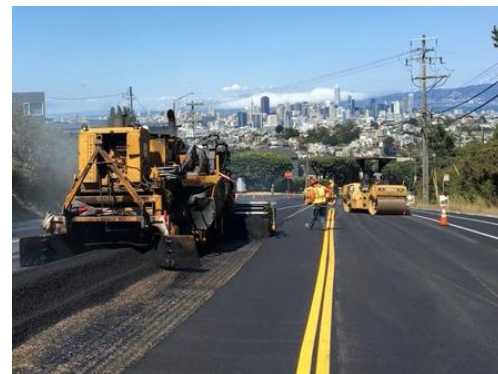
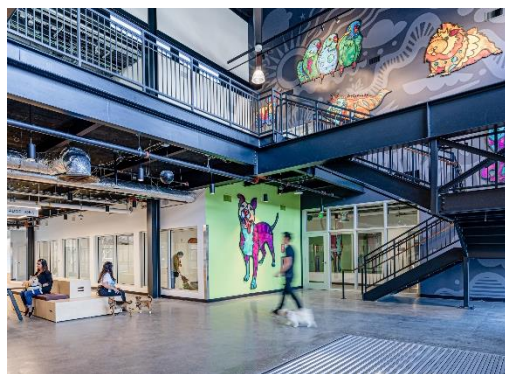


March 19, 2026

Public Works Permit Review Process Ensuring Accessibility Code Compliance

Debra Lutske, Development Permits Manager
Kevin Jensen, Disability Access Coordinator



Today's presentation



Accessibility review process within the Public Works permit workflow and the steps Public Works has taken to improve transparency and timelines and move projects to construction sooner

When is a permit needed?

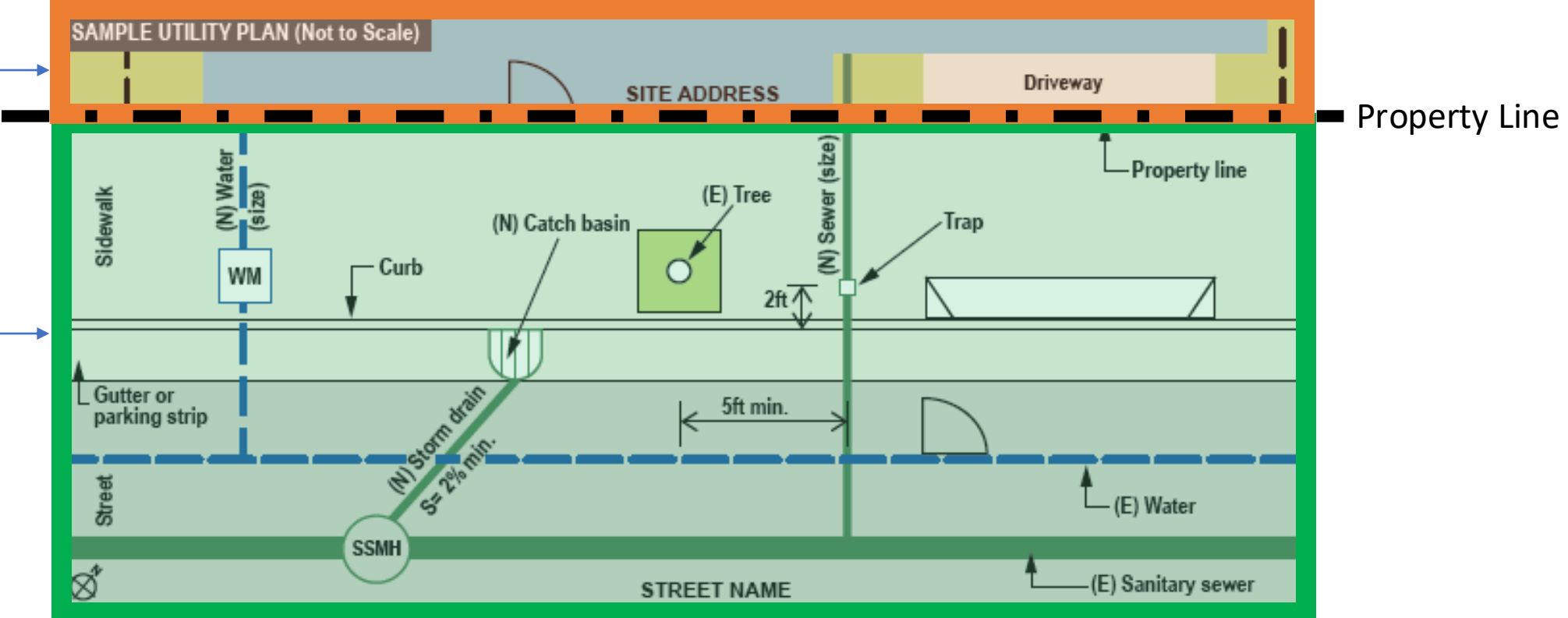
Building permit vs. Public Works permit

- Building Permit**
- Construction on private property—such as new buildings, additions, structural alterations or repairs, changes in occupancy, demolitions, and most electrical, plumbing or mechanical work

- Public Works Permit:**
- Construction or occupancy of the public right of way

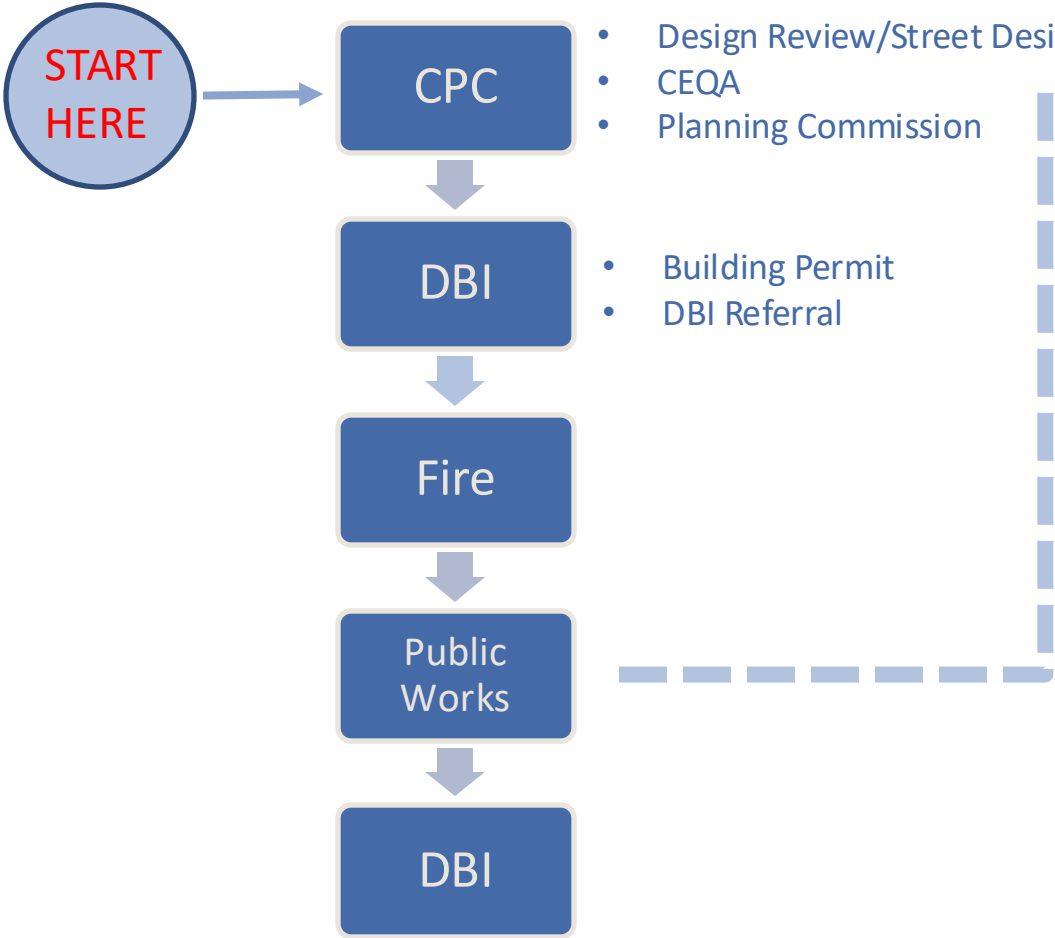
Building Permit (DBI)
(site, full, addenda)

Public Works Permit
(Street Improvement, Excavation, Encroachment Permit(s))

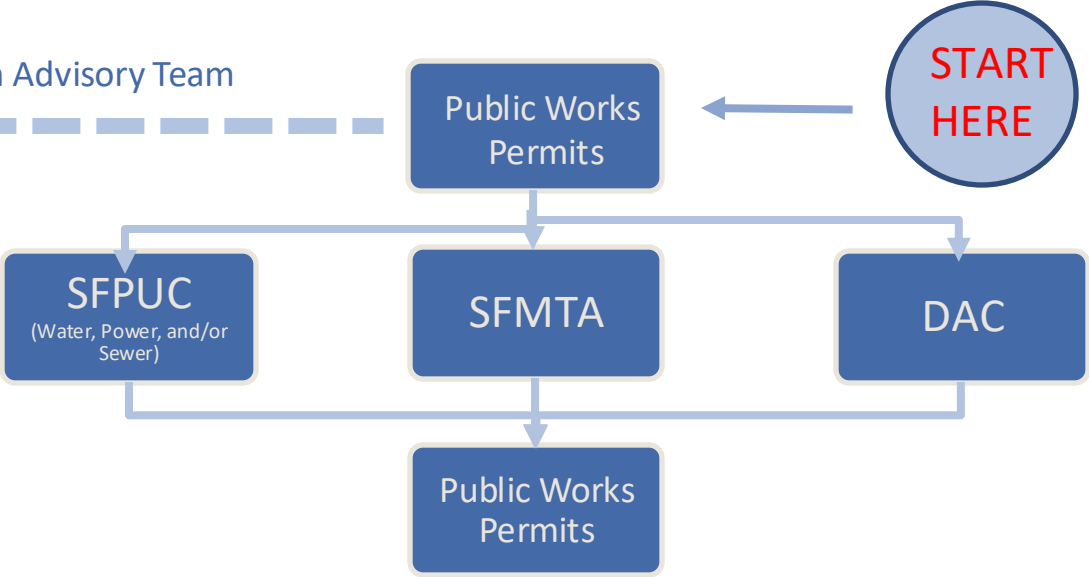


Permit life cycle

Building Permit Process (DBI)



Public Works Permit Process



Examples of Public Works permits that result from DBI permits:

- **Vaults (to provide new/upgraded power)**
- **Street Improvement**
- **Minor Encroachments (accessibility, historic encroachments, fire stub out, gas meters)**
- **Side Sewer**
- **Street Space/Additional Street Space (for construction staging, providing path of travel, etc.)**

Types of permits reviewed by Public Works

Commercial

- Autonomous Delivery Devices
- Banners
- Café Tables and Chairs
- Display Merchandise
- Free Sample
- Mobile Food Facilities
- Parklets
- Places for People
- Shared Spaces
- Street Vendor
- Love Our Neighborhoods

BUF

- Tree Protection
- Sidewalk Landscaping
- Tree Planting
- Tree Removal

DBI

- DBI Building Permit Review for Public Works compliance
- Street Space
- Inspection Conformity
- Sidewalk Repair

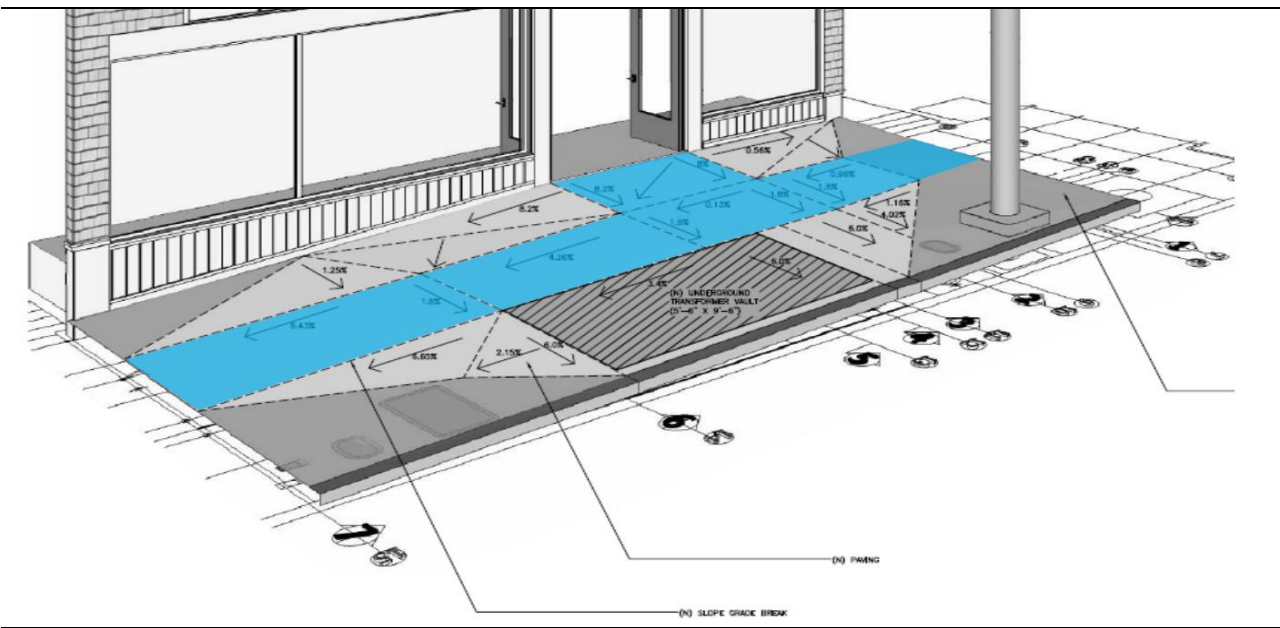
Construction

- Additional Street Space
- Boring and Monitoring Well
- Debris Box
- General Excavation
- Major Encroachment
- Minor Encroachment
- Night Noise
- Side Sewer
- Sidewalk Repair
- Storage Container
- Street Improvement
- Sub-Sidewalk Basement
- Surface Mounted Facility
- Tank Removal
- Temporary Occupancy
- Utility Excavation

On average, Public Works annually receives:

- **2,900 building permit applications for review**
- **19,000 Public Works permit applications**
- **8,000 Street Space permit applications associated with building permit applications**

Permits requiring DAC review



Construction

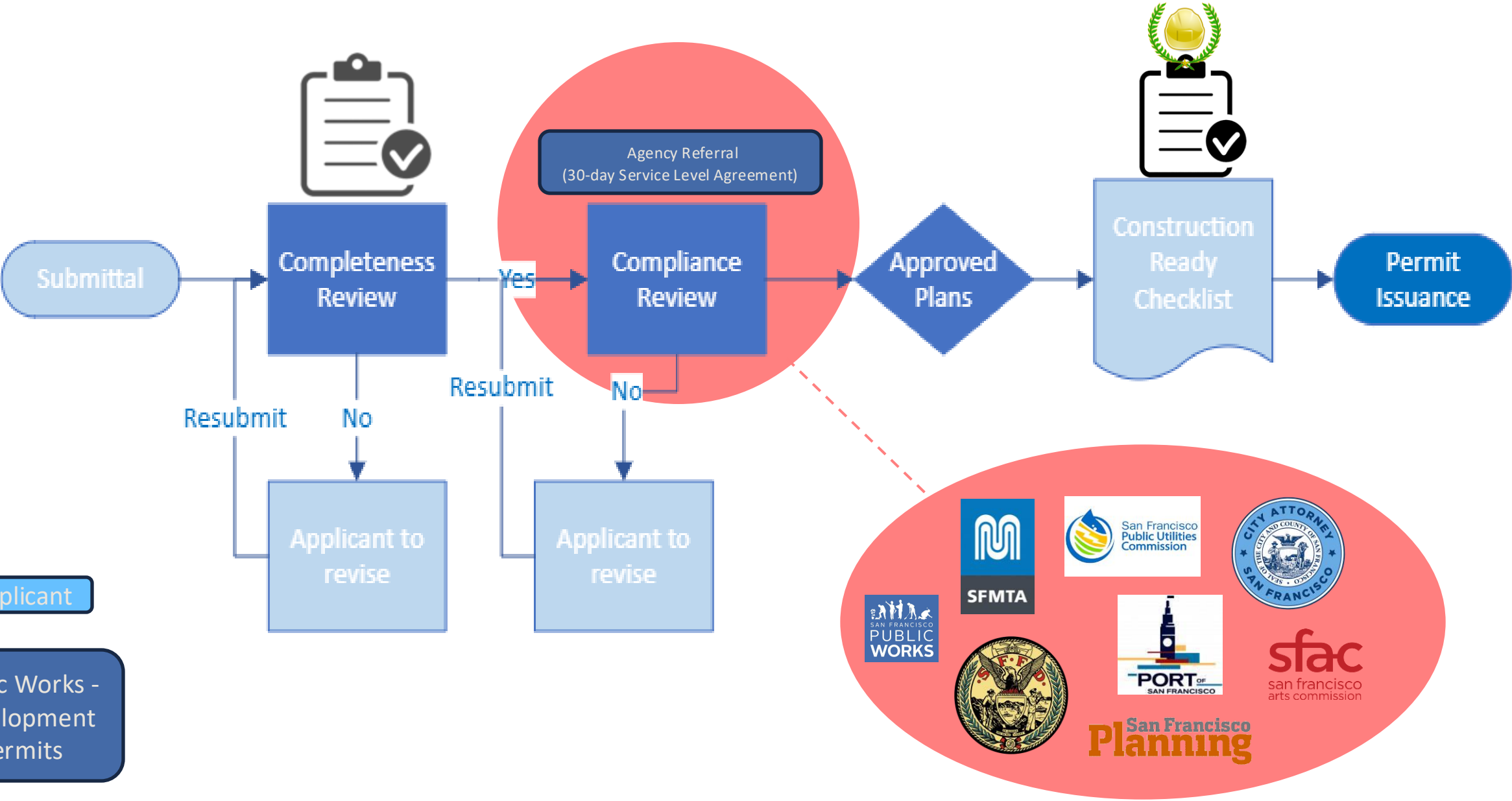
- Street Improvement Permits
- Excavation Permits

&

Occupancy

- Encroachment Permits

Public Works permitting process: Bringing projects to construction sooner



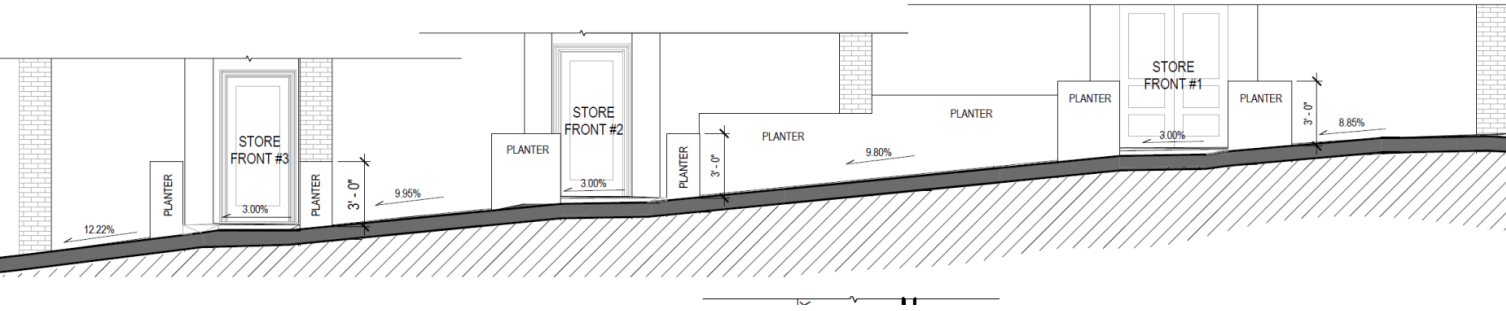
Applicant

Public Works -
Development
Permits

What triggers DAC review?

Sidewalk Sections

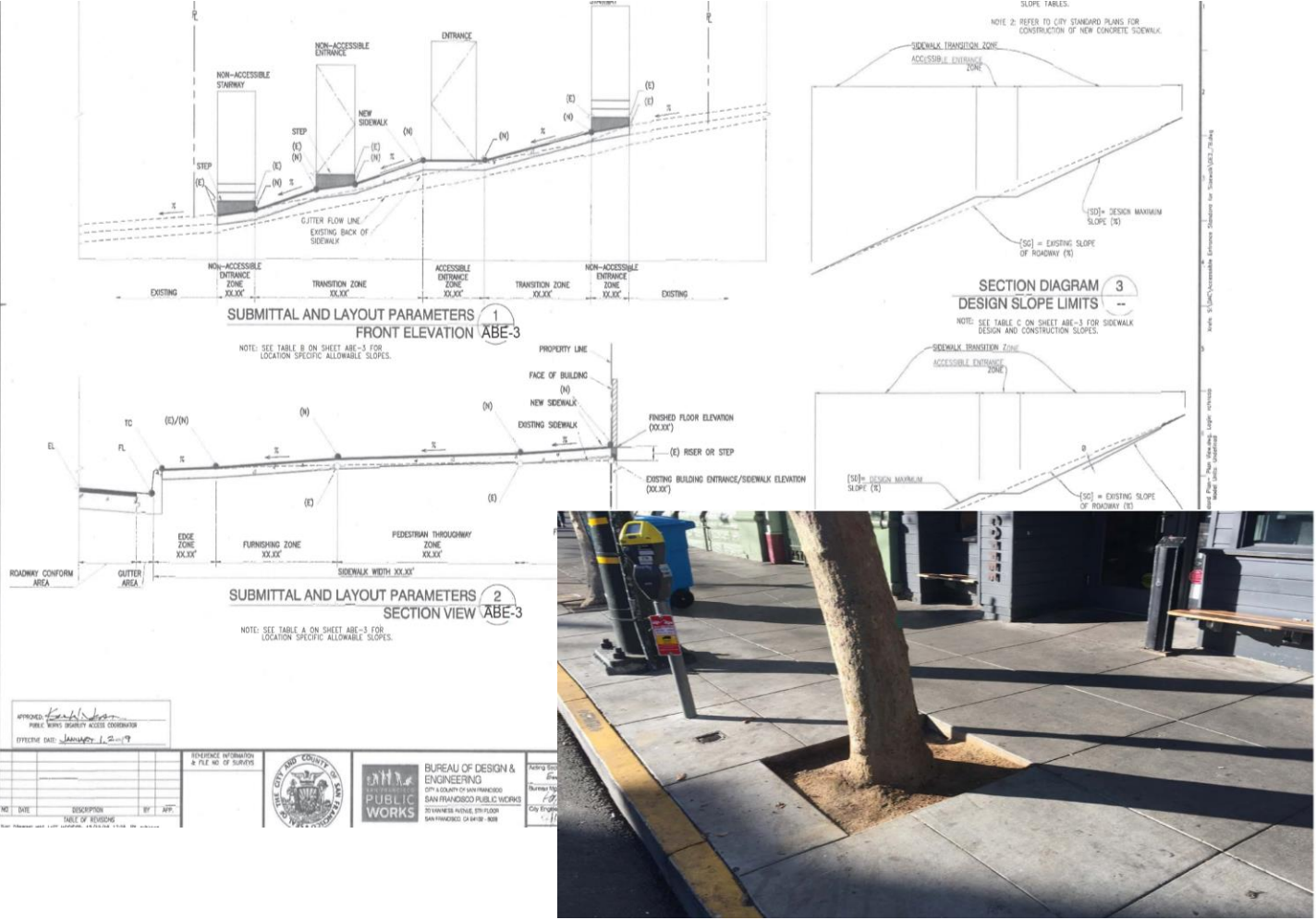
Example 2



Applications may be routed to DAC when plans include one or more of the following elements:

- Curb ramps
- New buildings or alterations to existing buildings
- Passenger loading zones (white zones) and/or accessible parking spaces (blue zones)
- Accessible Business Entrance (ABE) Program applications
- Bus stops
- Sidewalk cross slopes exceeding 1.67 percent
- Curb heights less than 4 inches or greater than 7 inches
- Building or sidewalk alterations involving sub-sidewalk basements
- Entrance canopies or awnings with vertical clearances less than 8 feet

New buildings or alterations to existing buildings



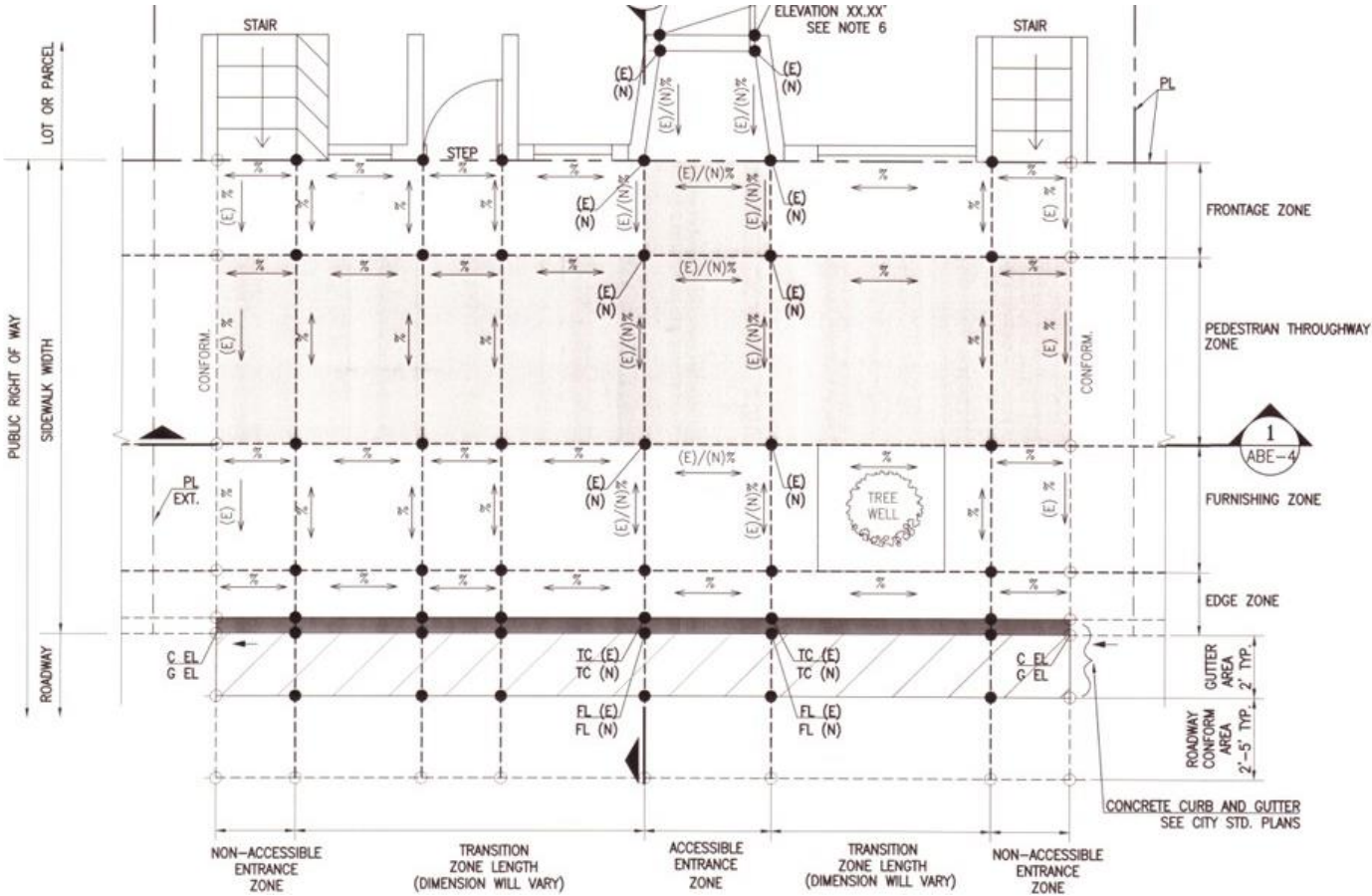
Accessible Route Along Sidewalk
 <2% Cross-Slope

Level Landing Provided at
 Pedestrian Throughway Zone Only

<8.3% Slope up to Doorway

DA-04, Power Door Operator in
 Lieu of Level Landing Utilized

Common Accessibility Code compliance issues



External challenges

- Incomplete applications
 - Missing accessibility details
 - Non-compliant curb ramp design
 - Non-conforming sidewalk grading grid
- Applicant resubmittal time

Internal challenges

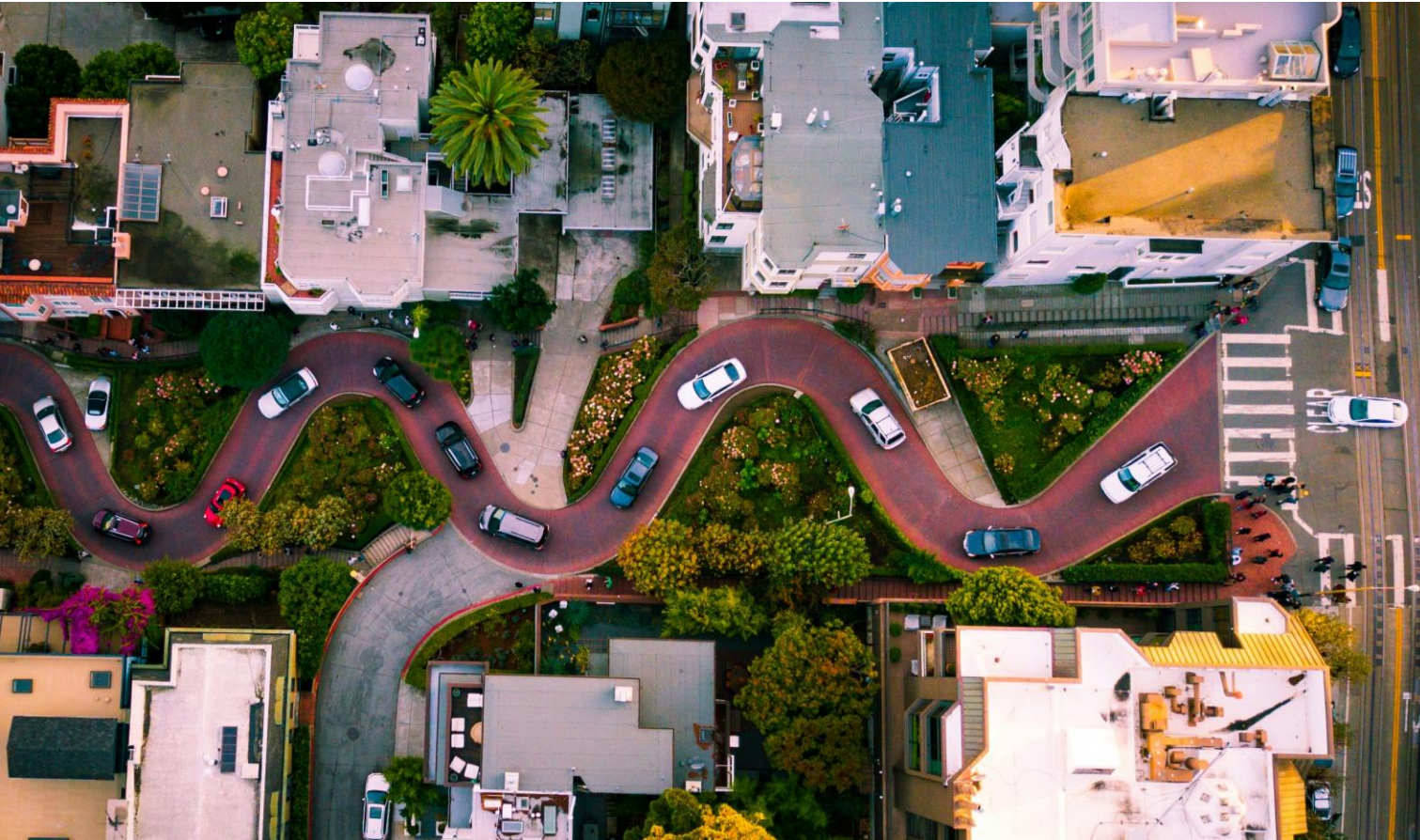
- Mandated permit priorities
- Staffing resources

Why proper design is so important



- **Reminder: Public Works has a duty to safeguard the public right of way**
- **Applicants must honor their obligation to produce a project that is compliant with our standards for a safe, accessible right of way**
- **Final Occupancy can not be given until a final permit approval is granted**

Accessibility compliance in other cities



San Francisco is a leader in accessibility compliance in the nation, serving as a model for other cities

Prop H (Save Our Small Businesses Initiative)

	Target days to review	Median Days to review	% meeting target
Completeness check Number of days from application submitted to completeness letter sent.	21	0	100%
First plan review Number of days from in-house permit filed to first plan review comments issued. This is the number of days for each station's first plan review.	30	5	96%
Resubmission review Number of days for each station to issue resubmission review comments for in-house permits. There may be multiple resubmission rounds.	14	3	97%

The screenshot shows a dashboard for permit review. On the left, there are filter sections for 'Review Status' (set to 'All'), 'Agency' (with checkboxes for DAC, DP, EHY, EST, Fire, and MonPres), 'Due Date' (set to 'Last 1'), 'Finish Date' (set to 'Last 1'), and 'Has Bluebeam Session' (set to 'Yes'). On the right, there are two data tables.

Review Data

Permit ID	Revision	Agency	Result
20ME-00005	1	Bike Racks	Approved
20ME-00005	1	CDD	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	DAC	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	DP	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	EHY	Approved
20ME-00005	1	EST	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	Fire	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	MonPres	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	Planning	Approved
20ME-00005	1	SFMTA	Needs Revision
20ME-00005	1	SL	Approved
Total			

Agency Review Counts and Days to Review

Agency	Count	Average	Median
BUF	35	28.91	30
CDD	55	34.88	33
Color Curb	41	20.38	16
DAC	50	26.42	29
DP	52	40.08	33
EHY	34	28.81	30
EST	4	25.25	25
Fire	4	96.50	97
MonPres	49	5.91	1
Planning	2	31.00	31
SFMTA	52	26.17	22
SL	53	33.27	30
Total	519	27.82	28

- Prop H reduces permit times from months to 30 days
- Building Permits
 - 30-day reviews
 - Review begins upon submittal of application
- Public Works Permits
 - Review begins upon submittal of application

Improvements implemented

- 1 Bluebeam sessions**
- 2 30-day interagency reviews**
- 3 Permit completeness checklists**
- 4 Development Permit Tracker**
- 5 Legislative changes**

Public Works has transformed its processes—removing barriers, modernizing tools, strengthening service levels and advancing legislation—to help projects reach construction faster.

Website, resources and checklists

Permits

Services

- [Report a Problem](#)
- [Street Cleaning](#)
- [Contractor Resources](#)
- [Garbage and Waste](#)
- [Graffiti](#)
- [Permits](#)
- [Potholes](#)
- [Public Records Requests](#)
- [Public Toilets](#)
- [Recycling and Refuse Collection](#)
- [Storm Preparation](#)
- [Mechanical Street Sweeping and Street Cleaning Schedule](#)
- [Sidewalks](#)
- [Street Resurfacing Program](#)
- [Street Trees and Plants](#)
- [Subdivisions and Mapping](#)
- [Other Services A-Z](#)



START HERE!
Start with these tools to help you successfully obtain a permit.



WHAT TYPE OF PERMIT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
Look for the right permits for your project.



LOOK UP YOUR PERMIT STATUS
Curious about your permit application status? Find out how it's coming along.



LATEST INFORMATION
Get the scoop on all things permit-related.



IN-PERSON SERVICES
Visit us at our offices, located at 49 South Van Ness Ave.



ONLINE SERVICES
Submit a permit application or Notice to Repair (NTR) permit application, pay a permit fee, or access permit recordation services.



CONTACT US
Need help finding your permit? Have any other questions or need more information? Reach out to us.

What's New

Services

- [Report a Problem](#)
- [Cleaning Programs](#)
- [Contractor Resources](#)
- [Garbage & Waste](#)
- [Graffiti](#)
- [Permits](#)
- [Potholes](#)
- [Public Records Requests](#)
- [Public Toilets](#)
- [Recycling & Refuse Collection](#)
- [Storm Preparation](#)
- [Street Sweeping](#)
- [Sidewalks](#)
- [Street Resurfacing](#)
- [Street Trees and Plants](#)
- [Subdivisions and Mapping](#)
- [Other Services A-Z](#)

Establishment of Minimum Completeness Standards for Public Works' Construction Permits (Effective May 15, 2024)

- [Announcement from Director.](#)
- [Public Works Permit Application Completeness Guide](#)
- [Preapplication Checklist](#)

Establishment of Public Works' Minimum Standards for Building Permit Application Intake Reviews and Releases (Effective September 1, 2023)

- [Announcement from Director Short.](#)
- [Minimum Standards for BPA Intake Review and Release \(Tier II\) Checklist](#)
- [Minimum Standards for BPA Intake Review and Releases Memo Eff. Sept2023 \(8.29.23\)](#)

<p>Mission</p> <p>San Francisco Public Works is one of the largest and most complex municipal operations in the City, with a 1,600-member workforce and a \$384 million annual operating budget. The department's active capital project portfolio exceeds \$3 billion. As one of San Francisco's oldest City departments, it is also one of the most forward-thinking. Keeping San Francisco beautiful, safe and sustainable.</p> <p>Additional Resources</p>	<p>About Us</p> <p>Accessibility Information Budget Commissions Contact Us Core Values History In the Works - A Digital Journal Media Inquiries Organization Press Releases 2023</p>	<p>Get Involved</p> <p>Grants Jobs + Internships Neighborhood Improvement Volunteer</p>	<p>Projects</p> <p>Portfolio Map</p>	<p>Services</p> <p>Report a Problem Cleaning Programs Contractor Resources Garbage & Waste Graffiti Permits Potholes Public Records Requests Public Toilets Recycling & Refuse Collection</p>
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Resources and Guides:

- [Pre-application Checklist](#)
- [Minimum Completeness Standards & Checklist \(including DAC\)](#)
- [Construction Ready Checklist](#)
- [Curb Ramp Design Submittal Checklist](#)

Resources and checklists

Want to make your permit review process **smoother, quicker and easier?**

Complete the San Francisco Public Works permit review checklist at the get-go.


PRE-APPLICATION

Does your project include any of the following features in the public right of way?

Identify any of the following features shown on project plans (check all that apply):

- Structural components (posts/beams/braces)
- Curb curbs (curb/curb/curb) Curbside Curb Area/Drainage Requirements Checklist
- Accessible parking (flat, level) and/or passenger loading/unloading zones
- Accessible business entrances
- New building and/or alterations of existing buildings
- Building and/or sidewalk alterations with sub-sidewalk basements
- Entrance canopies and/or awnings with vertical clearance of less than 8 feet (modification)
- New sidewalk (no street frontage)
- Existing street lines, designated significant tree or landmark tree within (1) foot of the project
- Existing or proposed curbside sidewalk technologies (the right of way)
- Treeing, retaining, job work elevation and/or relocation within existing and/or lateral limits of any street or designated application area with the status of a tree or tree view. (Significant and/or landmark trees, Public Works) (DBI/Structural/Sign)
- Non-compliant with (1) foot of the project
- Curb heights under 6 inches or curb heights over 7 inches
- Existing or proposed sidewalk slope over 1.0%
- Existing or proposed sidewalk having flow over 10%
- Existing, proposed or proposed sidewalk (under minor, under major, for hydraulic, lower sidewalk, lower major, wheelchair, catch basins/drains, street lights)
- Structures, retaining walls, changes in finished grade within 1 foot of an existing utility or street sign foundation
- Existing existing and/or sidewalk full non-compliance
- Existing new or existing median in the roadway or side street
- Document existing encroachments. No new work or modification allowed

More information can be found at: www.sfpublicworks.org/licenses/permits/what's-new



Type of Building Exterior Work from DBI G-20	Types of DBI Permits			Tiers for Releases				Descriptions
	Hold (H)	Hold (Full)	Hold (Address)	Tier I Apps + Fees	Tier II Apps + Fees + Minimum Standards on BPA Form	Tier III Apps + Fees + Plans + Public Works Permit Review	Tier IV Apps + Fees + Approve Public Works Permit	
								NO HOLD on Site Permit for X (City Standard Designs)
						*		*Settlement approvals to be submitted for all non-City standard designs (Major Encroachment).
						X > 4'		Street Improvement and/or Minor Sidewalk Encroachment. Additional permits may be required. Name, Tables and Chair / Shared Spaces Permit may be required.
							X	Minor Sidewalk Encroachment. If over 4' then Tier III requirements apply (Plans and Structural review).
							X	Must comply with code or will be routed back to DBI. If allowed, Minor Sidewalk Encroachment Required.
								Approved Minor Sidewalk Encroachment (no public notification). Requires additional Agencies review.
								NO HOLD. Must comply with code or will be routed back to DBI.
								If plans do not comply with code, requires DBI recheck. Minor Sidewalk Encroachment.
								If plans do not comply with code, requires DBI recheck / DBI Structural review and approval. Preexisting Encroachment Permit.

COMPLETENESS CHECKLISTS

IMPROVEMENT APPLICATIONS SHALL INCLUDE:

- Project email(s), phone number(s) and wet signature(s) for final approved set. (Drawings)
- LOT number (if available)

Scale shall be no less than 1/8" = 1' or 1" = 10' and if applicable, enlarged detail for rounded to the nearest one hundredth of one foot

Dimension of the front property line and dimension of the legislated sidewalk width, which is measured by the face of the curb and going toward the property

Dimensions as well as the front and side property lines

Existing (E) and proposed (N) spot elevations, in positive decimal feet and rounded to the nearest one hundredth of one foot, fronting the property and at least 15 feet into the adjacent parcels. Spot elevations shall be rounded to the nearest one hundredth of one foot

Existing (E) and proposed (N) spot elevations at the top of curb (TC) and at the flow line (FL). At an interval no greater than 25 feet

Existing (E) and proposed (N) ground finished floor spot elevations as (FF) at each entrance threshold and garage, with a corresponding BW

Along both edges of driveways

At grade breaks with corresponding BW, TC, and FL

Provide both existing (E) and new (N) slope percentages in between each spot elevation(s) with the arrow symbol pointing in the direction of downward drainage.

Dimension existing and/or new curb cut(s). Ensure curb cut wings are oriented correctly (See San Francisco Public Works Standard Plan) and also indicate the required 1-inch lip and 18" wings within the curb cut.

If applicable, show both existing (E) and proposed (N) spot elevations at the corners of all encroachments and changes in elevation. This includes but is not limited to the edges of landscaping features, retaining walls, stairs, warpages, landings, transformer vaults, driveways and curb cut.

If applicable, show existing curb ramps. For all corner lots, two (2) curb ramp evaluations and possibly reconstruction will be required per Public Works Order No. 184350.

Denote type of curb: 1. Standard curb, 2. Combined curb and concrete gutter, 3. Combined curb and parking strip, or 4. Other existing non-conforming condition, be specific.

For all doors, existing stairs, garages and/or driveway areas. Label elevations at the top of riser, bottom of treads and tread extents along each side of stairs and/or ramp

Where new work meets existing work at back of walk, top of curb, grade breaks, flow line and height (E) elevations at conforms/limits of work

Label curb heights in decimal inches along project frontage(s). Curb heights should be 6 inches typically. To comply with accessibility requirements, curb height may be 4 inches minimum to 7 inches

X	City Standard Designs							
*	(Non-City Standards designs)							
X > 4'								
X								
X								

- Driveways and curb cuts
- Lawn/planter strips, planter boxes
- Ramps in the sidewalk
- Streight/traffic signal/utility poles

Not and/or if applicant proposes excavation in crosswalks and/or curb returns. Show existing and proposed curb ramps to be constructed as required per Public Works Order No. 184350

If instructed, submit proposed curb ramp details that provide all the items listed on the Public Works Order No. 184350 Requirements Checklist

If evaluated, submit an Existing Curb Ramp Slope Inspection, overall curb ramp slope inspection and a list of the detectable warnings (refer to Existing Curb Ramp Slope Inspection Form)

Resource guide to:

- Get building permits sooner
- Make sure submittals are more complete to get Public Works permits sooner
- Provide access to early reviews with Public Works staff

Each adjacent pair of spot elevations (one for sidewalk drainage), Round slope

on callouts. Sidewalk cross slope shall be a 1% minimum and the street

ps, finished floor levels, etc. correctly (see San Francisco Public Works Order No. 184350)

Including sewer, water, gas, fire hydrants, etc. Show dimensions from lot lines

used scope of work. Provide dimensions with the service point (see Public Works Order No. 184350)

encroachments and changes in elevation

Bluebeam sessions & 30-day Service Level Agreements

+ Completeness Check Street Improvement Permits (SIPs)
(includes DAC for curb ramps)

Project Review: 30-day Service Level Agreement (SLA)
Time from payment to first review: 38.5 days (average)

+ Bluebeam Compliance Sessions & SLAs (SIPs)
(includes DAC)

Project Review: 30-day SLA
On average, iterative compliance review of each project cycle is taking 28 days

Permit ID	Revision	Agency	Result	Days to Review	Routed Date	Due Date	Finish Date	Review Notes
20ME-00005	1	Bike Racks	Approved	14.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	1/12/2026	
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20ME-00005	1	DAC	Needs Revision	51.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/18/2026	
20ME-00005	1	DP	Needs Revision	44.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/11/2026	
20ME-00005	1	EHY	Approved	45.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/12/2026	
20ME-00005	1	EST	Needs Revision	51.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/18/2026	
20ME-00005	1	Fire	Needs Revision	51.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/18/2026	
20ME-00005	1	MonPres	Needs Revision	0.00	1/12/2026	2/11/2026	1/12/2026	
20ME-00005	1	Planning	Approved	31.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	1/29/2026	
20ME-00005	1	SFMTA	Needs Revision	28.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	1/26/2026	
20ME-00005	1	SL	Approved	44.00	12/29/2025	1/28/2026	2/11/2026	
Total				27.82				

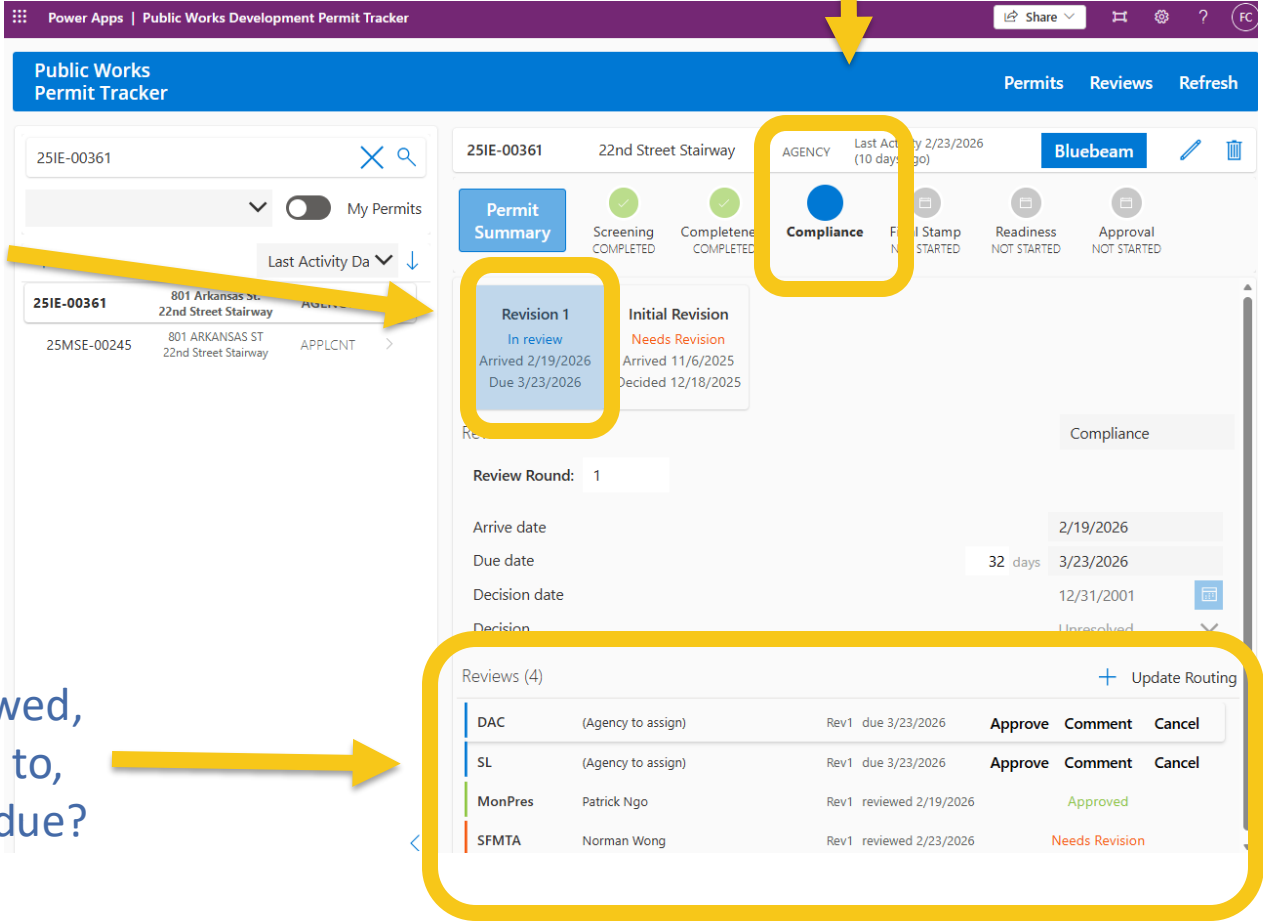
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Fire	4	96.50	97
MonPres	49	5.91	1
Planning	2	31.00	31
SFMTA	52	26.17	22
SL	53	33.27	30
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Development Permits Tracker

Review phase

Review round

Who has reviewed, who still needs to, and when is it due?



- Helps us manage reviews and keep projects on track
- Provides a tool for management and all City departments to monitor program status and workflow
- Helps reviewers meet deadlines
- Next step: publish on website

Recent changes and next steps

Improvements complete:

Accelerate approvals

Fewer reviews, faster approvals and earlier construction start



Pre-Application meeting to provide early feedback

(Public Works)



Establish new minimum technical design standards for Building Permit Application submittals and reviews to speed Public Works release

(DBI)



Create new master checklist for all Public Works permit application submittals for a more comprehensive review, speedier referral to City agencies and quicker responses

(Public Works)



NEW Bluebeam Sessions & Agency Reviews (30 days)

(Referral Agencies)

Next steps:

- Integration with the citywide digital permitting system
- Additional pre-application guidance for accessibility compliance
- Expanded permit tracking tools
- Continued interagency coordination



QUESTIONS