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# City of San Diego Offers Customer Support Through Virtual Appointments with Development Services Staff

NEW ONLINE MEETINGS AIM TO REPLICATE HELPFUL IN-PERSON SERVICES OFFERED BEFORE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

SAN DIEGO – In an effort to make information and resources more readily available to residents and business owners, today the City of San Diego launched a new Virtual Counter Appointment system for customers to meet with Development Services Department (DSD) planners, reviewers and records staff.

These virtual appointments allow residents and business and property owners to ask questions and receive immediate assistance on City building and development requirements.

**"This is another example of the City's commitment to using data and technology to improve transparency, performance and service to the benefit of all San Diegans," said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. "Virtual appointments will help customers get the permits they need 24/7 from the safety of their own home."**

The new online booking system resumes customer meetings previously available at the downtown Development Services Center before COVID-19 safety measures closed public access to City facilities in March. Virtual Counter is facilitated by the recent transition to an [online permitting system](#).

**"DSD is transforming the way we review plans and process permits by leveraging technology and innovation to make it more efficient for customers and the City," said DSD Director Elyse W. Lowe. "Restoring appointment-based counter services for quick-plan reviews is crucial in restoring pre-COVID-19 permit processing timelines."**

All virtual 30- to 45-minute appointments will be conducted using Microsoft Teams. After customers make an appointment online, they will receive a confirmation email with instructions and a link to join the meeting at the date and time requested.

Available by visiting the Most Requested Services section at [sandiego.gov/DSD](https://sandiego.gov/DSD) and clicking on the Schedule an Appointment icon, the new online booking system currently offers customers the ability to book six different appointment types:

- Downtown Planning & Zoning for customers with development review questions about projects located in Downtown San Diego only.
- Engineering / Right-of-Way Permits for customers seeking assistance with a grading, drainage or public-improvement project in the public right-of-way.
- Historic - 1st Contact Assistance for customers considering historic designations, preserving a property, building or other structure or seeking guidance about a potential historical issue.
- Planning & Zoning for customers seeking assistance with zoning, land use, development regulations and the permit process.
- Traffic Control for customers planning to close traffic lanes, sidewalks, parking areas and parking meters, process traffic control and dumpster permits for construction, apply for a Temporary Outdoor Business Operations permit, or who have questions about traffic control in the City's right-of-way.
- Records Review for customers seeking to review archived building plans or records. This appointment type is booked online and conducted in person at the Development Services Center located at 1222 First Ave.

Based on customer feedback, DSD will consider adding more meeting types to the online booking system, including virtual structural recheck appointments, in the coming weeks.

The implementation of Virtual Counter Appointments is an integral part of #DigitalDSD, an initiative to modernize all DSD workplace systems and cost-effectively leverage technology to increase productivity and improve service delivery.

Other #DigitalDSD services introduced this year include online permitting, the launch of an [online portal](#) to assist local businesses with outdoor expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic and [virtual inspections](#) for construction projects.

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