

# Larimer County - Special Review Process

April 30, 2022



## What are the steps in a development review process (Special Review)?

Check out Land Use Code, Article 6.4.2. Special Review, Figure 6-3. See:  
<https://www.larimer.org/planning/regulations> in Current Land Use Code (Feb. 15, 2022).

### Summary of Special Review Procedure

1	<b>Pre-Application Conference</b>	<i>Required</i>	
2	<b>Sketch Plan</b>	<i>Required</i>	
3	<b>Neighborhood Meeting</b>	<i>Director may waive meeting requirement based on response to neighbor referral</i>	Neighborhood Notice and Application Processing
4	<b>Application Submittal and Processing (additional pre-application conference required)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Submit to Director</li><li>– Neighbor referral required</li></ul>	
5	<b>Staff Review</b>	<i>Review by Staff</i>	
6	<b>Scheduling and Notice of Public Hearings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Planning Commission hearing</li><li>– County Commissioners hearing</li></ul>	Hearing and Decision-making
7	<b>Review and Decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Planning Commission review and recommendation</li><li>– County Commissioners review and decision</li></ul>	
8	<b>Post-Decision Actions</b>	<i>Special review expires if not commenced within 3 years of approval</i>	

## What is a Sketch Plan?

The intent of Sketch Plan review is to first initiate the exchange of information between the applicant and county staff and referral agencies to raise awareness of potential issues and allow the applicant to decide whether to proceed with the application; and second obtain sufficient information to accurately assess the technical aspects of the application and to communicate major issues that would impact a formal submittal. Once a Sketch Plan is completed it shows up as “passed.” (Note: in the portal, “passed” does not mean approved, it simply means completed). Generally, an applicant has six months to move forward after a Sketch Plan meeting, or they may go through the Sketch Plan phase again.

## What is a Neighborhood Meeting (Step Following Sketch Plan)?

If an applicant chooses to move forward and if the application is largely as discussed in the sketch plan, the next step is a neighborhood meeting, with mail notification to neighbors within 500 feet (sometimes further if a subdivision will not be fully covered).

The neighborhood meeting allows the applicant to share the goals of the proposed project and to receive constructive input from the community on how an application could be improved. It is also an opportunity for the residents and property owners of Larimer County to help shape the direction of the project and address community concerns. If the nature of the proposal has changed, another Sketch Plan meeting may be needed.

### **What is the Application for Public Hearings?**

After the neighborhood meeting, a public hearing application submittal would be required if the applicant chooses to move forward, and the applicant also pays fees. Once an application is complete, the county refers it out for review to neighbors and agencies for their comments (e.g., parks and wildlife, fire, engineering, health department, state and federal agencies, utilities, and others). Neighborhood notice occurs again for the hearings. Then, the planning staff reviewers and development review team, community and applicant appear at the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners hearings. The county's Land Use Code establishes technical and other review criteria.

### **What is the Special Review Process?**

The special review procedure provides a mechanism for the county to evaluate proposed development and land uses that have unique or widely varying operating characteristics or unusual site development features to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas. The procedure considers the location, design, configuration, intensity, density, natural hazards, and other relevant factors pertaining to the proposed use to evaluate the potential impacts of such uses on surrounding properties, including the environment and wildlife, and to ensure that such uses are compatible with surrounding properties and that adequate mitigation is provided to minimize potential impacts on those surrounding the proposal.

### **Special Review Application**

In reviewing a proposed special review application, the review bodies noted above shall consider the general approval criteria in Code Section 6.3.8.D., General Review Criteria, and whether the proposed use has minimal impacts on existing and future development of the area and on other factors such as the environment, traffic. Referral agencies need to be adequately addressed. It should meet all the other applicable criteria, or they can request appeals. There can be conditions of approval.

### **How and when may I submit comments for the record and to be considered for the decision?**

1. Attend a neighborhood meeting if held.
2. Once an application is received for each phase, send your written comments. Until an application is filed, the county does not collect comments. The county does not collect comments after the Sketch Plan phase is completed until the applicant applies for the public hearing phase.
3. Attend and speak at the hearings once scheduled.

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

Information about proposed projects and their workflow can be found on the Community Development, Online Portal by the case number: [https://onlineportal.larimer.org/EnerGov\\_Prod/selfservice#/home](https://onlineportal.larimer.org/EnerGov_Prod/selfservice#/home). If you don't know a project file number, call the planner on call at 970-498-7679.