

PA Permit Fast Track Program Guidance

Executive Order 2024-04 established the PA Permit Fast Track Program led by the Office of Transformation and Opportunity.

This guidance outlines the purpose, definitions, process for implementing coordinated timelines for permitting and approvals, roles, and responsibilities associated with a Covered Project, PA Permit Fast Track Dashboard.

1. Purpose.

The Pennsylvania Permit Fast-Track Program is designed to provide enhanced public awareness, collaboration, accountability, coordination, transparency, and predictability to the Commonwealth's permitting, licensing, and other authorizations for critical infrastructure projects and projects delivering significant economic development to Pennsylvanians. Through a collaborative process, governmental entities and private stakeholders will jointly develop clear project timelines, set milestones, and track progress through a publicly available PA Permit Fast Track Dashboard.

This collaborative process aims to accelerate project delivery within the Commonwealth, enhance Pennsylvania's competitiveness, increase economic opportunity, and position Pennsylvania as an economic leader nationally and globally.

The Governor's Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO) has primary responsibility for overseeing and managing the PA Permit Fast Track Program, facilitating the development of Coordinated Project Plans across relevant agencies, liaising with Project Sponsors, and updating the PA Permit Fast Track Dashboard.

2. Definitions.

- A. Authorization.** Any agency permit, license, or agreement that is required before a Covered Project may begin construction, reconstruction or commence operations.
- B. Cooperating Agency.** A Commonwealth agency that is not under the Governor's jurisdiction.
- C. Coordinated Project Plan.** A concise plan for coordinating public and agency participation in, and completion of, any required authorizations for the project created by the Coordinating Office—in consultation with the Project Sponsor and each Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government, or Service Provider.
- D. Coordinating Office.** The Office of Transformation and Opportunity (OTO), the office established by Executive Order 2023-05.

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- E. Covered Project.** A project that the Coordinating Office has designated to participate in the Fast Track Program.
- F. Dashboard.** The PA Fast Track Dashboard, a publicly accessible internet website tracking system designed to provide the status of applications for Authorizations.
- G. Government.** A federal or local governmental agency or political subdivision that oversees an authorization process that is necessary to complete a Covered Project participating in the PA Permit Fast Track Program.
- H. Participating Agency.** An agency under the Governor's jurisdiction overseeing an Authorization related to a Covered Project.
- I. Participating Agency Project Coordinator.** An official designated by each Participating Agency to interface with the Coordinating Office and oversee permitting, licensing, and other authorizations related to Covered Projects with the Coordinating Office.
- J. Participating Agency Supervisor.** A senior agency official designated by the Secretary, or equivalent, of each Participating Agency to interface with the Coordinating Office.
- K. Project Sponsor.** Any private, public, or public-private entity that seeks an authorization for a Covered Project.
- L. Service Provider.** A utility company or other private entity that elects to participate in the PA Permit Fast Track Program.

3. Fast Track Process.

A. Covered Project - Request for Consideration

- a.** A Project Sponsor may request that the Coordinating Office designate a project as a Covered Project under this program.
- b.** The Coordinating Office may meet with the Project Sponsor to obtain additional details about the proposed project, review questions about the project request, identify necessary Authorizations, coordinate on outreach to potential Cooperating Agencies, Governments, or Service Providers, and establish roles and responsibilities associated with a Covered Project, including defining timelines and critical milestones.

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- c. The Coordinating Office shall determine whether to designate the project as a Covered Project based on the following criteria:
 - i. Project size, complexity, potential economic impact, or public benefit, including impact upon environmental justice concerns as described in Executive Order 12898 of February 11, 1994, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations;
 - ii. Proposed project timeline, steps taken toward project completion, financial commitment, and project support by the Project Sponsors, local authorities, and stakeholders;
 - iii. The number of processes covered through Participating Agencies, Governments, or Service Providers; or

Additional criteria may be considered on a case-by-case basis, within the discretion of the Coordinating Office.

B. Notification.

- a. Following its review of the project designation request, the Coordinating Office shall notify the Project Sponsor of its determination.
- b. If a project is designated as a Covered Project, the Coordinating Office shall notify the Participating Agencies of the Covered Project through the relevant Participating Agency Supervisors. The Coordinating Office may notify additional Cooperating Agencies, Governments, or Service Providers of the Covered Project, in consultation with the Project Sponsor.
 - i. The Project Sponsor shall communicate with the Coordinating Office to coordinate all aspects of the Covered Projects.
 - ii. Once notified by the Coordinating Office that the Covered Project has been initiated, the Participating Agencies shall each designate a Participating Agency Project Coordinator for the Covered Project.
- c. The Coordinating Office may request that the Project Sponsor complete additional tasks before the Coordinating Office takes further action under this guidance.

C. Coordinated Project Plan.

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- a. The Coordinating Office, in consultation with the Project Sponsor and each Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government, or Service Provider, shall communicate a concise plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and completion of any required authorizations for the Covered Project to all project participants.
- b. The Coordinated Project Plan must include:
 - i. A clear listing of all necessary authorizations and Agency Project Coordinators for each Authorization.
 - ii. A permitting timetable setting forth a comprehensive schedule of dates by which all applications for Authorizations are anticipated to be made, including deadlines for fully completed applications to be filed and intermediate and final review completion dates, with the concurrence of the Project Sponsor and each Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government, or Service Provider. The permitting timetable will be posted on the PA Fast Track Dashboard.
 - iii. A discussion of potential avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies for implementation for potential project obstacles.
 - iv. Project Sponsor's plans and public engagement and outreach.
 - v. A permitting timetable for a given permit must be consistent with or shorter than other relevant time periods established through policy, law, or regulation and is not intended to prevent any Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government, or Service Provider from discharging any obligation under law in connection with the Covered Project.

D. Dashboard.

- a. The Coordinating Office, with support from the Office of Administration, shall establish, maintain, and make available a tracking system designed to provide the status of applications for Authorizations on a publicly accessible Internet website to be known as the "PA Permit Fast Track Dashboard." The Dashboard will track the status of applications for Authorizations included in the Coordinated Project Plan of each Covered Project. The Dashboard must include a specific and searchable entry for each Covered Project.
- b. To the extent possible and permitted by law, the Dashboard should include the following information:

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- i. Publicly available applications for Authorizations and supporting documents submitted by a Project Sponsor.
- ii. A description of actions undertaken, or decisions made by any Participating Agencies or Cooperating Agencies, Governments or Service Providers materially affecting a Covered Project.
- iii. Publicly available documentation that outlines an action taken or decision.
- iv. The status of mitigation measures relating to the environmental review and permitting process.
- v. Information about Covered Project-related public meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods.
- vi. Any publicly available memoranda of understanding or similar agreements relevant to the Covered Project.

E. Covered Project Milestones.

- a. The Coordinating Office shall create an initial Dashboard entry for any new Covered Project.
- b. The Coordinating Office shall post all critical milestones of the Coordinated Project Plan to the Dashboard.
- c. The Coordinating Office shall update the Dashboard with information regarding material decisions made by Participating Agencies or Cooperating Agencies, Governments, or Service Providers affecting the Covered Project's critical milestones.
- d. The Dashboard will provide updates regarding deadlines and known delays with explanations from the Project Sponsor when any issue becomes known to the Coordinating Office, but in any event the Dashboard will update each Covered Project at least each calendar quarter.

F. Coordinated Project Plan Modifications.

Once a Coordinated Project Plan has been established, timelines may be extended only under one of the following circumstances:

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- a. The Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government or Service Provider controlling the relevant process or step consults with the Coordinating Office and other stakeholders about the extension no less than 14 business days before its due date, and all parties agree to the modification.
- b. The Participating Agency or Cooperating Agency, Government or Service Provider requesting the extension provides a written justification which, to the extent it contains public information, will be posted to the Dashboard.

G. Abandonment of a Covered Project.

- a. If at any time the Coordinating Office doubts the continuing technical or financial viability of the Project Sponsor to construct the Covered Project, the Coordinating Office shall request that the Project Sponsor provide updated statements and project status within 30 business days of the Coordinating Office informing the Project Sponsor of its concerns regarding the Covered Project's viability.
- b. If the Project Sponsor fails to respond or the response does not resolve the Coordinating Office's concerns, the Coordinating Office may list the Covered Project as paused or cancelled on the Dashboard and toll all agency prospective responsibilities to the extent permitted by law.

H. Additional Powers.

The Coordinating Office may:

- a. Update and issue guidance to provide training and support for implementation of improved permitting for Covered Projects, including, but not limited to, coordinating with stakeholders, reducing administrative burden on agencies or Project Sponsors, and enhancing transparency.
- b. Develop, publish, or revise recommended permitting timelines for certain categories of projects based on data gathered from past projects.
- c. Recommend modifications to policy, regulations, or business processes based on stakeholder input.

Agency Supervisors may:

- a. Provide agency advice, guidance, and input to the Coordinating Office on proposed recommendations, guidance, training, and permitting timelines.

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- b. Analyze agency processes, policies, and authorities and make recommendations to the Secretary or Coordinating Office on ways to improve the speed and efficiency of authorizations.
- c. Develop and implement, training programs for agency staff who may serve as Agency Project Coordinators or be involved in reviews for authorizations regularly necessary for completion of Covered Projects.