

ZONING CODE CLARIFICATION

To: Development Services Staff
From: Jeff Brasel, Zoning Administrator
Date: December 24, 2025
Subject: Beginning of Approval Period/Approval Date for Site Development Plans

Summary

This memo provides a written clarification that addresses the question, “When is a Site Development Plan officially approved?”

This question was posed because of confusion from various applicants seeking to document the official approval date when the Site Development Plan document and the e-permit system contain multiple dates and/or signatures from approving staff that could be construed as an approval date.

Answer: A Site Development Plan is officially approved when the “Manager of Community Planning and Development” (a.k.a., Executive Director), or their designated staff, signs and dates the signature line for the approval of the Manager of Community Planning and Development on behalf of the Development Review Committee.

Development Review Committee Approval Authority

Each procedure in the Denver Zoning Code has a final reviewing authority and each reviewing authority is described in Division 12.2. Site Development Plans are recommended for approval by the Zoning Administrator and the Manager of Community Planning and Development, and are approved by the Development Review Committee (“DRC”). The DRC is made up of the manager of Community Planning and Development (“CPD”), the manager of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (“DOTI”), and the manager of Parks and Recreation, or their designated representatives.

In practice, each of the DRC managers’ representatives authorize their approval on behalf of their agency through the plan review workflow in Accela by choosing the “Approved” status for their agency review. Once all reviews in the workflow are approved and the applicant submits a final signed copy of the Site Development Plan for recordation, the Manager of CPD, or their designee, is then authorized on behalf of the DRC to take all actions to finalize and approve the SDP.

Beginning of Approval Period and Post-Approval Requirements

The approval period begins on the date of the decision-making body's final action, which shall be affixed to all approved applications plans or permits (according to DZC Sec. 12.3.6.2, Beginning of Approval Period – General Rule). The decision-making body's final action is considered the date the Manager of CPD, or their authorized representative, signs the SDP document on behalf of the DRC as described earlier.

This date is important because the DZC identifies certain actions that must be taken within a given amount of time after approval or the permit or plan lapses. The general rule is that an application, site development plan, or zoning permit may lapse if certain actions are not taken within a specified period of time.

Site development plans expire 18 months from the date of approval if a zoning permit and building permit (as applicable) have not been obtained and if start of construction has not begun (DZC Sec. 12.4.3.6.C). The Zoning Administrator may extend the approval for an additional 12 months according to Section 12.3.6.3, Extension of Approval Period. The countdown for completion of these actions begins on the date of the DRC approval.