

Benton County Planning Department

Review Policy Update

Effective July 1, 2024



What is the purpose of this update?

As the volume and complexity of submissions to the County have increased over the years, reviewing proposals with Planning Staff alone has become unsustainable. Planning does not have an engineer on staff. Benton County Planning has entered into an agreement with Garver to keep the firm on retainer for review of Site Plan Review Applications and Preliminary Plats and Final Plats.

How does this affect the review process?

The Planning Board must vote on each application at a regularly scheduled meeting to determine whether it should be reviewed by Garver. This vote will occur before Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), so that engineering comments can be provided to the applicant at TAC. The Planning Department will be reimbursed by the applicant for all fees incurred for engineering review.

Does this update add time to the review process?

No. After attending the Development Review Committee (DRC) and subsequently submitting a revised application, the item/project will be added to the next regularly scheduled Planning Board Meeting agenda for a vote on whether engineering review is required. If engineering review and review fees are deemed necessary, the item/project will be sent to the engineer the following business day for comments to be returned in time to be included in the TAC report.

Does this update require extra attendance?

No. Applicants do not need to be in attendance when the Planning Board votes on whether engineering review and fees are necessary for an item/project. Applicants will not have an opportunity to speak at this meeting regarding said item/project. This is to say that attendance remains the same; DRC, TAC, and Public Hearing must be attended by a representative for said item/project.

How much will the review fee be?

There is no set amount for engineering review. The fee will be item/project-specific, and the applicant will be notified of the amount due after review. Garver charges an hourly rate for review, with each engineer having a different rate. Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that straightforward items/projects may cost less than others, while complex items/projects may cost more.

Can the engineering review be opted-out of?

No. The decision to utilize engineering services is up to the discretion of the Planning Board. Per section §2.8 of the Benton County Planning and Development Regulations, "The Planning Board reserves the right to retain professional services including legal, architectural, engineering, land surveying, and such other consulting services in appropriate circumstances to protect the health, safety, and environmental concerns. Independent engineers or other consultants may be retained for commercial or industrial large scale developments, subdivisions, planned unit developments, development master plans, or any other projects involving significant drainage, transportation, or other complex technical issues. Requests for review fees may only be made by a vote of the Planning Board in a regular meeting."