

# Building Plan Check Self-Certification Program

Community & Economic Development Department

Economic Development Committee

July 17, 2025

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## PURPOSE

**Economic Opportunity:** Deliver programs that accelerate the permit process in a predictable, transparent manner

**Emergency Response:** Implement tools and resources that expedite the disaster recovery process



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# OBJECTIVES

- Educate and Inform the Committee
- Review Program Guidelines and Process
- Discuss Programs "Phased Approach"
- Discuss Residential/Commercial Project Types
- Consideration Items (Pros and Cons)
- Discuss steps to Program Implementation

## BUILDING PLAN CHECK SELF-CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM

- Opportunity to streamline and enhance the permitting process for qualifying projects
- Licensed architects and engineers in California may certify plans for code compliance
- Applicants bypass standard review, shortening time from submittal to issuance

### NATIONWIDE ADOPTION

- Programs developed to expedite plan reviews while still ensuring public safety



### PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Improves customer service and shortens permit approval times
- Helps resolve permitting backlogs and promote economic growth
- Maintains safety through inspections and auditing



### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- When activated, will expedite permitting for reconstruction after disasters

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# WHAT IS SELF-CERTIFICATION?



## Licensed Engineers

Approved Licensed Design Professionals certify plans comply with adopted codes and bypass the building plan check process - expediting permitting review and approvals

## Licensed Architects

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# SELF-CERTIFICATION HISTORY



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# PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE & ELIGIBILITY

## Program Acceptance:

CA Licensed architects and engineers with five years of experience may apply. Upon approval by the Building Official, they can submit eligible projects.

## Eligible Project Types:

Staff will verify eligibility during pre-screening and identify required approvals which must be obtained before permit issuance.



**City staff will verify Self-Certification eligibility during pre-screening**

And identify any required departmental approvals, which must be obtained before permit issuance.

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# INSURANCE & INDEMNIFICATION

## Self-Certified Professionals must:

1. Provide professional liability and Errors and Omission's insurance; and
2. Submit Indemnification Letter holding the City harmless for project-related claims or non-compliance.



INDEMNIFICATION REQUIRED

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# ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

## PROJECT TYPES

### Residential



- Residential Interior Remodels
- Residential 1 Story Room Additions < 500 SF
- Residential Detached Accessory Structures < 1200 SF
- Residential Patio Covers and Carports < 1200 SF
- Residential Detached Garages < 1200 SF
- Rebuild of Single-Family Homes Impacted by a Natural Disaster



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# ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

## PROJECT TYPES

### Commercial



- Commercial Tenant Improvements < 5,000 SF
- Commercial Patio Covers/Shade Structures < 1,500SF
- Commercial Accessory Structures < 1,500 SF
- Rooftop Solar PV Carports and PV Systems
- Site Improvements



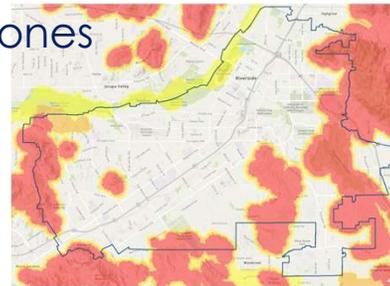
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# KEY EXCLUSIONS

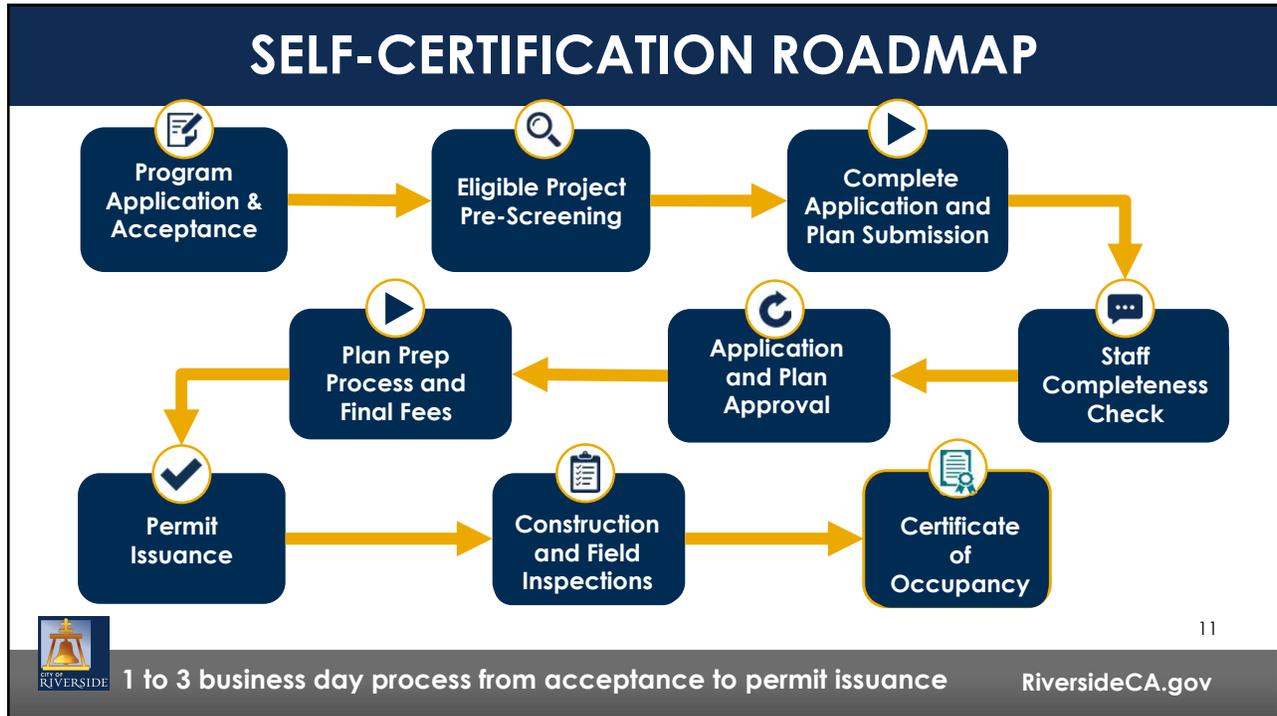
## Projects that include any of the following:

- Historic Preservation
- Environmental Review
- Very High and High Fire Severity Zones
- High Hazardous Uses
- New Buildings



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## AUDIT POLICY

All self-certified plans are subject to random audit to verify compliance with the requirements of the Program and Code. Audits may be conducted either before or after the self-certification permit is issued at a rate of at least 10% of the submitted projects.

**In addition to the random audits, projects may be audited if:**

- Four or more projects accepted in any given month
- Within the preceding 12 months, no project submitted by a Self-Certified Professional has been audited by the department
- A Self-Certified Professional has failed any audit within three years
- Field inspection reveals Self-Certified plans do not comply with City of Riverside codes, ordinances, or standards.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

PROS					CONS
Rapid Permit Issuance	✓	✗	Code Compliance and Safety		
Shorter Project Timelines	✓	✗	Increased Construction Costs and Delays		
Initial Cost Savings	✓	✗	Inspector Responsibility & Workload		
Economic Advantage for the City	✓	✗	Revenue Impacts and Program Management		


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## PROGRAM IMPACTS

### Fees and Cost Recovery Considerations

- **Plan Check Fees:** right size fees to actual time spent on program
- **Program Registration Fees:** fee for registration, entry and maintenance of Program
- **Inspection Fees:** re-inspections






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## NEXT STEPS

- Draft final Program Resolution and Ordinance
- Draft Fee Schedule Update and Resolution
- Finalize Program Guidelines and Policy
- Create Program Supporting Documents
- Software Update to support the Program
- Staff Training and Resources



## STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT



### Strategic Priority No. 5 – High Performing Government

**Goal 5.2:** Utilize technology, data, and process improvement strategies to increase efficiencies, guide decision making, and ensure services are accessible and distributed equitably throughout all geographic areas of the City



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Receive and file a report on the proposed Building Plan Check Self-Certification Program; and
2. Provide input and direction to proceed with the draft Ordinance and related supporting documents to City Council for consideration.

