

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS MANUAL

Chapter 1: DPM Overview



Contents

1. Development Process Manual (DPM) Overview.....	1-3
1.1 Introduction	1-3
1.2 Purpose of the DPM.....	1-3
1.3 Relationship to Other Regulatory Documents.....	1-3
1.4 DPM Update Procedures	1-4
1.4.A DPM Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities.....	1-4
1.4.B DPM Update Procedures	1-5
1.4.C Appeal Procedures	1-6
1.5 DPM Waiver Procedures	1-6
1.5.A DPM Waiver Criteria for Approval	1-6
1.5.B DPM Waiver Process.....	1-7

1. Development Process Manual (DPM) Overview

1.1 Introduction

The City of Rio Rancho's Development Process Manual (DPM) provides design criteria and procedures for the orderly development of the community, assuring the public health, safety, and general welfare. The DPM is intended for use by City staff, citizens, and developers as a reference for the development process from the initial land use proposals through construction. Rio Rancho Municipal Code § 150.11(C) adopted the DPM and incorporated it by reference.

1.2 Purpose of the DPM

The purpose of the DPM is to carry out the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, to coordinate and clarify the development processes and procedures, and to provide uniform standards for development. It is intended to provide the basic criteria necessary to ensure acceptable levels of performance and safety for public facilities related to development, and to assure adequate monumentation and documentation of land division. The DPM also serves as a reference for City staff to apply uniform standards in a consistent manner while evaluating development submittals.

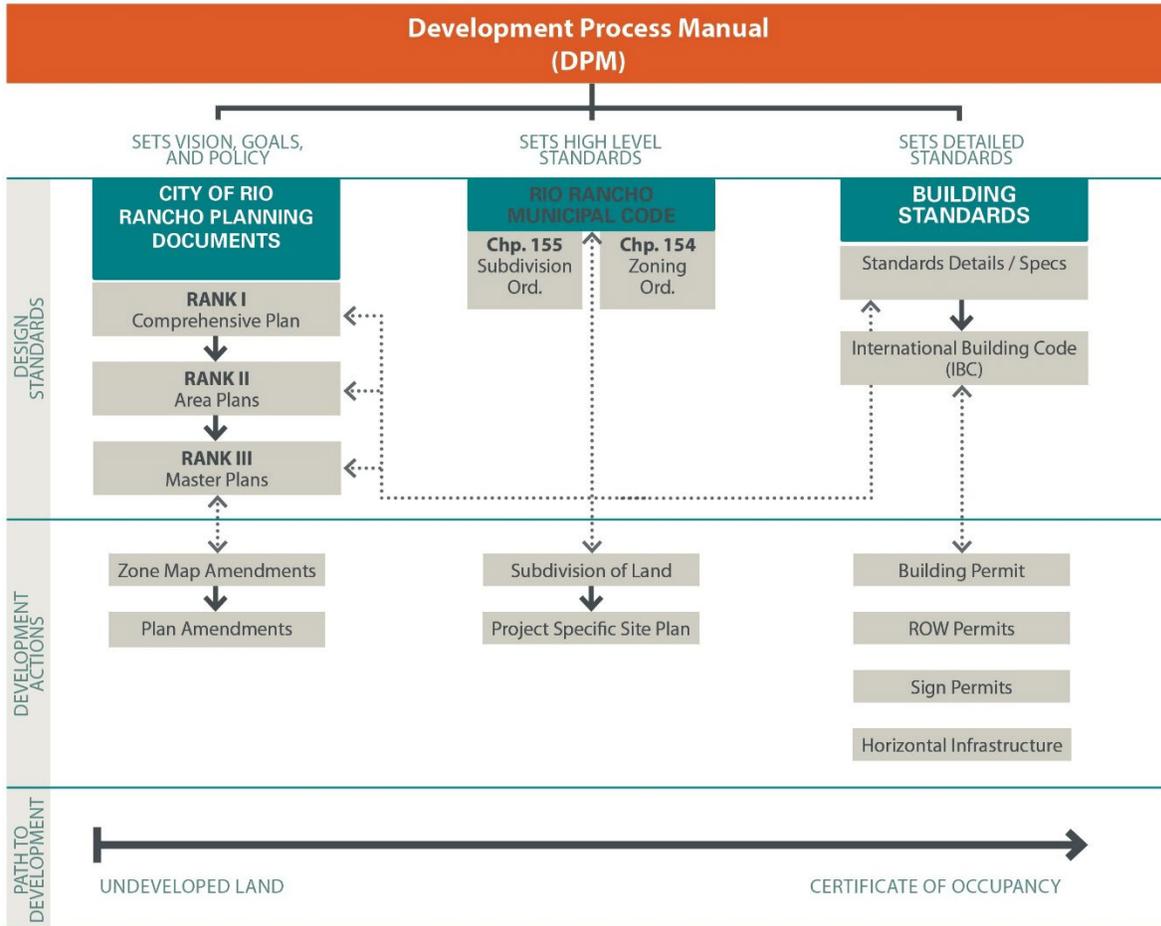
1.3 Relationship to Other Regulatory Documents

The City of Rio Rancho relies on a comprehensive system of regulatory documents to govern growth and development, ensuring public safety, order, and responsible development. These documents include:

- **Adopted City Plans**, which set the long-term vision, goals, and policies for growth, providing a guiding framework for development that aligns with the community's values and addresses regional, citywide, and area-specific issues.
- **City of Rio Rancho Municipal Code**, a set of local laws that regulate land use, zoning, building standards, and other aspects of city life. For example, Chapter 155 establishes subdivision standards for land division, while Chapter 154 outlines zoning regulations to define permissible land uses. These ordinances ensure that development is orderly and aligned with the city's growth goals.
- **Development Process Manual (DPM) and Public Works Design Criteria and Standard Details**, which provide technical guidelines and specifications for the design and construction of public infrastructure. These standards ensure the consistency, safety, and quality of infrastructure projects, covering roads, drainage systems, utilities, and public facilities, and ensuring that projects meet the required safety, functionality, and aesthetic standards.
- **International Building Code**, which establishes minimum standards for the design, construction, and safety of buildings and structures. It covers structural integrity, fire safety, electrical systems, plumbing, ventilation, accessibility, and energy efficiency, all aimed at protecting public health and safety.

Each of these regulatory tiers builds on the one above, creating a cohesive planning framework that ensures all development decisions align with the broader goals and policies established in the Comprehensive Plan. The Development Process Manual (DPM) is particularly important as it serves as a critical tool for ensuring that both public and private development projects are carried out consistently,

efficiently, and in compliance with City standards, contributing to the long-term success and sustainability of the community.



1.4 DPM Update Procedures

The DPM is intended to evolve as the need for new or updated standards arise. The document was most recently revised in 2025. The content of the DPM was prepared jointly by both private sector users and City staff members. DPM users are encouraged to submit suggestions, corrections, and proposed modifications in writing at any time.

1.4.A DPM Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Development Process Manual Executive Committee (the DPM Committee), established by Rio Rancho Municipal Code Section 150.11(C), is responsible for the review and direction of DPM changes. The DPM Committee consists of an interdisciplinary team of City staff and community group representatives, including two members from the Development Services Department, one member from the Public Works Department, one from the Utilities Department, one from the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, and one from the Fire and Rescue Department. The City Manager may also appoint three community members, such as building contractors, engineering firms, land developers, or realtors, to the committee.

The DPM Committee meets at a minimum biannually to review the DPM for necessary updates or revisions. A written evaluation and appraisal of the DPM is then presented to the Planning and Zoning Board and the Governing Body.

Proposals to change the DPM may be reviewed by a subcommittee of the DPM Committee composed of various public and private sector members from professions or companies closely related to various aspects of land development. Any subcommittee is advisory only and has no authority to override any public agency responsible for the enforcement of public policy or charged with the responsibility of promulgation of new rules, policies, ordinances, or procedures.

1.4.B DPM Update Procedures

Proposed changes are to be submitted in writing to staff. The submittal of the change request is to include a brief statement outlining the proposed change, the reason for the change, and the name and address of the individual, firm, organization, or agency proposing the change. Requests should also include the DPM text to be changed with the material proposed to be deleted identified with a strike-through and proposed new text identified as underlined.

The request is first reviewed by the DPM Committee. The Executive Committee determines the merits or validity of the change and whether further investigation, information, or research is needed. If the proposed change requires further study, the Executive Committee will appoint a subcommittee to undertake the work. If the subcommittee determines that a modification to the proposed rule is appropriate or necessary, the proposed rule as modified shall go back to the Executive Committee for consideration.

If the DPM Committee recommends approval of the change, the proposed modification is reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Board. A legal ad notification shall be published in a newspaper 15 days prior to the Planning and Zoning Board Meeting. The Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation is forwarded to the Governing Body for adoption of the modifications by resolution. A legal ad notification shall be published in a newspaper 15 days prior to the Governing Body meeting.

After the change request is accepted as originally proposed or modified as a result of comments received, the change is official when adopted by resolution of the Governing Body.



1.4.C Appeal Procedures

Anyone may appeal a proposed rule change within 15 days of its posting and filing with the City Clerk, or within 15 days of sending notice of final rejection to the proponent of the change.

1.5 DPM Waiver Procedures

A waiver to the design standards of the DPM may be sought in the case of unusual site characteristics, unique circumstances, or alternative design concepts.

1.5.A DPM Waiver Criteria for Approval

An application for a waiver to the DPM Standards may be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The standards may be met by an alternative method that is demonstrated to have an equivalent or better function and meet the same objective.
2. Site conditions, including geology, topography, indigenous soils, or issues related to environmental impacts or wildlife habitat, may be better addressed through the alternative proposal.
3. There are special circumstances applicable to the site that are not self-imposed, including but not limited to size, shape, topography, location, surroundings, physical characteristics, and natural forces. Such special circumstances of the lot either create an extraordinary hardship in the form of a substantial and unjustified limitation on the reasonable use or economic return on the property, or practical difficulties result from strict compliance with the minimum standards.
4. The requested waiver is the minimum necessary to avoid extraordinary hardship or practical difficulties.

1.5.B DPM Waiver Process

DPM waivers are requested by the following process. Applicants submit an application to the Development Services Department. Development Services Zoning Division review and decide on the application.

