



Land Development Services

Technical Bulletin

Subject: Minimum Submission Review Policy

Date: 10/24/22

No.: 22-09

Summary: This technical bulletin explains the launch of a new Minimum Submission Review (MSR) policy for first submissions of conservation plans, infill lot grading plans, minor site plans, and rough grading plans. During the Minimum Submission Review, a Land Development Services (LDS) minimum submission reviewer will screen the plan based on the appropriate published MSR checklist to ensure the plan meets county standards for review. (See checklists for each plan under “Minimum Submission Review Checklists” in this technical bulletin.)

Effective Date: October 31, 2022

Background: The quality and completeness of site-related plan submissions are critical for the efficiency of LDS review processes for all customers. The MSR will accelerate overall review times and shorten the time-to-market for projects because reviewers will perform detailed reviews only on complete plans with all required elements.

Policy (Requirement or Guidelines): LDS will apply the MSR to the first submission of conservation plans, infill lot grading plans¹, minor site plans^{2,3} and rough grading plans². Prior to plan acceptance into the Fairfax County site review process, an LDS minimum submission reviewer will conduct an MSR using the MSR checklists. These checklists provide essential content related to county and other review agency requirements that must be included in the plan to allow a complete and thorough review. A submitter must address all essential items or justify exclusions on or attached to the checklist. If your plan does not pass the MSR, LDS will return it for correction and resubmission. This cycle continues until the plan meets MSR requirements. Once accepted, LDS will distribute the plan to county and other review agencies in PLUS.

An MSR fee will be assessed at initial plan submission for conservation plans, infill lot grading plans, minor site plans, and rough grading plans. This fee will be charged for each MSR regardless of pass or fail, per [Appendix Q](#) of the County Code.

¹ The INF MSR checklist designated in [Technical Bulletin 21-05](#) remains the same.

² Depending on the complexity of the plan, some minor site plans and rough grading plans may be routed to the [Gateway Review](#) instead of the MSR, and assessed the Gateway Review fee per Appendix Q of the County Code.

³ Effective Oct. 31, 2022, the minor site plan MSR checklist will replace the previously required [minor site plan application](#).

Discussion of MSR Program Objectives, Procedures, and Definitions:

Minimum Submission Review Objectives:

- Improve the quality of plan submissions. A ‘quality plan’ is one that is complete, accurate, and readable and has been quality-checked by an MSR reviewer prior to submission to the county.
- Reduce the “Time to Market.” Improving the quality of plan submittals directly limits overall review time. Conversely, a poor-quality submission is difficult to review, generates an excessive number of review comments, and may require multiple submissions before approval and “new” comments during the second and subsequent reviews. This delays the process and impacts the review timeline for other higher quality plans. Poorly prepared plans have direct impacts on the owner, too, including high project carry costs and potentially escalated construction costs due to change orders and delays.
- Create a more predictable process. Quality plans can be reviewed within a more predictable timeframe benefiting the project owner, the design team, and the regulatory agencies.
- MSR completion within two business days of plan submission.

Minimum Submission Review Procedure:

1. Conservation plans, infill lot grading plans, minor site plans, and rough grading plans will go through an MSR process where a county MSR reviewer will determine if the plans are acceptable using the MSR checklists as a guide.
 - a) Prior to initial submission, the submitting engineer will review the plan using the appropriate checklist and indicate in each line of the checklist: a) the plan sheet number(s) where the item appears; b) a checkmark in the OK column or a checkmark in the N/A column if not applicable to the plan. If adding a checkmark in the NO column, an explanation must be provided why the item has not been addressed in the plan. The explanation can be included on the checklist as a footnote or may be attached to the checklist.
2. The submitting engineer will include the completed checklist with the plan submission package.
3. The Minimum Submission Reviewer reviews the plan for completeness, accuracy, and readability using the checklist as a guide.
4. If the plan meets the criteria for acceptance, the submitting engineer will be notified and the plan distributed to LDS and other review agencies.
5. If the plan is deemed unacceptable, it will be returned to the submitting engineer with the reasons for non-acceptance. The applicant must make appropriate corrections and resubmit the plan through the MSR, with a new MSR fee, and include a comment-response letter and updated checklist with the resubmission package. This cycle continues until the plan is deemed acceptable.

Definitions:

1. *Acceptable plan.* The Minimum Submission Reviewer has determined the plan is complete, accurate, and readable so that a thorough review can be conducted.
2. *Non-acceptable plan.* The Minimum Submission Reviewer has determined that the plan does not meet required standards for completeness, accuracy, or readability. The plan cannot be thoroughly reviewed due to missing, inaccurate, or unreadable information.
3. *Completeness.* The plan includes all information necessary for a thorough review.
4. *Accuracy.* The information on the plan correctly depicts existing and proposed conditions, zoning ordinance, Public Facilities Manual (PFM) and code requirements; tabulations and design calculations; labeled features and dimensions; site-specific notes and narratives; sections, details, dimensions, and specifications that meet codes and engineering standards.
5. *Readability.* A readable plan is necessary for reviewers to conduct a thorough review and for site inspectors to enforce the approved plan during construction. Factors that diminish readability include overlapping lines, labels, or information; insufficient distinction among line types or line weights; inaccurate or missing legend; heavy lines or shading that obscures underlying information; misplaced or missing leaders; lines or features without labels; scale too small to clearly depict all information; existing features indistinguishable from proposed work; and unreadable text (smaller than 0.1 inch, blurred, obscured by linework, overlapping text).
6. *Essential Items.* Line items identified on the MSR checklist as being essential to a complete and accurate plan that can be thoroughly reviewed. Essential items are those components of a plan that are fundamental requirements that, if omitted, prevent a thorough review and could lead to design modifications requiring new review comments during a subsequent plan review.

Minimum Submission Review Checklists:

[Conservation Plan](#)

[Infill Lot Grading Plan](#)

[Minor Site Plan](#)

[Rough Grading Plan](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Miranda Wingo in the Customer & Technical Support Center (CTSC) at Miranda.Wingo@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-222-0801 TTY 711

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