

Summary of SFDB Project Data Analysis

Overview

For the Single Family Design Board (SFDB) process improvement project, staff gathered and synthesized data using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. To begin, staff performed a comprehensive scan of relevant data from city permitting records on single-unit residential projects that triggered SFDB design review. This was followed by robust qualitative data gathering via one-on-one interviews with current and former SFDB board members; a survey of homeowners, architects, and land use professionals; and focus groups to discuss SFDB process improvements. Staff reviewed the project data and engagement results to understand applicants' frustrations with the process and to identify potential improvements for better customer experience.

Methodology

Staff collected and analyzed data from 440 SFDB projects submitted between 2019 and 2022 to understand the type and scope of projects being reviewed and the frequency with which those project types are triggered for review. This period was chosen because it allowed for a reasonably sized sample of projects being processed under the current code and regulations. By comparing project data with the synthesized feedback from the survey, interviews, and focus groups, staff identified opportunities to amend the current design review triggers and procedures, which are anticipated to result in an approximate 21% reduction in the number of projects that trigger any level of SFDB review. See Figure 1 below for a breakdown of the percentage of projects per review level before and after the proposed amendments.

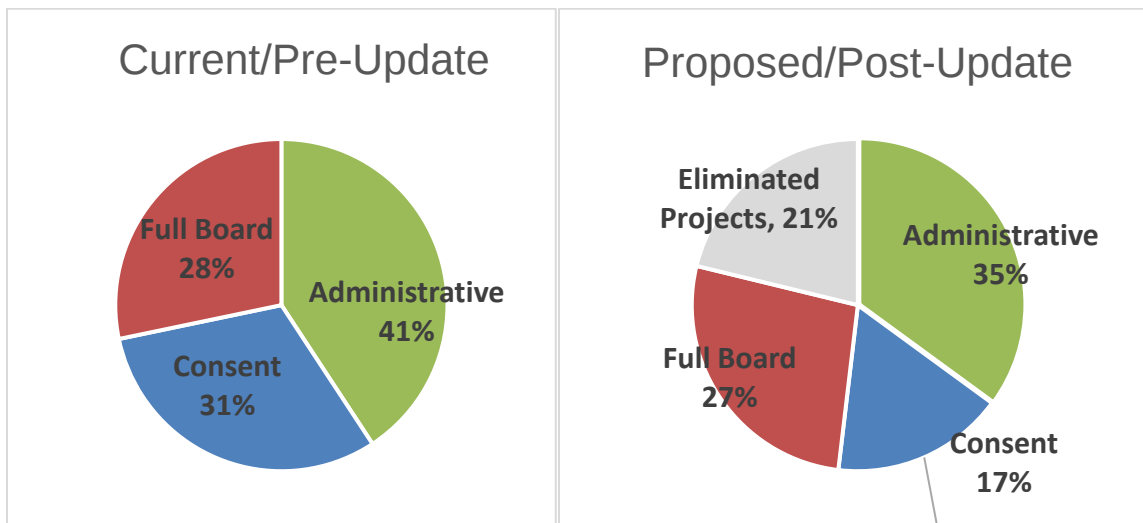


Figure 1: Pre- and Post- Streamlining SFDB Project Count by Review level

Exhibit H
Single Family Streamlining Project
Summary of SFDB Project Data Analysis
Discussion

When a project is “triggered” for SFDB design review, it means that part of the project’s scope of work meets certain thresholds in the Municipal Code that require design review. Unlike other types of development such as commercial and multifamily, not all single family projects automatically trigger design review. If a project triggers SFDB design review per the code, staff first assess the level of review (Administrative, Consent, or Full Board) based on the extent of exterior changes to the building or site¹. The flowchart in Figure 2 below explains how design review triggers work.

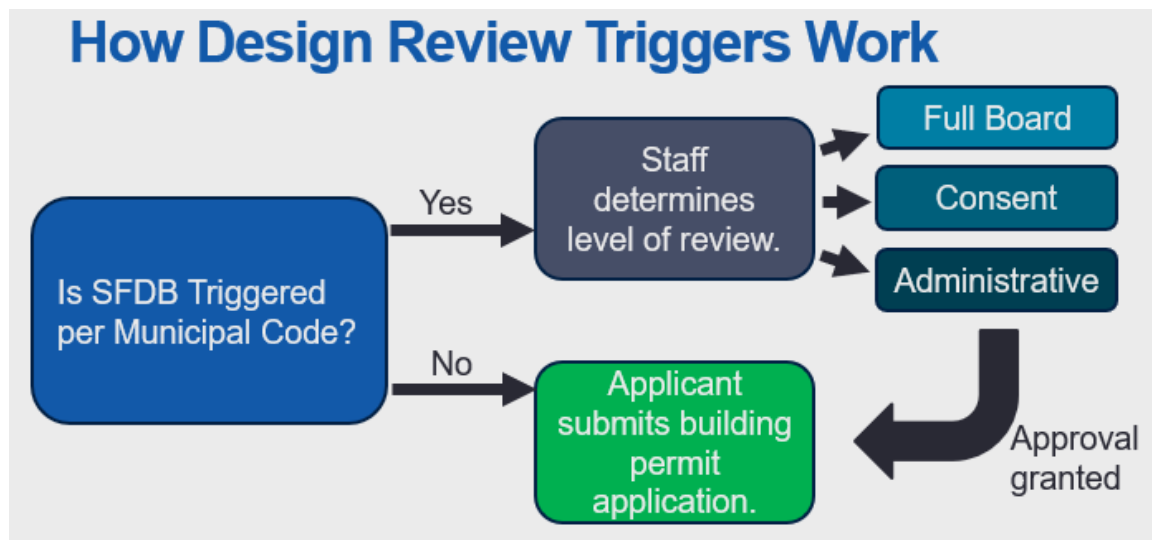


Figure 2: How design review triggers work

In the three-year dataset, the Hillside Design District trigger accounted for half of all SFDB projects and the upper-story triggers accounted for an additional twenty-five percent. The remaining 33 design review triggers were used less frequently. See Figure 3 below for a breakdown of the most frequently-used SFDB triggers.

¹ General Guidance on the appropriate SFDB review level for various project types can be found in the SFDB General Design Guidelines and Meeting Procedures.

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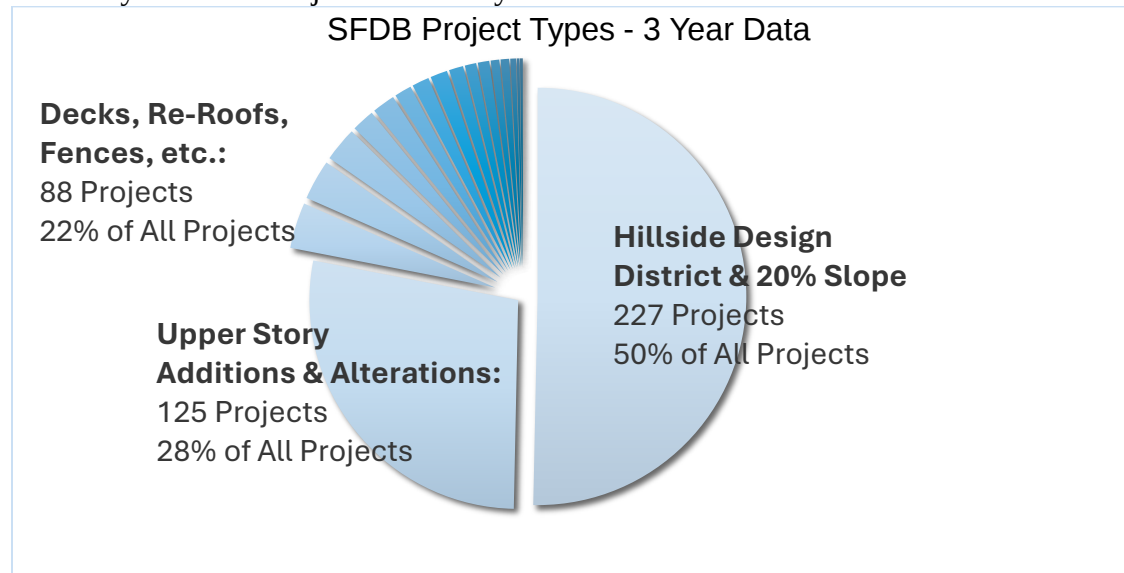


Figure 3: Frequently used SFDB triggers

Forty-five percent (199) of all SFDB projects analyzed in the three-year dataset were for exterior alterations only (see Figure 4 below), such as window changes, reroofs, new fences, and landscaping, with no change in square footage or the size and bulk of the house. These minor projects tended to be reviewed administratively without a public hearing; however, there were still a significant number of alterations-only projects (ranging from minor to major alterations) that were reviewed at SFDB Consent or Full Board. Fifty-three percent (107) of those alterations-only projects triggered SFDB review because of the property's location in the Hillside Design District, and about 16% (18) of the alterations-only projects triggered SFDB review because they were on an upper story.

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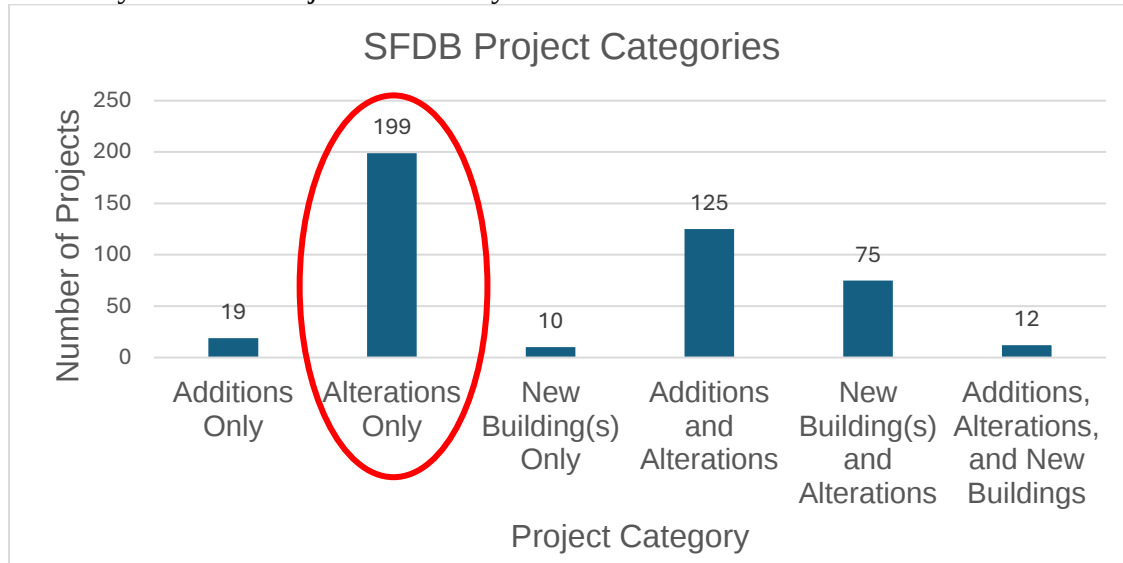


Figure 4: SFDB project categories