



Development Services

Service First Bulletin #306

APPOINTMENT BASED ZONING CONSULTATION PROCESS

PURPOSE

In line with our dedication to the Service First philosophy, the Development Services Department (DSD) is pleased to present this Service First Bulletin 306, detailing our modernized Zoning Consultation Program. The program is intended to be appointment based and help reduce or eliminate lobby wait times for customers seeking a technical zoning or building consultation. This customer service initiative will be implemented October 1st, 2023.

SCOPE

The Department understands the importance of providing timely and accurate information. In the past customers have typically visited our permit center with questions about a proposed project. These walk-in customers would have to wait and hope to be seen on the day they visited. Often, these sessions would extend well beyond the free complementary service 20 minute and would result in long wait times for other customers. The Department recognizes that this is not the most efficient way to serve customers.

DSD will continue to offer a free complementary service of 20 minutes for basic consultations and a fee-based service for more complex requests. This appointment-based program will be offered in person or virtually. These services are designed to provide tailored assistance to meet our customer's unique needs and below is the Code reference and fee schedule outlining this customer service initiative.

Chapter 52 Administrative Procedures for Construction Codes Section 303.5.20 states, *“A fee for consultation with technical staff members must be paid before the consultation in accordance with the fee scheduled below. A fee is not required to discuss a plan for which a permit application has been accepted by the building official and permit fee has been paid.”*

Basic Zoning Consultations

- ❖ Duration: 20-minute session
- ❖ Fee: Free Complimentary Session

- ❖ Focus: Basic information of specific site attributes including zoning identification, district regulations, land-use provision, and walkthroughs of the permitting process.
- ❖ **Note:** While this consultation serves as an excellent primer for zoning basics, it is not designed for intricate project evaluations. This service is typically recommended for single-family residential projects, homeowners, Do-It-Yourself (DIYs), small first-time business owners, existing small commercial projects, etc.

Enhanced Zoning Consultation

- ❖ Duration: Up to 1-hour session
- ❖ Fee: Starting at \$50 (additional fees may be required based on additional requests or research required). Payment must be made with the zoning team member prior to beginning the consultation session.
- ❖ Focus: Specialized and more in-depth understanding of zoning challenges, encompassing topics like Planned Development Districts (PDs), Form-Based Districts, Legal Build Site and Parking Analysis, and Zoning Determination requests.
- ❖ **Note:** This consultation dives deeper into zoning complexities, but it is not designed to replace site plan reviews or pre-development meetings. This service is designed for consulting firms, permit expeditors, existing and new large/complex projects, etc.

To facilitate easy scheduling and access to a collection of resources, visit our dedicated zoning webpage at <https://bit.ly/DSD-Zoning>. It is highly recommended consultations be scheduled in advanced with both in-person and virtual options available. This will ensure staff is available and eliminate customer wait times.

REQUESTS

Customers are highly encouraged to schedule an appointment with City staff. This will help ensure the applicable staff is available to assist and will minimize/eliminate wait times. Scheduling a consultation is straightforward and tailored for convenience:

1. Scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/DSD-Zoning>. Hit the “ZONE IN! on your next consultation.” button.
2. Choose your service type: Basic / In-person, Basic / Virtual, Enhanced / In-person, or Enhanced / Virtual.
3. Pick your appointment date and time.
4. Fill in the short information fields.
5. Hit the “BOOK” button.

Scheduled In-person Zoning Consultations:

For those preferring to visit us in-person, announce your scheduled appointment at the front desk to bypass the regular wait and meet with a zoning team member. If you chose

an Enhanced Consultation, payment can be made with the zoning team member prior to beginning the consultation.

Scheduled Virtual Zoning Consultations:

For virtual consultation just click on the Microsoft Teams meeting link you were emailed when you booked at your appointed time. If you chose an Enhanced Consultation, payment must be made with the zoning team member prior to beginning the consultation.

Walk-in Customers:

Our walk-in customers are still welcome to our Basic Zoning Consultation service limited to 20-minute sessions. Enhanced Zoning Consultations must be scheduled in advanced through the website or with a team member. Please note scheduled appointments will be given priority over walk-in requests.

SUMMARY

This Bulletin is intended for information purposes only, and the Department reserves the right to administer this process. The Building Official may modify or suspend this program based on staffing levels and business needs. If you have any questions or concerns related to this process, please email the Director at buildingofficial@dallas.gov.

- Prepared by:** Jason Pool, Development Services Administrator
- Reviewed by:** Vernon Young, Jr., Assistant Director
Mina Eskander, P.E., CFM, LEED-AP BD+C, Assistant Director
Donald D. Dixon, Jr. CBO, Assistant Director
- Authorized by:** Andrew Espinoza, CBO, MCP, CFM, CCEA, Chief Building Official/Director