Submiting a Pre-Application:

EFFECTIVE: AUGUST 3RD, 2020

SCOPE: RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL

The information provided in this document is general and intended as a guide only. Each project is unique and additional requirements may be enforced as deemed appropriate.

INTRODUCTION

The online pre-application process allows prospective permit applicants to submit their pre-applications and upload digital plans and documents. Staff will review the application materials to ensure all necessary documents have been provided. The applicant will be notified once the online submittal package is considered complete and ready for the online building permit application intake phase.

ONLINE REGISTRATION

Pre-applications can be filed online through Palo Alto’s Accela Citizen Access (ACA) portal link. You may also paste this link into your internet browser to access the pre-application page: https://aca.accela.com/PALOALTO.

To submit for a pre-application, you must register for an ACA account or have an existing account. To register select, Register for an Account, on the Citizen Portal main screen.

Follow the instructions on your email confirmation letter to start a pre-application. Below is an example email confirmation letter that you will receive.

Welcome to the City of Palo Alto’s Citizen Portal!
Detail information of the Account
User name: 
Email Account: 
Your account has been activated:

If you are a licensed contractor you may add your contractor’s license information to your account under account management. As a licensed contractor, you may apply, pay and print a limited number of simple permits online under the ‘Building’ section.

To submit plans and documents for pre-application, click on the link below, login with your username and password and select “Create an Application” under the Pre-Application section. Pre-Application allows the Planning & Development Services Department to ensure that when we open to the public, your project can more quickly and efficiently move forward for review.

We thank you for your patience as we endeavor to expand our scope of services to better serve you. Permit pre-application can now be submitted online. Please log in and select Pre-Application to begin this process.

City of Palo Alto Citizen Access Portal
CREATING A PRE-APPLICATION

Login to your account to start the Pre-Application process.

Once you have logged into the Citizen Portal select “Pre-Application” and open the online application by clicking the “Pre-Application” menu button.
Enter the project’s street number and street name then select “Search”, then confirm and select the applicable address, parcel and owner’s information.

Accept the Citizen Portal terms by checking the box and select “Continue Application”.
The Parcel and Owner’s information will be filled in automatically if a valid Palo Alto address has been entered in the previous step.

When the Address, Parcel and Owner’s information is complete, select “Continue Application”.

Note: If the Parcel or Owner’s information does not automatically populate after searching for an address number and street name, enter the corresponding information into the fields above.
ENTER PROJECT INFORMATION

Select application type and whether the project is Residential or Commercial, then enter a detailed description of the project. When complete, click “Continue Application”.

Example description for a Building Permit: New 2-story single-family dwelling, 2500 s.f., with attached garage, 400 s.f., basement, 1200 s.f. and covered porches, 250 s.f.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Enter the Applicant information for the main contact for this project, e.g., architect, contractor, project manager, etc. Please note: All email correspondence for this application will be sent to this person.

**Step 3: Contact > Primary Point of Contact**

**Applicant**

Select Primary Point of Contact for this Project

- Select from Account
- Continue Application »

Select Applicant from Account, then select “Continue Application”.

**Step 4: Contractor > Contractor**

**Licensed Professional**

If you have not selected a contractor yet, please ignore this step.

- Add New
- Look Up
- Continue Application »

Enter contractor’s information if one has been selected. If not, select “Continue Application”.
UPLOAD PDF PLANS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Select “Add” to upload pdf files for plans and other documents, i.e., structural calculations, arborist report, geotechnical report, energy report, etc. When complete, select “Continue Application”.

A pop-up screen will appear to allow you to upload files from your account or from your computer.

PDF files from your computer can be uploaded into the Citizen’s Portal. Select the “Add” button to start. For more information regarding the file formats requirements for electronic plans, please review the Electronic Plan Review Submittal Guidelines.

Please note that any plan set files that exceed 400 MB (megabytes) should be broken up into separate files with the following naming convention: C1_250HAM_PLANS01 or C1_250HAM_PLANS_01
Indicate the types of files that are being added with a brief description.

Select one:
- Plans
- Supporting Documents

Enter a description of the PDF file, e.g., Initial plans, structural calculations, soils report, arborist report, fire sprinkler plans etc. Then click “Continue Application”.

When the PDF files have been uploaded it will appear as an “Attachment”.

Additional PDF files can be added here at this time.

When you have completed uploading all the attachments, select “Continue Application”.

Click the add button to upload the files.
PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY AND REVIEW
Accela Citizen Portal will now display a summary of the information that you have entered. Please review this information to confirm that it is correct. The pre-application information can still be changed before the final submission.

Record Type

Pre-Application

Address

250 HAMILTON AV

Parcel

Parcel Number: 120-27-011
Zoning: P1

Owner

CITY OF PALO ALTO
250 HAMILTON AVE
PALO ALTO CA 94301

Custom Fields

GENERAL
Application Type: Building Permit
Residential or Commercial: Commercial
Do you have a contractor?: No

Detail Information

Detailed Description:

Applicant

Applicant Name
Business Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Home Phone Number
Work Phone Number
Mobile Work Number
Email Address

Attachment

Please upload your plans or any supporting documents, in .pdf format, that will help us review and approve your pre-application. The maximum file size allowed is 400 MB.

Name | Type | Size | Latest Update | Action
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
CL_250HAM_PLAN.pdf | Plans | 529.53 KB | 08/03/2020 | Actions
If the information in the Pre-Application is correct and complete, review the application conditions and check the box for agreement. Select the “Continue Application” to complete your Pre-Application.

**PRE-APPLICATION SUBMITTAL SUCCESSFUL**
You will receive an email notification that your Pre-Application submittal was successful. In addition, you will receive a pre-application record number: 20APP-XXXXX for future reference.
PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Your submitted documents and plans will be reviewed for completeness within 5 days. If necessary, you will be advised by email to submit additional documentation via the Citizen Access portal. Once it is determined that all required documentation has been submitted, a permit application will be created, and you will be advised of your Building, Planning, Fire or Public Works Permit record number. At this point your application will begin the normal review process and your project coordinator or Planning Technician will continue to inform you as needed. Please note that your Pre-Application record will automatically become inactive once it is accepted and you will no longer be able to 'add' documents to your Pre-Application record. Please refer to your formal Permit/Record number after your Pre-Application is accepted.
In the event that you need to attach additional supporting documents, follow the following steps:

Log in to the Palo Alto ACA website and click on “My Records”.

After clicking on “My Records”, click on the correct Building Permit or Planning Entitlement record number that you wish to upload additional documents to.

Note: This process is not for resubmittals, please reach out to your Project Coordinator for additional details regarding resubmittals.

In this case, we will submit additional documents for the last pre-application shown on the image above.
Click on “Attachments”

Click “Add”
Click “Add” again and select the file(s) you wish to upload to this Building Permit or Planning Entitlement. Wait until the document reaches 100% uploaded status, then click “Continue”.

Classify the document by selecting one of the options on the dropdown menu and include a short description of the file you are uploading. Then click “Save”.

That’s all, please remember that a resubmittal is a different process than submitting additional documents. Contact your Project Coordinator for details on resubmittals. **Please note that your Pre-Application record will automatically become inactive once it is accepted and you will no longer be able to ‘add’ documents to your Pre-Application record.** Please refer to your formal Permit/Record number after your Pre-Application is accepted.