scanned plan set must be available to Development Review Staff to facilitate the final PC/PCA approval and electronic stamping process. The Planning Commission Administrator's Final Approval stamp provides the PCA signature, date of approval, and vesting date.

The Approved Plan Set will be available to the applicants/agent via the Online Portal to be used when applying for building, grading and other permits. Final Approved Printed Site Plans will no longer be provided by Planning & Zoning for this purpose, but they may also be printed from the electronic file in the Online Portal if desired.

During the subdivision approval process, after the Preliminary Plans at Step 2 are ready, the Primary Planner will draft the Preliminary Approval Letter within 90 days indicating any corrections or actions that need to be accomplished, the plans go through Flat Plat review and approval prior to receiving approval to return the Final Recording Package. The Final Recording Package will be reviewed and Approval To Record must be given prior to the Recording Clerk filing the necessary paperwork with the Clerk of the Court for recordation. The Final Plat and Recording Package processing is accomplished through the Planning Commission Clerk. Administrative Plats are also handled by the Planning Commission Clerk.

Project Expirations

A request for extension shall be submitted, in writing, 30 days prior to the expiration date of the applicable time period.

Site Plans: (ZO Article 30-3.G)

- Once accepted for review, Concept Site Plans must be approved within 12 months.
- Once a project is approved at Step 1, a Detailed Site Development Plan (Step 2) must be accepted for review by the Department of Planning & Zoning within 12 months.
- Once the DSDP is accepted for review, it must reach final approval within 24 months.
- Final approval expires 36 months after stamping, unless the criterion for vesting by construction is met.
- One 12-month extension to only one of the steps for Site Plan Approvals is available in certain circumstances as set forth in Article 30.

Subdivisions: (ZO Article 31-7.E)

- A Concept Subdivision Plan shall expire 12 months after it has been accepted for review unless an application for a preliminary subdivision plan has been accepted.
- An application for a Preliminary Subdivision Plan shall expire 24 months after it has been accepted for review, unless approval is granted.
- The approval of the Preliminary Subdivision Plan expires after three (3) years from approval date. The approval date is the date that the PCA Final Stamp is applied to the plan set.
- Extensions of Conceptual and Preliminary Subdivision Plan Approvals is available in certain circumstances as set forth in Article 31.

Pre-Concept Consultations

Pre-Concept Consultations are a free service which allows applicants to quickly present their project, ask specific questions regarding the feasibility of a proposed project, and receive verbal feedback from the reviewing agencies prior to making formal submittal. Meetings are held to 30 minutes in length however, applicants may request additional clarification from specific reviewers as needed. Only one Pre-Concept Presentation is allowed per project within a 24-month period.

- Pre-Concept submittals are assigned a Service Request number related to the property address for tracking purposes.
- Begin the process by completing the first two pages of the [Site Plan Project Number Request and Application](#) and emailing it to DevRev@calvertcountymd.gov along with the following required documentation.
- A complete submittal package must be received no later than 3:00 p.m. on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in which you're seeking the consult.
 - Pre-Concept Presentations are held virtually via Microsoft Teams on the 4th Wednesday of the month in ½ hour time slots beginning at 9:00 a.m. *The exception to this is generally November & December due to major holidays. During those months the meeting day maybe altered slightly from the normal schedule.*
 - Pre-Concept Presentations are limited to three projects per month. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to submit requests and necessary documentation early.
- Following scheduling by Development Review staff, a project number will be generated and sent back to the requestor in the form of an email with a Microsoft Teams Meeting invitation advising the date and time of the Pre-Concept Presentation scheduled. This meeting invite will also include all reviewing agencies.

Pre-Concept submittal requirements:

1. A current Plat, Site Plan, or Aerial Photo of the proposed property.
2. A rudimentary drawing/plan of the property showing the property's limitations and interaction with neighboring properties. Consider including geographic features like steep slopes, wetlands, and Critical Area.
3. A written explanation describing the proposed project.
4. A list of questions for the reviewers so they may be prepared to efficiently respond to your concerns in the time allotted. This consultation will focus on those concerns brought forward by the applicant—*it is not a comprehensive review of the project.*