



New Streamlined Entitlement Process for Housing Projects

In an effort to streamline the development of housing and implement Program 1.A of the City’s certified 6th Cycle (2021-2029) Housing Element, on March 21, 2023, the Santa Monica City Council adopted revisions to the City’s entitlement process for the majority of housing projects through an expanded Administrative Approval (AA) process. **These new processing revisions will become effective on June 1, 2023.**

Applicability

Pursuant to the newly revised Santa Monica Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 9.39.020, the following housing projects (new construction and additions to existing buildings) will be eligible for the streamlined AA process:

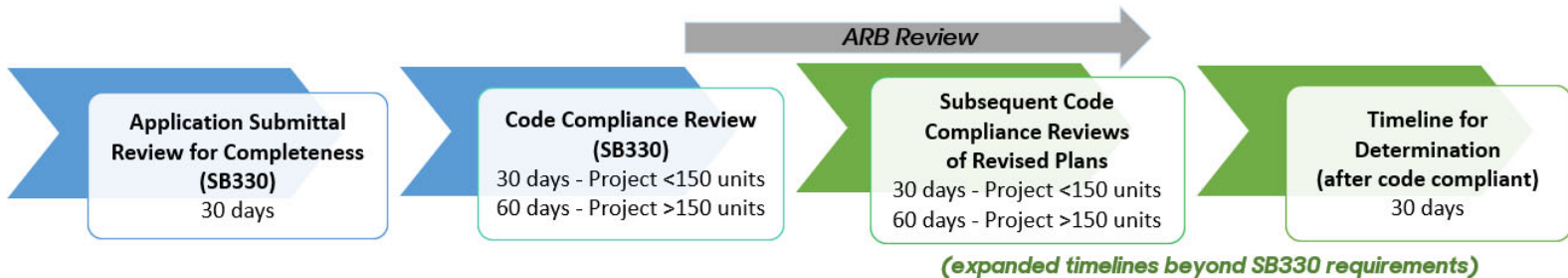
1. 100% affordable housing projects;
2. Moderate Income Housing Overlay project, as defined in SMMC Section 9.12.020(D);
3. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65583.2(c), any housing project as defined by 65589.5(h)(2) providing at least 20% of the onsite units as affordable units located on a nonvacant site that was identified in the 5th Cycle (2013-2021) Housing Element suitable sites inventory.
4. “Streamlined housing projects”, as defined in Section 9.39.040, located on a parcel or parcels that do not exceed 43,560 square feet (1 acre) in size, including projects that have been granted modifications and waivers pursuant to Chapter 9.43, Modifications and Waivers; or

A “streamlined housing project” is defined as a project consisting of any of the following:

1. Residential units only; or
2. Mixed-use developments consisting of residential and nonresidential uses in which nonresidential uses do not exceed 25% of the total building square footage and are limited to the first two floors of buildings that are two or more stories; or
3. Transitional or supportive housing.

AA Review Timeline

As illustrated below, the processing timeline for AA review incorporates the mandated deadlines pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 330 and expanded milestones that staff will strive to meet. However, this timeline would apply to all housing projects, regardless of if they are submitted through the SB330 process.



Architectural Review Board

In conjunction with this new streamlined process for housing projects, through implementation of Program 1.B of Santa Monica’s Housing Element, revisions to the Architectural Review Board (ARB) process were also adopted by City Council on March 21, 2023. Instead of the current two-step ARB process, design review will be consolidated to one formal review that occurs prior to entitlement approval. This new process will allow design review to happen in tandem with the entitlement and for an AA review, will take place during the code compliance review stage once the project is deemed to be sufficiently code compliant (e.g. complies with the majority of applicable development standards).

In addition to the revised ARB process, administrative design approval of projects has been expanded to allow for staff to review and approve projects up to 10,000 square feet in the City’s Residential and Ocean Park Neighborhood zoning districts or 7,500 square feet in all other zoning districts.