



Fast Track Site Plan Process

Development Services Department

Austin City Code, Sections 25-5-23 and 25-5-24

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OVERVIEW OF THE FAST TRACK PROCESS

The City of Austin created an optional Fast Track process (LDC 25-5-23) to provide a quicker startup time for site construction. This optional process allows a developer to start flatwork, excavation, and construction of certain at-grade site plan elements prior to the full site plan being approved and released. The Fast Track option is only available for a consolidated administrative site plan (C Plan) submission.

The Fast Track process divides the site plan review into two approval stages: F1 and F2. F1 is the approved site prep construction work, which may be done prior to the approval of the remainder of the plan, not including buildings. The allowable site construction for F1 includes the following:

- Preconstruction conference with City inspectors.
- Placing fencing around the construction area, tree protection fencing, erosion and sedimentation controls, and stabilized construction entrances.
- Construction of temporary detention/sedimentation ponds
- Clearing, rough grading, and construction of utilities and storm sewers*
- Final detention and water quality ponds
- Construction of paved areas, curbs, and islands**

* While utility construction is allowed in F1, it is not recommended due to the amount of time necessary for planning and recordation of easements.

**Paving of parking, driveways, and interior roads, and construction of curb and gutter may not be allowed until F2 is approved if the location of buildings, the expected number of employees, or other reasons preclude determining location or size.

F2 is the remainder of the work to be done, including the land use and compatibility details. When F1 is approved, the developer can begin construction on the approved F1 activities at- and below-grade elements, while F2 is still in review, saving the time it may take to bring the review's F2 land use and compatibility elements into final compliance.

To participate in the Fast Track process, the developer must have a certified City of Austin Fast Track Agent. This Agent facilitates communication between the City and the developer throughout the application process. To be certified, the Agent must pass an exam and pay an annual fee. Find more information about the certification process in the [**CERTIFICATION AS A FAST TRACK AGENT**](#) section.

FAST TRACK REQUIREMENTS

SITE AND APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The site is in City limits and within the boundaries of an urban or suburban watershed.
2. The site is not located in the recharge, transition, or contributing zones of the Edwards Aquifer.
3. The site does not contain any Critical Environmental Features.
4. The proposed development is not located in the 100-year floodplain.
5. The proposed development does not require any waivers, variances, or public hearings.
6. A Consolidated Administrative Site Plan (C plan) application is used. A Fast Track request letter shall be submitted along with the application. It should outline the F1 and F2 elements and the project qualifications for the Fast Track process.
7. The applicant has a current Fast Track Agent with Certification from the City. Find more information about the certification process in the [CERTIFICATION AS A FAST TRACK AGENT](#) section.
8. The applicant has the necessary approvals from all applicable government entities included in the Fast Track application. F1 permits will be denied if there are outstanding government authorizations.

DOCUMENTATION FOR F1 REVIEW

These documents must be submitted for F1 permit review:

1. A complete Consolidated Administrative Site Plan application including:
 - a. A letter requesting Fast Track process and outline of development staging.
NOTE: The Fast Track request must be submitted before finalization of the Completeness Check.
 - b. Proof of current certification for the Fast Track Agent.
 - c. The F1 permit proposal.
 - d. The remaining scope included in the F2 permit with exact work identified on

affected sheets.

2. Submit the following for determining project feasibility:
 - a. A construction schedule with anticipated review times and F1 work start and finish dates.
 - b. An environmental impact report with a tree and critical features survey including all trees larger than eight inches in diameter and any required protective fencing.
3. Submission of fiscal posting for erosion and sedimentation controls, tree mitigation, and restoration.
4. Grading plans showing elevation changes are required for all projects with proposed subsurface work.

REQUIREMENTS AFTER F1 APPROVAL

1. City staff will discontinue the Fast Track process if any Commission or Council variances or waivers are identified during the review process and affect the F1 work.
2. Temporary erosion/sedimentation controls, silt fences, tree protection, and temporary fencing shall be installed.
3. Permanent detention and water quality ponds shall be installed early in the construction schedule for sediment and pollutant mitigation.
4. Driveways and permanent parking shall not be installed until approval of driveway location and design, on-site circulation, surface parking, and building location.
5. Access roads of grades and materials acceptable to the Fire Department will be required prior to building construction and will be maintained during construction.
 - a. Any site preparation or construction that limits the required access to other buildings will require Fire Department approval.
 - b. Required hydrants shall be installed and completed prior to building construction, unless otherwise authorized by the Fire Department.
 - c. Hydrants and other existing fire protection systems must be maintained throughout site preparation and building construction job, unless otherwise authorized by the Fire Department.

CERTIFICATION AS A FAST TRACK AGENT

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

1. Individuals apply to take part in the certification training to become a Fast Track Agent. Individual participation is not limited to design professionals. However, it is recommended that applicants be familiar with the Land Development Code, City policies and the development processes.
2. To become certified, applicants are required to take and pass a written exam on the Fast Track process. The purpose of the exam is to test knowledge on the contents of this handbook and the Fast Track process. Candidates must also pay an annual certification fee to be determined by ordinance.
3. A certificate will be given to the successful candidates and a list of certified individuals will be distributed to the public upon request.
4. Upon expiration for not paying the annual certification fee, a new application and fee will be required for renewal, and the applicant will have to take an updated test based on the latest policy and Code requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FAST TRACK AGENT

The person certified as the Fast Track Agent assumes the responsibility of liaison between the owner, the architect, the engineer, the contractor and City staff to assist in scheduling, Code compliance, and resolution of problems during the design, review and construction stages. The person will be required to provide the added communication and follow-up that is necessary to make the Fast Track process work.

In brief these responsibilities are:

1. Predesign coordination:
 - a. Scheduling of site design, preparing application for complete submittal, anticipating City review time and construction time.
 - b. Taking photographs of site for history of existing conditions.
 - c. Coordinating preliminary meetings between City staff and land developer's staff.
2. Design coordination:
 - a. Coordinating meetings with City staff for design or submittal clarification.

- b. Synchronizing and familiarizing design team with the approved schedule.
 - c. Submitting application after checking for completeness. Important items:
 - i. Submitting a letter requesting participation in the Fast Track process with justification,
 - ii. F1 and F2 areas and exact work to be conducted in each,
 - iii. Final construction schedule,
 - iv. Environmental impact report with tree and critical environmental features survey,
 - v. Affirmation that other required governmental authorization has been obtained (such as Texas Commission on Environmental Quality & U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service),
 - vi. Involvement in any conflict resolution during review,
 - vii. Expediting the return of plans to clear all comments,
 - viii. Coordinating timely submittal of the fiscal security for erosion and sedimentation controls.
3. Construction coordination:
- a. Scheduling and coordinating the preconstruction meeting between the owner, City inspection, designer, and contractor's representative.
 - b. Determining the sequence of construction.
 - c. Visiting the jobsite a minimum of twice weekly to observe:
 - i. Contractor not extending beyond limits of construction for the F1 permit purview,
 - ii. The water quality and detention ponds are built first,
 - iii. That erosion and sedimentation controls are maintained after every storm,
 - iv. The progress of the project as related to the approved schedule,
 - v. Assure that tree protection is installed and maintained,
 - d. Creation of the coordination log with:
 - i. A description of observations during visits to the site and date when the visits occurred,
 - ii. The dates and times of any violations of the Fast Track process by the contractor,
 - iii. The dates and times that contractor was warned and when violation was remedied.
 - e. Providing the coordination log to City staff when requested.
4. The Agent must be present at final inspection of the F1 site work. Reminder: Water quality and detention ponds must be completed as shown on the construction plans.

5. Coordinating the building site improvements per the approved site plan.

SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

The revocation of certification for an Agent participating in the Fast Track process means Fast Track Agent shall no longer be the liaison between the developer and the City on that project or any other Fast Track projects. Suspension means that revocation is for a limited, specified period.

Revocation may occur for severe violations by the Fast Track Agent, which either result from negligent or intentional acts by the Agent, or which result in significant injury to the health, safety, or welfare of either the public or the environment. It is important to note that a violation of Sections 25-5-23 and 25-5-24, dealing with the Fast Track process, is considered a criminal violation of the Code (see Chapter 25-1, Article 10).

The term "Director", when used in this section, refers to the Director of the Development Services Department or delegated staff.

1. The decision to revoke or suspend an approved certification for participating in the Fast Track process will be made by the Director.
2. Revocation may result when the Fast Track Agent is negligent in coordinating the Fast Track process. Revocation will be permanent unless it is reinstated by the Director or by an appeal to the Planning Commission. Violations to the processes outlined in the [RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FAST TRACK AGENT](#) may result in the Director's decision to revoke a certification. Two suspensions of certification during any calendar year will automatically result in revocation.

Examples of items that can cause revocation of the certification are:

- Observing the contractor not complying with Code. The Agent is warned by the City of an ordinance violation and not acting to stop or remedy the situation as required.
- Failing to maintain lines of communication or to coordinate the necessary meetings on multiple occasions.
- Submitting or stating false information and omitting information necessary to prevent damage or injury to the public or to the environment.
- Intentionally not informing the contractor and City staff of any protected environmental features or endangered species that were discovered on the site and not protecting them in a manner approved by the City and other regulatory

agencies.

- Other actions which, in the opinion of the Director, interfere with the intent of the Fast Track process or are in violation of the City Code or policy.
3. Suspension of the certification may result when the Fast Track Agent is warned in written form, of any violation to the responsibilities of the certification and neglects to remedy or give adequate written explanation for the violation. Notice of violation shall specify the time frame within which action must be taken.
 4. If certification has been revoked or suspended, F1 permit authorization is suspended until the Fast Track Agent's certification is revalidated or the owner replaces the suspended Agent with another certified Agent. This requires approval by the Director.

APPEALS

The decision by the Director to revoke the certification for Fast Track permits can be appealed to the Land Use Commission in accordance with Sec. 25-5-24(D) of the Land Development Code.

FAST TRACK CONCEPT



F1 - DEVELOPMENT PERMIT *

Site work allowed in the F1 permit scope:

- Temporary and permanent erosion and sedimentation controls
- Temporary fencing
- Tree removal and protection
- Clearing and grubbing
- Earthwork
- Detention, filtration, and sedimentation ponds
- Utility construction**
- Storm sewer and drainage construction
- Subgrade work
- Grading
- Base and paving for parking and interior roads
- Interior vehicular bridges
- Driveways
- Landscaping and revegetation
- Curb and gutters
- Retaining walls
- Other site related work as approved by staff

F2 - LAND USE SITE PLAN *

Zoning Ordinance compliance for the following:

- Location of buildings, building dimensions
- Legal description for the property
- Related building information (i.e., impervious cover, building coverage, floor-to-area ratio, etc.)
- Gross square feet, height
- Setbacks, including Compatibility setbacks.
- Transportation review requirements for traffic impacts, internal circulation, and all other ordinance and code requirements

** These are examples of commonly used work included in the F1 and F2 scopes of work. Since many sites related issues interface between the two stages, in some cases, it may not be possible to separate the*

proposed improvements into the two groupings as shown above.

*** While utility construction is allowed in F1, it is not recommended due to the amount of time necessary for planning and recordation of easements.*

FAST TRACK PROCESS

The procedures for reviewing a development application submitted under the Fast Track process occurs in the following sequence:

Note: The request for participation in the Fast Track process must be received before finalization of the Completeness Check.

1. Between the submission of the Fast Track request and acceptance of the project, the Fast Track Agent will meet with City staff to review the submittal and determine feasibility of the Fast Track request.
2. City staff reviews the Consolidated Administrative Site Plan application on separate paths: the F1 and F2 processes. Review times will remain the same as the traditional applications. If possible, the applicant will receive an early status report on the feasibility of participating in the Fast Track process.
3. City staff will prepare a comment report addressing any F1 and F2 issues found in the Consolidated Administrative Site Plan. The Fast Track proposal shall be approved once the applicant submits an update addressing the F1 comments, and if:
 - a. no variances are required,
 - b. if required, proof of other governments' authorization is provided,
 - c. fiscal surety is posted,
 - d. F2 compliance is feasible.*
4. The F1 application is approved and released by issuance of a F1 temporary development permit. Note:
 - Permit and site plan must describe the sequence of construction and the approved activity for each affected sheet.
 - A note must be added to the F1 approval which states: "No layout inspection will be permitted until F1 detention and water quality ponds are constructed and a letter from the engineer has been submitted stating that the detention and water quality ponds are completed, and this has been verified by designees of the Director."
 - At a minimum, the following reviews and approvals are needed for the release of

the F1 permit:

- Drainage and Water Quality
- Plumbing
- Fire
- Water
- Environmental
- Electric
- Traffic Control approval and additional reviews may be necessary as determined during the pre-Fast Track process approval meeting.

5. After the F1 application is approved and released, the Case Manager shall organize a meeting with the staff construction engineer, City Arborist, and field inspectors.

The purpose of this meeting is to:

- a. To review the project's construction sequence
 - b. Distribute copies of the approved plans to inspectors
 - c. Distribute a contact list with information for the owner, engineer, architect, contractor, Case Manager, and the City construction engineer for the project.
6. The developer will install temporary erosion and sedimentation controls, tree protection, and temporary fencing as shown on the approved plans. Once these measures are inspected and approved, a pre-construction meeting is scheduled.
 7. Inspectors may approve minor field adjustments to the site plan, if necessary. If field routed changes occur, the inspector will contact the City staff construction engineer and inform them of the changes. The construction engineer will also inform the Case Manager of the site plan changes, and the Case Manager will inform the Fast Track Agent. The Agent ensures these revisions are updated on the site plan.
 8. City inspectors will conduct field inspections monthly, at minimum, and after significant rainfall events depending on the site topography and watershed.
 9. Any site work not included in the F1 permit shall continue to be reviewed in the F2 scope of work. If the F2 application is not approved by the application deadline (from Land Development Code guideline), the F1 permit will be revoked.
 10. If the F2 application is approved, the entire site plan is released, and a development permit is issued for the entire project.

11. Concurrent site plan and building plan review is permissible.

12. No limited building permit will be issued until the F2 scope of work is approved and the site plan is released.

** If the location of buildings, expected number of employees, or other reasons preclude determining location or size, paving of parking, driveways and interior roads, and construction of curb and gutter may not be allowed until the F2 application is approved.*

CONCURRENT SITE PLAN AND BUILDING PERMIT REVIEWS

Applicants may submit an application for the building permit review before the site plan is released. Concurrent review should not be requested until the Fast Track Agent is confident that the building location will not change due to site plan requirements.

If the concurrent building and site plan review is approved, the site plan Case Manager will also review the building plan layout against the site plan to ensure that there are no discrepancies.

SCHEDULING

DESIGN

Design scheduling is the responsibility of the owner and his or her consultant. However, it is expected that during the preliminary design steps the certified person will take part in formulating a schedule, which will include site design, application submittal, review, and construction.

A meeting with City staff during the preliminary design stages is required for all projects.

CONSTRUCTION

These activities shall follow this approximate sequence:

1. Conduct the initial strategy meeting with City staff (Case Manager, review team, and inspectors) and the applicant team (Fast Track Agent, owner, and contractor).
2. Install temporary fencing, tree protection, erosion and sedimentation controls, and stabilized construction entrances.

3. Conduct preconstruction meeting with City inspectors.
4. Construct temporary detention and sedimentation ponds.
5. Perform clearing and rough grading, construct utilities, and storm sewers.
6. Finalize detention ponds and build filtration units.
7. Create paved areas, curbs, and islands and any remaining work in covered in the F1 permit.
8. Once the Consolidated Site Plan is approved and released and building permits are issues, begin building construction.

Note: If the F2 process is approved - and therefore, the entire site plan - is approved and released, items 7 and 8 can be done concurrently or in any order.

SUSPENSION IN PARTICIPATING IN THE FAST TRACK PROCESS

The Fast Track process is a unique process requiring special attention from the Fast Track Agent, design engineer, contractor, and City staff. A systematic approach and precise coordination are necessary. If the Fast Track permit guidelines are not met, there may be justification for suspending the Fast Track process. These are examples of such violations or process changes:

- Identification of a variance during the review process.
- F1 and F2 processes not approved within the Land Development Code deadline for site plan approval.
- Construction of items not approved in the F1 permit prior to site plan approval and release.
- Uncorrected ordinance violation leading to a red tag issuance.
- A construction method resulting in a serious safety problem, which can only be reduced or eliminated by a construction safety stop.
- Construction or disturbance of soil outside of the limits of construction.

- Spoils disposal at an unpermitted site.
- Revocation or suspension of the Fast Track Agent's Certification which, in effect, suspends the project.
- Removal or damage to a protected tree shown to remain on the site.

FAST TRACK PROCESS TIPS

DO:

- Schedule a pre-application meeting with site plan, construction, and environmental staff to review the application information.
- Ensure the application is complete, signed and the agent clearly identified.
- Verify the legal description shown on the application matches the tax plat maps indicating the site boundaries in red, unless only the construction limits will be used as the site area.
- Know if the site is subject to private deed restrictions which may limit its use, site layout, or access.
- The site plan has/is:
 - Clearly defined existing site improvements and proposed construction;
 - Consistent layout of the site from sheet to sheet;
 - Flow arrows are shown on buildings and where the direction of flow is not readily evident;
 - All legal lots or tracts must be shown on at least one sheet, even if the limits of construction area is smaller than the legal lots or legal tracts.
- Drainage calculations for existing and proposed conditions are consistent with the Drainage criteria Manual and good engineering practice.
- If parts of the site are located outside of the Austin Full Use area, ensure the amount of impervious cover, building coverage and floor-to-area ratio are calculated on that portion of the site located within the City limits (either full or limited purpose), not just within the limits of construction.
- The specific uses on the site are permitted uses of the Land Development Code, not uses requiring Conditional Use Permits.

DO NOT:

- Confuse building coverage with the slab area associated with impervious cover. Building coverage includes the total amount of horizontal roofed area, which may include carports, breezeways, covered porches, etc.
- Submit any update before receiving comments on the previous update.
- Assume that F1 permit approval ensures F2 approval is automatic.
- Request participation in the Fast Track process if:

- The land is not inside the Urban or Suburban Watersheds as defined by the Land Development Code;
- A variance is necessary for site plan approval;
- An area to be used for buildings or parking is within a 100-year floodplain, unless the Director determines that development in that area will result in minimal adverse impact on other properties or the environment.