



## City of Gainesville

A citizen's guide to the

# Development Review Process

The purpose of this brochure is to provide citizens with a guide to participating in the Development Review Process.

If you have any questions, please contact the City's Department of Community Development at **(352)334-5023** or email ***COGPlanning@ci.gainesville.fl.us***.

If you would like to view development review agendas or minutes online, go to *[www.comdev.cityofgainesville.org/planning.cfm](http://www.comdev.cityofgainesville.org/planning.cfm)*.

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## the review process

### **Who must go through the Development Review Process?**

Anyone ready to begin a development or anyone applying for a special use permit, a land use or zoning amendment, or a text amendment to the city's development codes must go through the Development Review Process.

### **What are the steps in the Development Review Process?**

- Step 1. First Step Meeting
- Step 2. Neighborhood Workshop
- Step 3. Staff Review
- Step 4. Reviewing Boards (public hearings)
  - Development Review Board, or
  - Plan Board & City Commission

### **What is a First Step Meeting? (Step 1)**

Before turning in an application for a development, the applicant must attend a First Step meeting. This is a conference with city staff to discuss the steps of the development review process and learn about other city regulations that may apply to the proposed development.

### **When can citizens begin participating?**

Citizens can participate throughout the review process. Informal citizen input begins with the Neighborhood Workshop (Step 2). Then, after the application is filed and staff begins review (Step 3), citizens may contact staff if they wish to look at or discuss the application. If citizens submit written comments at this time, they are included in the information packets sent to each member of the review board. Finally, citizens may formally contribute their input by speaking at the review board's public hearings (Step 4).

## early citizen input

### **What is a Neighborhood Workshop? (Step 2)**

After the First Step meeting, most applicants for development must hold a Neighborhood Workshop. This is an informal meeting between the applicant and interested citizens. A general notice of the meeting is posted in the newspaper and property owners within 400 feet of the proposed development, as well as all registered neighborhood associations, are notified by mail.

### **What is the purpose of the Neighborhood Workshop?**

- To make sure that citizens have plenty of time to learn about developments that may affect them.
- To give the applicants the chance to understand and try to address the concerns that citizens may have about their developments.
- To provide ongoing communication between the applicant, interested citizens, and staff.

### **What are the limitations of the Neighborhood Workshop?**

The Neighborhood Workshop is an important tool, but it does not necessarily mean that all conflicts can be resolved. Neighbors' expectations that applicants will change plans for them, may not be met. Until the final decision of the review board, the applicant has the right to present their development plans in their own manner. *Any agreements that are reached between the applicant and the residents must be in compliance with city codes.*

## formal review

### **What is Staff Review? (Step 3)**

After the Neighborhood Workshop, the applicant can go to the next step of formally filing their application. The applications are given a petition number and assigned to a planner to review and make recommendations. Staff's recommendation on whether to approve or deny a petition is based on the rules of the Land Development Code and the guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan.

During this review period, staff notifies the public of the petition and the dates of related public hearings. Individual property owners within 400 feet of the project are notified by mail. The notice includes a general description of the project, the public hearing date, and instructions on how to get more information. The public at large is notified through newspaper ads and orange signs posted on the property.

### **What are the Reviewing Boards? (Step 4)**

There are different boards that review different types of development proposals.

#### *Development Review Board*

The Development Review Board is a seven member citizen board appointed by the City Commission. It reviews and approves or denies development plan petitions. These include plans for constructing new buildings and plans for expanding existing buildings. The board also reviews and approves or denies designs for new subdivisions which then go to the City Commission for final plat approval.

#### *City Plan Board*

The City Plan Board is a seven member citizen board appointed by the City Commission, with an additional non-voting member appointed by the county School Board. It reviews and makes recommendations on petitions that go to the City Commission. These include land use and zoning changes, development code text amendments, and comprehensive plan issues. The board also makes final decisions on most special use permits.

#### *City Commission*

The City Commission is a seven member board elected by the public. It reviews and makes the final decision on petitions that go through the City Plan Board. These include all land use and zoning changes, development code text amendments, and comprehensive plan issues. The board also makes decisions on final plats for subdivisions and some wellfield special use permits.

## public hearings

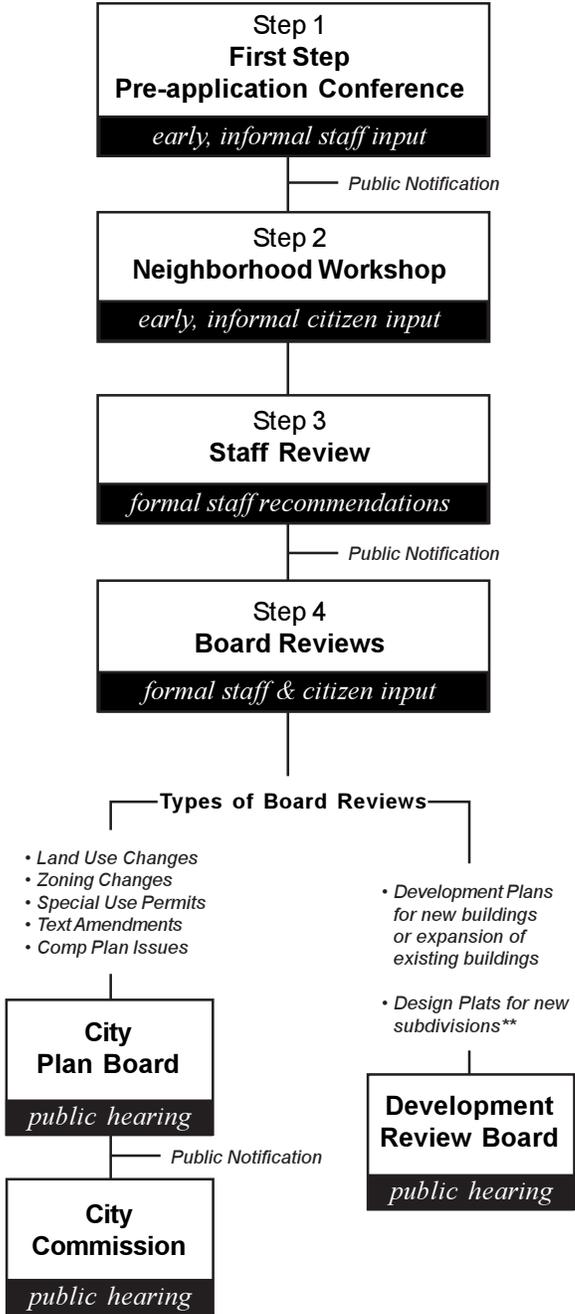
### **What is a Public Hearing?**

At public hearings, city staff, the applicant and the general public give formal comments and evidence to support their position on the proposed project. The Plan Board and the Development Review Board hold at least one public hearing on the petitions that come before them. The City Commission holds at least two public hearings on petitions that come before them (with the exception of wellfield permits and small-scale land use changes).

### **How do I get more information?**

For more information, see the contact numbers listed on the front panel of this brochure.

# flow chart



\*\* Final Plats go to the City Commission for approval.