FOREST CONSERVATION APPLICANT GUIDE

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND
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Introduction

This Forest Conservation Applicant Guide is designed to be a resource to applicants who are seeking to have their projects approved by the Forest Conservation Program in Baltimore City. The City of Baltimore has adopted local legislation in compliance with the State Forest Conservation law and enforces the Forest Conservation Program for development occurring within the city limits. The City's local forest conservation code can be found in Article 7, Division IV of the Baltimore City Code.

Currently, **all projects that disturb or subdivide 5,000 square feet of land or more must receive approval from the City's Forest Conservation Program before beginning clearing**. Applicants must work with a licensed forester, licensed landscape architect, or a qualified forest conservation professional to complete a Forest Stand Delineation (FSD), which shows what forest and other natural resources exist on site, and a Forest Conservation Plan (FCP), which shows how the law will be met via forest preservation and/or tree planting. Preference should be given to preserving existing forests, specimen trees, and other sensitive natural features such as steep slopes and streams.

More information on the background of Baltimore City's Forest Conservation Program can be found on the Baltimore Office of Sustainability's Forest Conservation webpage.

Approval Process – BCNR Overview

In 2022, Baltimore City's Department of Public Works (DPW) introduced a new review portal to coordinate environmental reviews across City agencies. Reviews for Erosion and Sediment Control/Stormwater Management, forest conservation, floodplain impacts, Critical Area impacts, and street and park tree impacts all now occur within this new portal, also known as BCNR (Baltimore City Natural Resources). You can create a BCNR account here. A project typically undergoes three stages of review in BCNR – Concept, Site Development, and Final. After Final plans have been submitted, reviewed, and approved by all applicable environmental review agencies, DPW uploads "green stamp" approved plans to BCNR, which can then be used to receive final permit approval in ePlans, Baltimore City DHCD's permit system.

"Green stamp" for approved BCNR plan set.

Approval Process – SPRC Overview

Some projects are also required to go through Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) review prior to, or concurrently with, BCNR environmental reviews. For more information on the applicability of Site Plan Review Committee for a given project, please refer to the Baltimore City Site Plan Review Manual.

All development or redevelopment projects that involve 5,000 square feet or more of site disturbance and require Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) approval, including such projects undertaken by the City of Baltimore, are subject to the requirements of the City's Landscape Manual. While the focus of this Applicant Guide is Forest Conservation submittal requirements, more information on Landscape Manual requirements can be found on the Baltimore Office of Sustainability's Landscape Manual webpage.

BALTIMORE CITY SITE PLAN REVIEW MANUAL

Department of Planning
City of Baltimore
5 June 2017

Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

Thomas J. Stosur
Director

Approval Process – EPlans Overview

During the ePlans review process, which will occur concurrently with the BCNR review, the permit and plans will be referred to different DHCD divisions or Baltimore City agencies, depending on the needs of the specific project. Please refer to DHCD's ePlans webpage for more information about the various types of ePlans reviews.

When an applicant seeks a Use & Occupancy permit for a project with required on-site planting to meet forest conservation or landscape manual requirements, photographs demonstrating implementation of required planting may be required for permit approval.

OVERVIEW OF FOREST CONSERVATION REVIEW PROCESS

Predevelopment Meeting (PDM)
Organized by DOP's Land Use and Urban Design Division early in review timeline for projects with complicated elements. **Not every project requires a PDM.** Contact Eric Tiso (Eric.Tiso@baltimorecity.gov) for more information.

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)
Organized by DOP's Land Use and Urban Design Division midway through review timeline for projects with complicated elements. **Not every project requires a SPRC Meeting.** Refer to SPRC Manual or contact Eric Tiso (Eric.Tiso@baltimorecity.gov) for more information.

SPRC projects enter BCNR at Concept or SDP Review stage

BCNR/ProjectDox
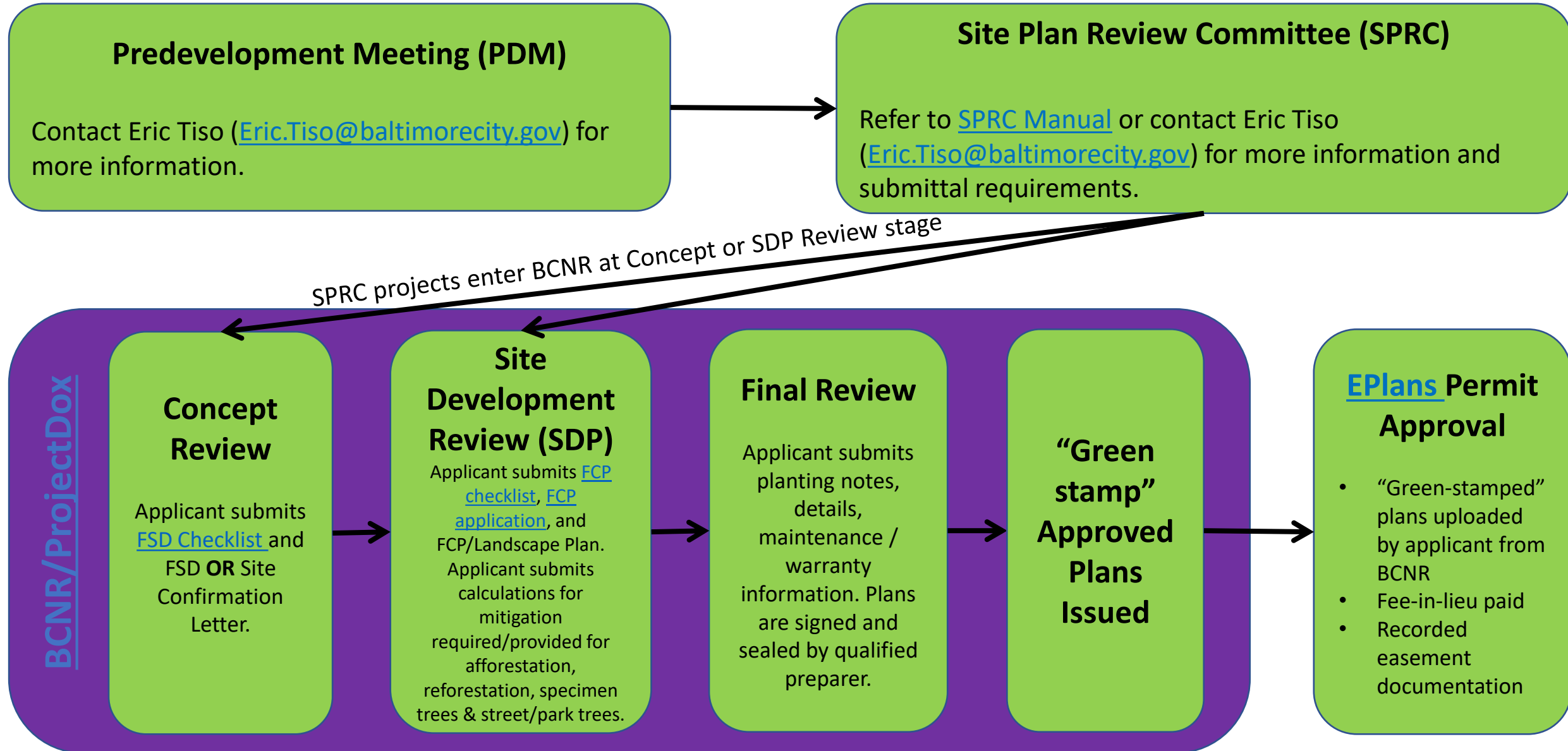
Concept Review → Site Development Review (SDP) → Final Review → "Green stamp" Approved Plans Issued → EPlans Permit Approval

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH REVIEW STAGE*

Please note that applicant can submit more developed plans at any given review stage.

Predevelopment Meeting (PDM)

Contact Eric Tiso (Eric.Tiso@baltimorecity.gov) for more information.

Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC)

Refer to SPRC Manual or contact Eric Tiso (Eric.Tiso@baltimorecity.gov) for more information and submittal requirements.

SPRC projects enter BCNR at Concept or SDP Review stage

BCNR/ProjectDox

Concept Review

Applicant submits FSD Checklist and FSD **OR** Site Confirmation Letter.

Site Development Review (SDP)

Applicant submits FCP checklist, FCP application, and FCP/Landscape Plan. Applicant submits calculations for mitigation required/provided for afforestation, reforestation, specimen trees & street/park trees.

Final Review

Applicant submits planting notes, details, maintenance / warranty information. Plans are signed and sealed by qualified preparer.

"Green stamp" Approved Plans Issued

EPlans Permit Approval

- "Green-stamped" plans uploaded by applicant from BCNR
- Fee-in-lieu paid
- Recorded easement documentation

*As of November 2023

Concept Review Requirements*
*Applicant submits FSD Checklist and FSD **OR** Site Confirmation Letter.*

[Forest Stand Delineation Checklist](#)

For the full requirements for Forest Stand Delineations, see both the [State Forest Conservation Technical Manual](#), which contains the state's standard requirements, and the [Baltimore City Supplement to the State Forest Conservation Manual](#), which identifies instances where the City requirements differ from state requirements. Depending on the extent of existing forest and the extent of proposed impacts to existing trees or forests, a project may require a Full, Intermediate, or Simplified Forest Stand Delineation. Baltimore City Recreation and Parks – Forestry Division has additional tree surveying requirements for street and park trees – please contact Matt Rescott (Matthew.Rescott@baltimorecity.gov) for guidance.

If no forest or specimen trees exist on a site, a letter and site photographs confirming these conditions may be submitted in lieu of a Simplified Forest Stand Delineation.

*As of November 2023

Site Development Review Requirements*
Applicant submits FCP checklist, FCP application, and FCP/Landscape Plan

Forest Conservation Plan Checklist

Forest Conservation Plan Application

For the full requirements for Forest Conservation Plans, see the State Forest Conservation Technical Manual and the Baltimore City Supplement to the State Forest Conservation Manual. The Forest Conservation Plan may be combined with the Landscape Plan for purposes of City reviews, as long as all required information is provided. Projects requiring protection of existing forests or trees may require a separate Forest Conservation Plan. The Forest Conservation Plan should document mitigation required/provided for afforestation, reforestation, specimen trees & street/park trees. Example mitigation calculations can be found posted on the Forest Conservation webpage.

For projects requiring both forest conservation and landscape manual compliance, applicants should be aware that where requirements differ, the more stringent will be applied.

*As of November 2023

Final Review Requirements*
Applicant submits planting notes, details, maintenance/warranty information.

[Maintenance Notes](#)

[Maintenance, Monitoring, and Warranty certification](#)

For Final Review, the applicant should submit all required planting notes and details, maintenance requirements, site preparation notes, and a maintenance, monitoring, and warranty certification. A full list of required elements can be found on the [Forest Conservation Plan Checklist](#).

Final plans should be certified by a qualified preparer. The Final Review stage is also when any required fee-in-lieu payments are finalized and arranged. Fee-in-lieu payments are calculated at a rate of $600 per tree required for afforestation and/or reforestation and $300 per inch required for specimen tree mitigation. Fee-in-lieu invoices for projects can be provided by the City upon request.

*As of November 2023

Resources

Baltimore Office of Sustainability Forest Conservation Website

State Forest Conservation Technical Manual

Baltimore City Supplement to the State Forest Conservation Manual

Forest Conservation Application (updated July 2023)

Forest Stand Delineation Checklist (updated July 2023)

Forest Conservation Plan Checklist (updated July 2023)

Forest Conservation Worksheet

Example Forest Conservation Calculations

Baltimore Office of Sustainability Landscape Manual Website

Baltimore City Landscape Manual