



# Building Plan Review – FAQ's

## What is a Plan Review?

A Plan Review is a routine requirement in accordance with New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) zoning regulations for Type I and Type II Alterations (greater than 20%). During this process, NYC Parks examines building site plans filed with DOB and assesses the location of street trees in relation to site conditions such as curb cuts, hydrants, signage, etc. Parks also reviews any proposed tree removals during this process, and ensures that trees of our existing urban forest are managed and appropriately protected during construction. Future street tree planting is also given consideration during the review if necessary as part of a DOB requirement.

## How do I get a Plan Review?

Plan Review begins when a site plan and (P-A) Forestry Application are submitted to NYC Parks. Submission can be made via postal mail, email or dropped-off in person to the appropriate Borough Forestry office as listed on the application.

Once a fully complete application and site plan have been submitted, an Acceptance Letter (P-R) is issued in approximately 3-5 days. Your submission will then be assigned to a NYC Parks plan examiner who will review the plan and either approve it or respond directly with objections. The plan examination process will begin within three (3) weeks of issuance of your P-R.

## What needs to be on the site plan?

An emailed, electronic PDF file is the preferred method of sending us your site plan. If hand delivered, the site plan must be submitted on architectural plans drawn to scale on no larger than 11" x 17" paper, and must include existing and proposed conditions (i.e. trees, utilities, etc.). You must also include one photo of each side of street frontage and one photo of each sidewalk view parallel to the street. Photos must include all trees within 50 feet of the property. Additional information may be required after the Acceptance Letter (P-R) is issued. For more information on the requirements, please reference the [Plan Review Checklist](#) and [Tree Planting Standards](#).

## Why do I need all these things on my site plan?

All these elements are necessary on the site plan because they impact our decisions on the placement of new street trees. For example, a new tree cannot be planted directly on top of an underground electrical line, or too close to a light pole, bus stop, stop sign or another existing street tree. Also, trees cannot be located too close to corners or curb cuts for traffic safety purposes. Basically, all this information is required to ensure that the tree is well-positioned to grow and that it conforms to our citywide planting guidelines.

## How will DOB know I submitted my design to Parks?

Once the site plan is submitted to Parks, you will be emailed and mailed an Acceptance Letter (P-R) with your application number. If your DOB Job Number is *not* yet available, the P-R must be taken to DOB to prove that your site plan has been accepted for review. If a DOB Job Number is available, Parks will e-submit this form to DOB and issue you a hard copy for your records.

### Once I submit my site plan, how long will it take to be approved?

The approval process will take some time. The examination will begin within three (3) weeks of receipt of the design. If your site plan conforms to Parks' Tree Planting Standards, there may be no objections and the approval could happen quickly. If there are objections however, the approval process will be dependent on how long it takes you to make the required changes and/or requested amendments. Parks strongly recommends everyone read our [Tree Planting Standards](#) so they are familiar with tree spacing and other requirements. Once Parks approves of the site plan, we will mail two (2) sealed copies to you.

### Once the site plan is approved, can I begin to do tree work?

No. Design approval does not qualify as a work permit. **A tree planting permit or tree removal permit must still be issued by Parks to actually plant or remove tree.** Planting permits should not be requested until construction is either finished or very close to completion. Parks will check its records to confirm that the design has already been approved, and will issue the permit based on the approved design. It is important to keep track of the assigned application number on your Acceptance Letter (P-R) as this will be used to reference your application during communications with our offices.

### How do I get a final sign-off of my tree planting permit?

You can request a permit sign-off after the planting permit has been issued and the trees have been planted. Before requesting a sign-off, you are required to update us with any modifications that were made to your site plan since Parks last approved your plan. Any site plan amendments must be submitted to us for re-approval. From the time that a final sign-off is requested, Parks' foresters may take up to three (3) weeks to inspect the planted trees.

If work is not performed to Parks' standards, a forester will issue a "punch-list" indicating the needed planting corrections. A "punch-list" can entail relocating trees or even relocating tree pits if necessary because the permitted work orders were not followed correctly. DOB will not issue a Certificate of Occupancy until a Parks forester has signed-off on your permit, confirming that the required street trees have been planted in conformity with the approved site plan. **The issuance of a "punch-list" will delay your final sign-off and Certificate of Occupancy from DOB.**

Once Parks has signed-off on your permit, a notice will be submitted via e-submit to DOB, thus paving the way for the issuance of your Certificate of Occupancy.

### Can I get my construction permits without an approved site plan from Parks?

Yes, you only need to have a receipt from Parks stating that you have submitted the plans for review in order to receive NB/Alteration permits from the Department of Buildings. However, you cannot get the Builder's Pavement Plan (BPP) or authorization for a Department of Transportation permit (Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan only) without a Parks approved site plan.

### How is the process in Queens and Staten Island different?

A Parks approved site plan is *not* required in Queens or Staten Island prior to Builder's Pavement Plan (BPP) approval; however, the site plan must be approved prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy in these boroughs.