

# DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

**A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE  
FOR LAND DEVELOPMENT IN  
UNINCORPORATED  
SACRAMENTO COUNTY**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Overview** ..... 3

**Planning and Environmental Review (Entitlements)** ..... 4

**Civil Improvement Plans and Grading Permits** ..... 5

**Building Permits** ..... 6

**Illustrations of Workflows** ..... 7

**Frequently Asked Questions**..... 11



*\*Some processes may occur concurrently, but all projects begin with Planning and Environmental Review.*



# OVERVIEW

The **Sacramento County Development Guide** provides information on successfully completing your project within the unincorporated areas of the County through various County development departments. Development projects may range from installing a new water heater to a more complex land development project, such as subdividing or rezoning land.

This guide is intended to help you prepare for the County's Development Process.

## Highlights of this guide include:

- Description of the Development Process:
  - Planning and Environmental Review (Entitlements)
  - Civil Improvement Plans and Grading Permits
  - Building Permits
- Workflow processes
- Online resources
- Contact information
- Frequently Asked Questions

The Sacramento County Community Development Department provides development services to the unincorporated areas of the County. Services within cities are provided by the respective city departments.

Not sure whether your project falls within the Unincorporated County or one of the incorporated cities? Visit the Assessor's Parcel Viewer at [assessorparcelviewer.sacounty.gov](https://assessorparcelviewer.sacounty.gov) and enter your address to find out!

**DISCLOSURE:** The purpose of this document is to provide a high-level overview of Sacramento County's Development Process and is intended to be used for general guidance. There are a variety of permits and processes necessary depending on the nature of your project. This document is designed to help members of the public, project Customers, and property owners understand the steps required to obtain permits.

# PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (ENTITLEMENTS)

Planning and Environmental Review (PER) drives the entitlement process, the legal process in which a developer or landowner seeks to obtain government approval for their development plans. Common entitlements include use permits and special development permits. PER is comprised of four teams: Long Range Planning, Environmental Review, Zoning Administration and Current Planning.

## **PER provides a range of land use planning services including but not limited to:**

- Providing zoning information and development standards for a proposed use
- Accepting and processing applications for planning entitlements, including General Plan Amendments, Rezones, Use Permits and Special Development Permits
- Accepting and processing administrative applications, including Temporary Events, Signs, Zoning Verification letters, Tree Permits and Design Review
- Signing off building permits for Zoning Code compliance
- Information about the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and preparation of the necessary documents
- Mitigation Monitoring and reporting
- Information about the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP)

For large projects, it is recommended that you schedule a Pre-application Meeting, which involves county staff from various County departments and external agencies.

For projects that will not require major off-site improvements, you can schedule a Planning and Environmental Review Consultation. This meeting is with PER staff only.

## **Contact and Hours of Operation**

### **Planning and Environmental Review**

827 7th Street, Room 102  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
General Inquiries: [sacplan@saccounty.gov](mailto:sacplan@saccounty.gov)  
(916) 874-6141

### **Schedule an Appointment**



For the most up-to-date information about our services and hours, visit [planning.saccounty.gov](http://planning.saccounty.gov). For questions related to fees, please email [sacplan@saccounty.gov](mailto:sacplan@saccounty.gov).

**The basic Planning and Environmental Review (Entitlement)  
process is shown in Figure 1 on page 7.**

**The basic Non-Discretionary Design Review process is shown in  
Figure 2 on page 8.**

# CIVIL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND GRADING PERMITS

Civil Improvement Plans and Grading Permits are completed through the Site Improvement and Permit Section (SIPS).

Civil Improvement Plans are prepared by a licensed Professional Civil Engineer and illustrate the required infrastructure that supports the project development.

Grading Permits are prepared by a licensed Landscape Architect or Civil Engineer and indicate proposed grading whenever there is a disturbance of one acre or more **OR** 350 cubic yards of combined cut and fill.

Most new construction and some additions trigger the requirement for an improvement plan for the installation of infrastructure. Infrastructure includes, but is not limited to roadway, drainage, sewer, and on-site improvements.

New construction or additions that do not trigger the installation of infrastructure but involve either one acre or more of disturbance **OR** 350 cubic yards of combined cut and fill will require a grading permit.

Approval of the civil improvement plans and grading permits is required prior to the issuance of any building permits associated with the project. Similarly, all civil improvements are required to be constructed and officially accepted by the County prior to the issuance of any Certificates of Occupancy.

## Contact and Hours of Operation

### Site Improvement and Permit Section

827 7th Street, Room 101

Sacramento, CA 95814

[engineering.saccounty.gov/sips](http://engineering.saccounty.gov/sips)

Email: [e-sips@saccounty.gov](mailto:e-sips@saccounty.gov)

(916) 874-6544

For SIPS hours of operation visit: [engineering.saccounty.gov/sips](http://engineering.saccounty.gov/sips)

For questions related to fees, please email [e-sips@saccounty.gov](mailto:e-sips@saccounty.gov).

**The basic Civil Improvement Plan approval process is shown in Figure 3 on page 9.**

**The basic Grading Permit approval process is shown in Figure 4 on page 10.**

# BUILDING PERMITS

There are two categories of building permits: Residential and Commercial. Residential projects include single-family homes and duplexes. Commercial projects include retail, office, industrial, and multifamily residential of three or more dwelling units. Building permits are completed through the Building Permit and Inspection Division (BPI).

Both types may require a building permit and building plan submittal. The building plans must indicate what is to be constructed and demonstrate building code compliance. Depending on the complexity of the project, plans may be required to be prepared by a licensed design professional.

## Building permits are required when\*:

- Constructing a new building or structure
- Adding or remodeling an existing building
- Changing the use of a building
- Conducting miscellaneous minor repairs, such as changing a water heater, changing electrical or gas service, reroofing, etc.

## Contact and Hours of Operation

### Downtown Permit Center

827 7th Street, Room 102  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 875-5296  
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Mon–Fri

### Bradshaw Permit Center

9700 Goethe Road, Suite A  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
(916) 875-5296  
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Mon–Fri

If you have questions related to Building Permit fees, please call (916) 875-5296. For potential impact fees, please email [impactfees@saccounty.gov](mailto:impactfees@saccounty.gov).

## General Questions and Information

(916) 875-5296

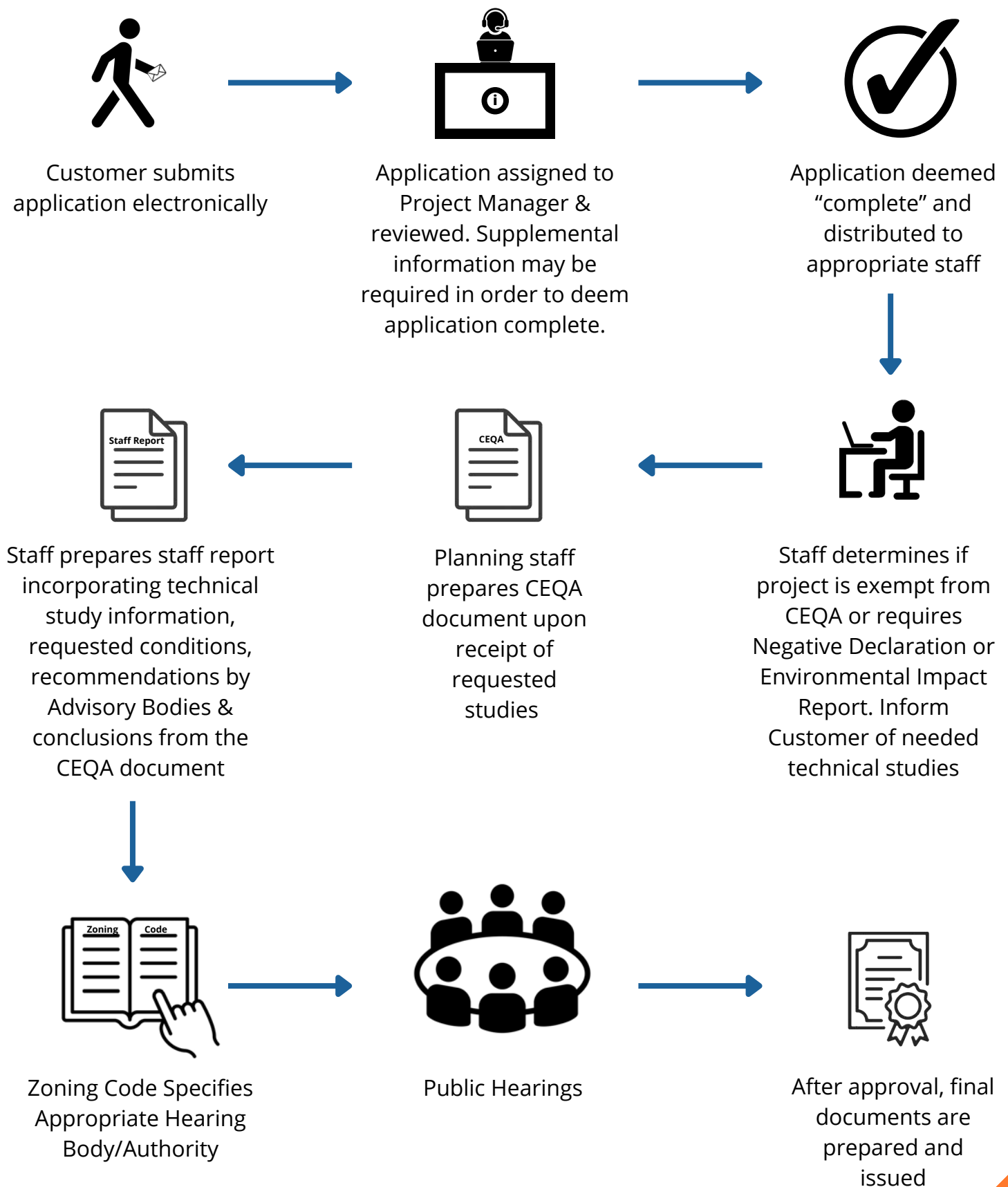
Building permit applications can be submitted electronically at [building.saccounty.gov](http://building.saccounty.gov).

Check out our Residential Development Navigation Assistance tool for a step-by-step guide through the residential building permit process at [app.uncamino.com/saccounty](http://app.uncamino.com/saccounty).

**The basic Building Permit process is shown in Figure 5 on page 11.**

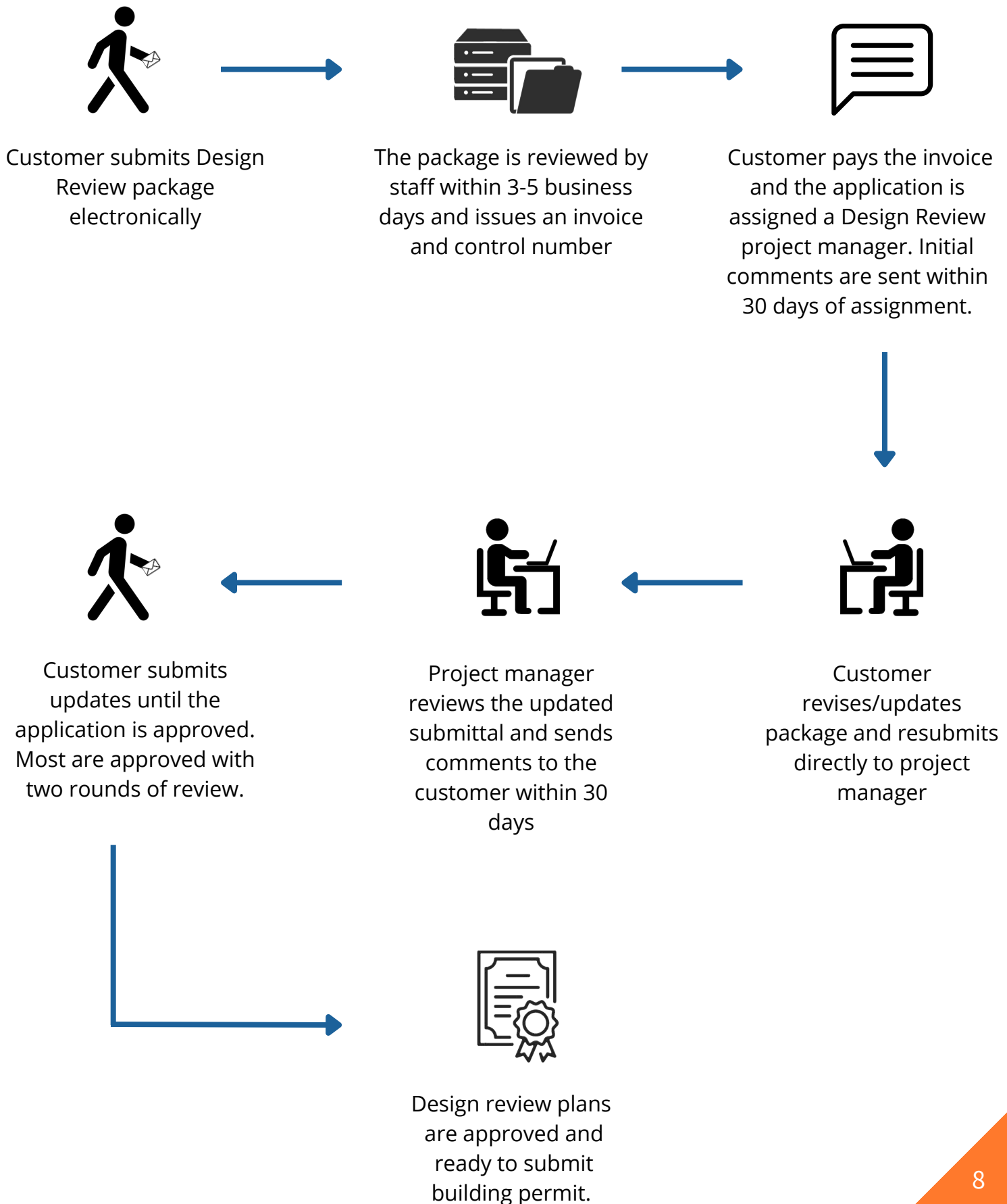
*\*This is not an exhaustive list of projects that require building permits. Please contact Building Permits and Inspection at (916) 875-5296 to see if your project requires permitting.*

## FIGURE 1: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (ENTITLEMENTS) WORKFLOW PROCESS



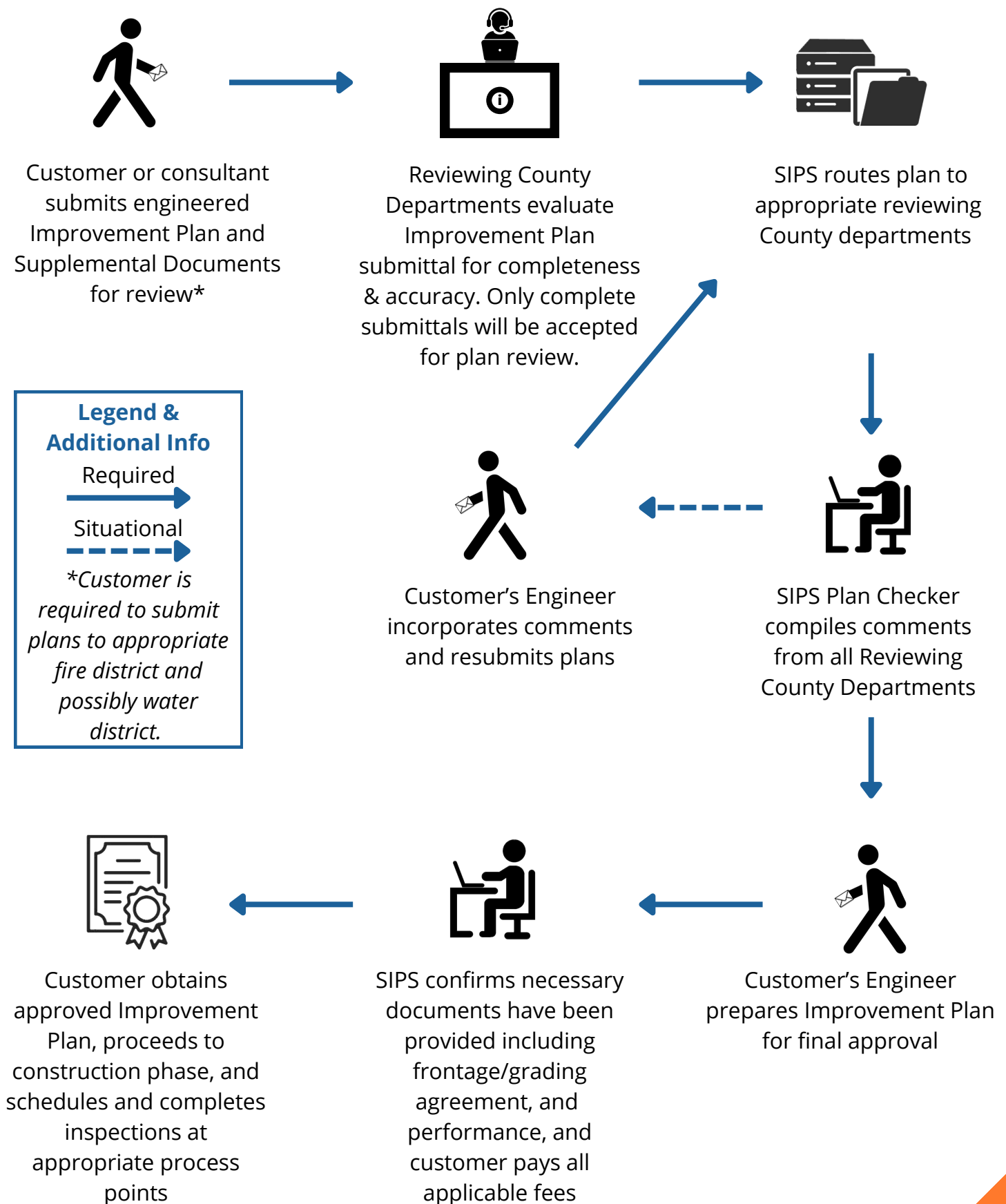
**At the end of this process, Planning and Environmental Review will inform customer of required next steps.**

## FIGURE 2: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (NON-DISCRETIONARY DESIGN REVIEW) WORKFLOW PROCESS

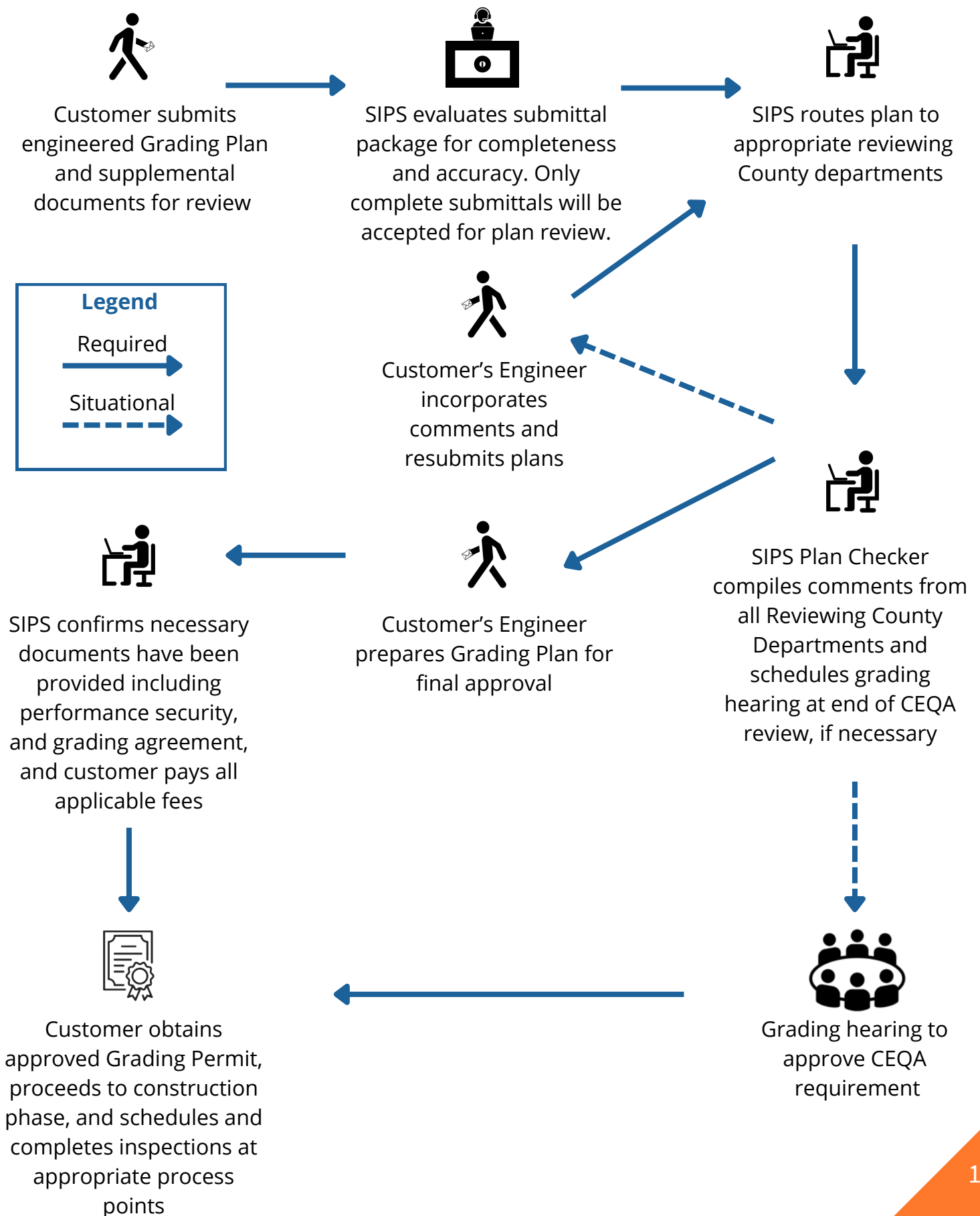




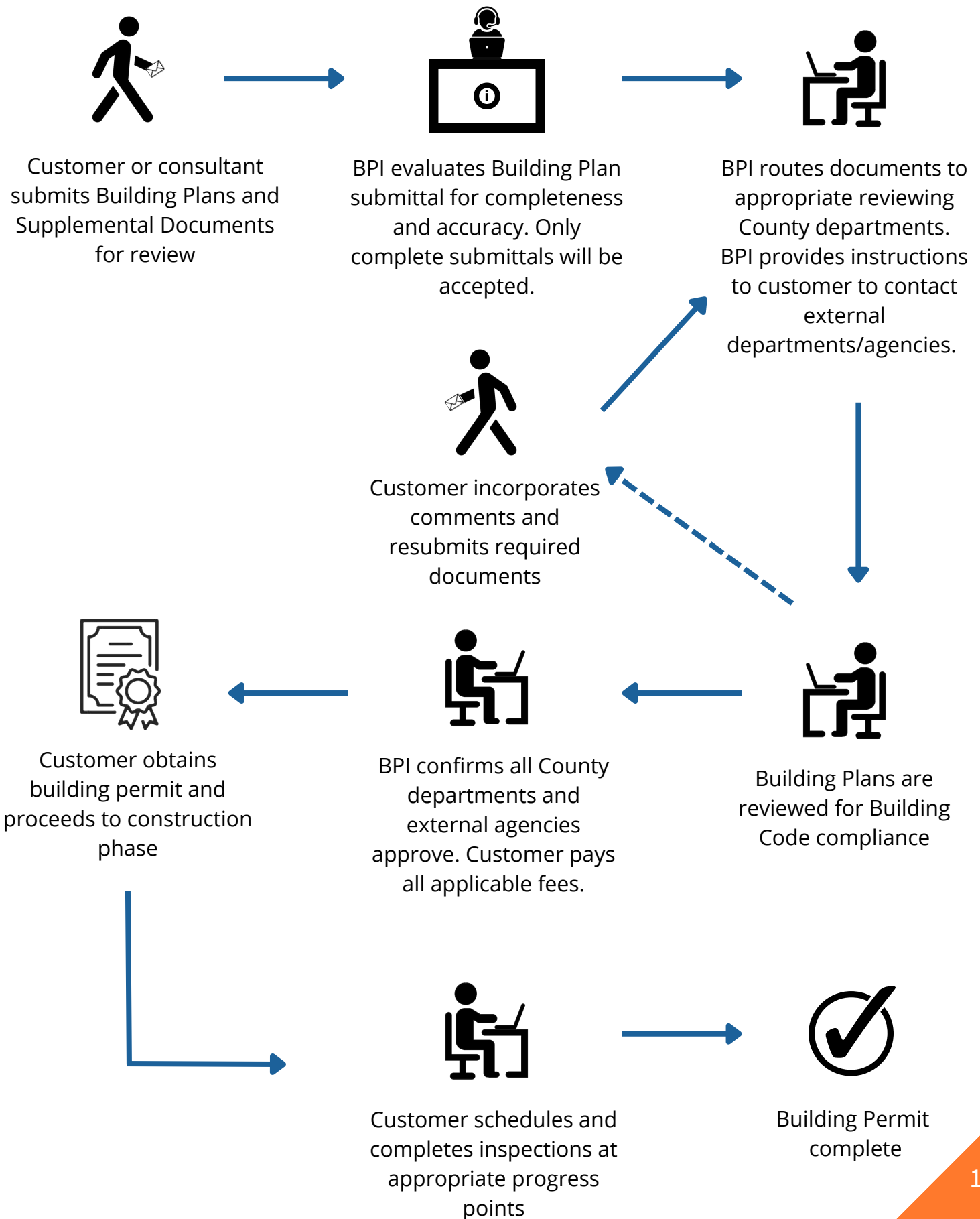
## FIGURE 3: CIVIL IMPROVEMENT PLANS WORKFLOW PROCESS



## FIGURE 4: GRADING PERMITS WORKFLOW PROCESS



## FIGURE 5: BUILDING PERMITS WORKFLOW PROCESS



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Planning and Environmental Review

### 1. What am I zoned for?

You can check the zoning of a property on our online Parcel Viewer: Please refer to Chapter 2 of the Zoning Code for descriptions of current zoning districts.

### 2. What can I do with my property?

Please review Chapter 3 of the Sacramento County Zoning Code for allowed, conditionally allowed, and prohibited uses for each zoning district.

Parcel Viewer



Zoning Code



Applications



## Site Improvement and Permit Section (SIPS)

### 1. Where do I submit my Improvement or Grading plans?

Improvement or Grading plans are to be submitted electronically and can be submitted to SIPS at the Building Assistance Center (827 7th Street, Room 102, Sacramento, CA) or can be emailed to [e-sips@sacounty.gov](mailto:e-sips@sacounty.gov).

Improvement  
Plan Submittal  
Package



Grading Permit  
Submittal  
Package



### 2. Does anyone other than the County need to review or approve the improvement plan?

Yes, when a project is located within areas served by other public agencies (e.g. fire or water districts) those non-County agencies must review the improvement plan to make sure the project meets the Agency's requirements.

### 3. Where can I find the County Improvement Standards?

Sacramento County Improvement Standards can be found online and downloaded at: <https://engineering.sacounty.gov/Pages/ImprovementStandards.aspx>

## Building Permit and Inspection

### 1. How do I submit a building permit application?

Submit appropriate application and if required, related plan (drawn to a measurable scale) and supplemental documents, in PDF format, electronically at [actonline.sacounty.gov](http://actonline.sacounty.gov).

### 2. Are over-the-counter permits issued?

Yes, for certain residential-only applications. Permits can be applied for electronically and issued automatically when permit payment has been made.

### 3. How long does plan review take after submitting my application for a permit?

After submitting a permit application, it will take approximately 1-3 days to process the paperwork and get it in line for plan review. Plan review will take an additional 14 - 21 working days depending on the valuation of the project.