Citizen Access: Public Permit Portal
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated March 2024

Construction and development permitting services provided by the City of Fremont are available online via Citizen Access, the City's public permitting portal located at fremont.gov/citizenaccess.

The City understands the public may have questions about how to use Citizen Access. Please see a list of common questions and answers on the following pages. This document will be updated regularly to reflect process or system changes.

Q1. What is Citizen Access and how can I use it?

Citizen Access, available at fremont.gov/citizenaccess, is the City's online permitting portal. Users can create a Citizen Access account by selecting "Register" at the top of the page. Once an account is created, users can log in to their account and perform the following actions.

- *Search records*: Search for permits by address, record number, and/or date range.

- *Apply for a permit:* Submit a new permit request for planning permits, building permits (includes fire, solar, express, and temporary permit types), as well as engineering permits. For more information about these permits, visit the City's Permits webpage.

- *Check record status.*

- *Make payments.*

- *Schedule an inspection*.

Q2. Who can I contact for help with Citizen Access?

For help or questions about Citizen Access, contact City staff by email.

Q3. What are the benefits of submitting my permit request online?

Using Citizen Access to submit a permit request is quick and convenient. Users can submit their request any time of the day. Every step of the permit process may be completed online including paying fees, retrieving plan review comments and plan corrections/staff marked up plans, resubmitting plans/documents, accessing issued/approved permit documents, and scheduling building inspections. Applicants can see all of their permit requests in one place (under "My Records") and track the status of each record as it progresses through the permit review process.

Q4. Do I have to submit my permit request online?

No. Permit requests do not need to be submitted online, although it is encouraged and provides a simplified format to do so. In-person permit submittals are permissible at the City's Permit Center/Development Services Center, located at 39550 Liberty Street, during operational hours. The City has implemented an all-electronic plan/document review process. Because of this, if an applicant would like to submit a new permit request in person at the Permit Center/Development Services Center, they must bring all of the submittal documents on a USB flash drive, including the permit application. Submittal documents and applications are available on the City's Permit Forms and Handouts webpage. If a permit request is submitted online, the permit application does not need to be uploaded.

Q5. How do I submit a new permit request online?

For new permit requests, applicants should log in to their Citizen Access account, select "Apply for a Permit," and then select the type of permit they need to apply for (i.e., planning, building, or engineering). For help determining what permit/record type to select based on the project, visit the City's Permit Types webpage. For online permit requests, the permit application form is completed online and no longer needs to be uploaded. To submit a new permit request, applicants should do the following:

- Register for a Citizen Access account at fremont.gov/citizenaccess.

- Log in to account.

- Select "Apply for a Permit."

- Select the type of permit needed (i.e., planning, building, or engineering). For help determining what permit/record type to select based on the project, visit the City's Permit Types webpage.
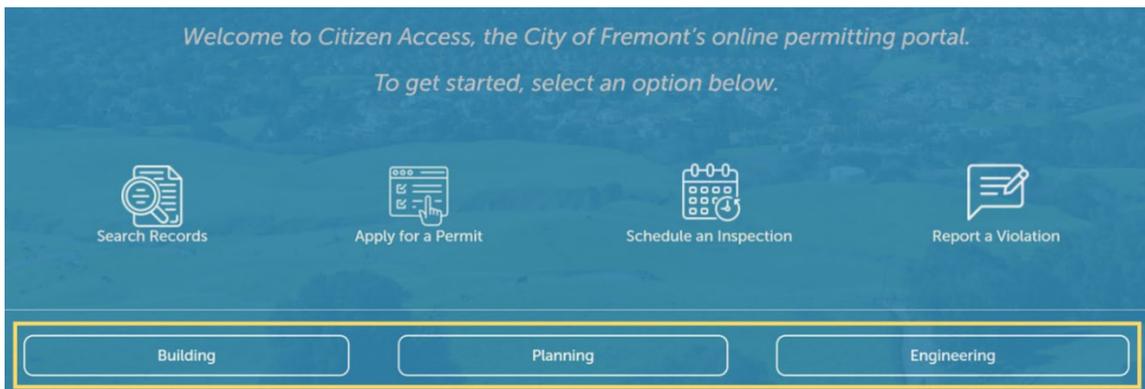
- Review the "Project Requirements." If the requirements are understood and the correct record type is selected, check the "Acknowledgment" box at the bottom of the page and then select "Continue Application." Please be advised that application fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

- Complete the online form. Use the "Directions" to better understand what is required for each section. If any steps are missed or required information is missing, error messages will pop up at the top of the screen stating what is required to continue the submittal.

- Upload the required plans/documents. Plans/documents are uploaded in two steps. The first step is the upload of plans and related documents that will be reviewed in the City's electronic plan review (EPR) software. EPR document submittal requirements are available here. Only upload one document at a time and wait for the verification before uploading the next document. The second step is to upload all other documents that are required for the application (e.g., reimbursement agreement, owner verification form, etc.). The required documents are listed at the top of the page.

- Continue the form to the payment screens. Depending on the type of record, there may be more than one time that payment of fees will be required. Once a payment is made, the receipt will be available to download and save from within the "Payments" tab.

- After the payment is made, an on-screen confirmation will verify that the submittal was successful. The applicant will receive an automated email confirming the submittal as well.

Q6. Do I have to create a Citizen Access account?

Yes. Throughout the permit review process, the applicant will be directed to log in to their Citizen Access account for several reasons (e.g., retrieve plan review comments; access the issued permit, inspection job card, and approved plans; resubmit plans/documents requiring corrections; and make payments). The applicant will be prompted to log in to their account via email when it is required to move the request along.

Q7. Do I have to have an email address to submit an online or in-person permit request?

Yes. All correspondence with the applicant will occur via email and at most steps in the processing of the record, emails will automatically be sent to the applicant listed on the record.

Q8. What happens after I submit my online permit request?

After the new request is submitted, the applicant will see the new record number in their [Citizen Access](#) account under "My Records." The new request will be reviewed by staff to determine if enough information has been provided/uploaded to route it for review. If necessary information is missing to enable routing of the request for plan review, the applicant will be contacted via email with a list of information that is necessary in order to initiate the review. This is a minimal list of items that only enables the City to calculate plan review fees and verify exactly what type(s) of review is required for the particular permit request. After the requested information is provided, the plan review fees (for building permit requests) will be invoiced. The applicant will be notified via email if invoiced fees need to be paid. Once all invoiced fees are paid, the request will be processed for review.

Q9. Why didn't I receive an email notifying me that my plan review cycle had been completed?

Correspondence with applicants now occurs primarily via email directly from the permit record. Two issues may be the reason an applicant does not receive the email correspondence:

1) The majority of email correspondence comes from "noreply-Accela@fremont.gov." If the email account is set up to block emails from a "no reply" email address, add "noreply-Accela@fremont.gov" to the contact list to ensure the correspondence does not get blocked, but instead gets filtered into the inbox.

2) Additionally, email correspondence is only sent to contacts on the record identified as the "applicant." If a contact on the record needs to receive email correspondence about the processing of the record but is not listed as an "applicant" contact, email the Team Lead on the record to request this change.

Q10. Why were my plans rejected and deleted from the record?

The City has transitioned all plan review services to electronic plan review (EPR) software. In order for the EPR software to work correctly, plans/documents need to be created in a specific format. If the plans/documents do not comply with the EPR submittal requirements, they will be rejected, and the applicant will be contacted via email with a list of what needs to be corrected. The EPR document submittal requirements are available here.

Q11. I submitted my online permit request. When will I be contacted?

Once permit requests are submitted, the record status is "Received." Processing staff reviews new submittals in the order they were received and will contact the applicant as soon as they get to the record in the processing queue. The record status can be checked at any time by logging into the Citizen Access account and selecting "My Records." Once the record is routed for review, a Team Lead will be assigned. The applicant will receive an email when the plan review is routed that will identify the staff person who is the Team Lead on the record and how to contact them. The Team Lead will be the applicant's contact through the plan review until the request is issued/approved.

Q12. Will online permits be processed in the same timeframe as those submitted in-person at the Permit Center/Development Services Center?

All permit requests are processed in the same permitting system. As such, the due dates for review cycles are the same regardless if a request is submitted online or in person at the Permit Center/Development Services Center.

Q13. Can I pay for my permit online?

Yes. Submitted permit fees can be paid by an applicant by either: 1) logging in to their Citizen Access account and selecting "My Cart" and selecting the record(s) that fees will be paid for; or 2) completing a general record search without logging in to a Citizen Access account and selecting "Pay Fees Due" at the far right of the record number (under the "Actions" column). Visa and MasterCard credit cards are accepted for payment.

Applicants are encouraged to log in to their Citizen Access account and select "My Cart" at the top of the screen to make a fee payment. Applicants who log in to their Citizen Access account to make a payment will receive a confirmation email with the receipt after the payment transaction is completed.

To pay fees without logging in to a Citizen Access account, applicants enter a partial record number, then select "Search." For example, if the record number is BLD2021-12345, it can be searched as BLD2021-1234_. This will provide a list of records with these numbers. Once the applicant locates their record number in the list, they can select "Pay Fees Due" at the far right of the record number under "Action." This will take the applicant to the payment screens. The receipt can be printed from the online screen after the payment.

Q14. How do I search my address in Citizen Access?

To get a valid address search result, enter the address number and a partial street name. For example, if the address to be searched is 39550 Liberty Street, it should be searched as "39550 Lib" and then select "Search." For permit requests, searching for the address in this manner will ensure a valid result with the City's parcel database, as well as will auto populate the parcel number and owner information. If multiple addresses are available, the applicant should select the correct address for their project.

Some address searches may be a little tricky if there is a direction in the street name (e.g., South Grimmer) or it is a new street name that may not yet be in the City's parcel database. If an applicant gets stuck with one of these searches, they should contact City staff by email. Staff will then access the record from the backend of the system to find a solution to facilitate submittal of the online request.

Q15. How do I enter my parcel number in the online permit form?

The best and easiest way to receive an accurate parcel number result is by querying a valid address search result. If a parcel does not have an address, contact staff by email for assistance in getting the request submitted. It is not recommended to search by parcel number.

Q16. Why do I still need to fill out the permit application and then upload it?

A permit application is only required by applicants who choose to submit their permit request in person at the Permit Center/Development Services Center. Applicants who choose to submit their permit request online in Citizen Access are no longer required to upload a completed permit application. Each permit request has required documents that must be uploaded to the online request in order for it to be processed. For online permit requests, the required documents are listed on the Project Summary page for each record type. For permit requests made in person at the Permit Center/Development Services Center, the documents required for submittal are available by visiting the City's Permit Forms and Handouts webpage.

Q17. How do I find out who the Team Lead is for my permit request?

The Team Lead on any permit request can be found in Citizen Access by looking up the record number (either logged in to a Citizen Access account or doing a general search) and selecting "Record Details." The Team Lead is not assigned to a record until it is routed for plan review.

Q18. How can I find out the status of my permit request?

An applicant can check the status of a record at any time by logging in to their Citizen Access account and selecting "My Records." Find the record number in the list of records (sorted by building, engineering, and planning records). The status of the record is listed under the "Status" column.

Q19. I really want to talk with someone about my permit request. Who can I contact?

If a project has been routed for plan review, the Team Lead has been assigned. The Team Lead is the contact for all questions/issues related to the permit request. The Team Lead can be found in Citizen Access by looking up the record number, selecting "Record Info," and then "Record Details."

If a record has not yet been routed for review, the applicant should contact processing staff as listed below:

- Planning Permits: email or 510-494-4455

- Building/Fire Permits: email or 510-494-4460

- Engineering Permits: email 510-494-4700

Q20. How do I resubmit plans/documents for an existing project under review?

If an applicant already has a project in process and needs to resubmit plans/documents, the resubmittal will need to be made via Citizen Access. Records for permit requests submitted in person prior to the start of the COVID-19 closure in March 2020 will need to be linked to an applicant's Citizen Access account. Once the record is linked to the Citizen Access account, the applicant will be able to resubmit electronically.

To get an existing record linked to a Citizen Access account, email the record Team Lead, providing the email address on the account to be linked and the record number to be linked to it. If there is no Team Lead, send the request via email. Once the record is linked with the Citizen Access account, it will be listed under "My Records."

After the record is linked, the resubmittal process is as follows:

- Visit fremont.gov/citizenaccess.

- Log in to account.

- Select "Home."

- Select "My Records."

- Select/click on the record number that needs to be resubmitted.

- Select "Record Info."

- Select "Documents."

- Under "Status," documents identified with "Corrections Required" must be resubmitted.

- To resubmit, under "Actions," select "Resubmit."

- Upload the resubmittal document.

- If a new document is required, select "New."

- Upload the new documents.

- Select "Save."

Q21. How do I schedule an inspection?

Inspections are scheduled in Citizen Access. All persons scheduling inspections must have a Citizen Access account and the 3-digit inspection code. The account does not need to be linked to the record. Instructions on how to schedule inspections are provided on the City's Inspections webpage.

Q22. How do I submit a revision on an issued permit?

To submit a revision/amendment to an issued permit, do the following:

- Visit fremont.gov/citizenaccess.

- Log in to account.

- Select "Home."

- Select "My Records."

- In the "My Records" list, find the issued record requiring revision/amendment.

- At the far right of the record number, under "Actions," select "Amendment."

- Select "Revision" and complete the online application.

- Upload the revision documents when prompted, including a statement explaining why the revision to the issued permit is necessary (referred to as the "Revision Narrative"), as well as the proposed revision plans/documents to the issued permit.

- Pay the revision plan check fee.

Q23. Who do I contact if I do not understand the submittal requirements?

For questions about submittal requirements or the status of a record, contact the Team Lead or use the contact information below.

- Planning Permits: email or 510-494-4455

- Building/Fire Permits: email or 510-494-4460

- Engineering Permits: email or 510-494-4700

Q24. What other City departments/divisions or outside agencies may be involved in my online permit request?

Coordination with other City departments/divisions and outside agencies may be necessary to obtain a City permit, as listed below.

- Environmental Services Division: Waste Handling Plan, Stormwater Permits
  email or 510-494-4570

- Transportation Engineering Division: Traffic Control Plan
  email or 510-494-4745

- Revenue Division: Business Tax
  email or 510-494-4790

- Alameda County Water District: Water Supply
  510-668-4200

- Republic Services: Garbage, Refuse Collection, and Disposal
  510-657-3500

- PG&E: Natural Gas and Electric Service
  Residential Service Center: 1-877-660-6789
  Business Service Center: 1-800-468-4743

- Union Sanitary: Wastewater/Sewer Services
  510-477-7500