Enterprise

Last updated October 28, 2022

Enterprise Green Communities announces three program changes designed to streamline the certification application review process. With these changes, we expect to reduce the amount of time needed for projects to receive approvals, benefiting both submitting project teams and Green Communities reviewers. The three process modifications include an updated re-review fee structure, an itemized review process, and newly added tools and resources to support teams submitting certification applications.

See below to learn more about these program updates. If you're not already familiar with the certification process, feel free to skip this document and instead go straight to our full overview of steps for certification. The remainder of this document assumes knowledge of our previous approach to certification reviews.

1. **Re-review Fee Structure:**

   a. **What is the re-review fee?** Applications that undergo two reviews in a given review phase (Prebuild or Postbuild) and still require additional review(s) before achieving approval will incur a $200 re-review fee per each subsequent submission in that phase.

   b. **When does the re-review fee take effect?** The re-review fee will go into effect starting November 6, 2022.

   c. **What projects will incur a re-review fee?** All 2015 and 2020 project applications that begin a new review phase (Prebuild or Postbuild) on or after November 6, 2022 will incur the re-review fee for each submission beyond two in one review phase of certification. This applies regardless of whether a project is following the traditional review structure or the itemized review structure. Note that, historically, the majority of projects submitted for certification review do not need more than 2 submissions per Prebuild or 2 submissions per Postbuild and therefore would never be subject to the re-review fee.

   d. **What projects will NOT incur a re-review fee?**
      i. Projects already in the midst of a review phase (those that have completed at least one submission for Prebuild or Postbuild) will **not** incur a re-review fee for that phase.
      ii. A re-review fee will **not** apply to project applications submitted for review of a waiver request, in relation to technical assistance correspondence with Green Communities, or when an accidental submission occurs.

e. **What about projects following the NYC Overlay for the 2015 Criteria or the 2020 Criteria that pay for an expedited review?** Eligible projects that pay for an expedited review are subject to the same re-review fee after two reviews per the structure above.
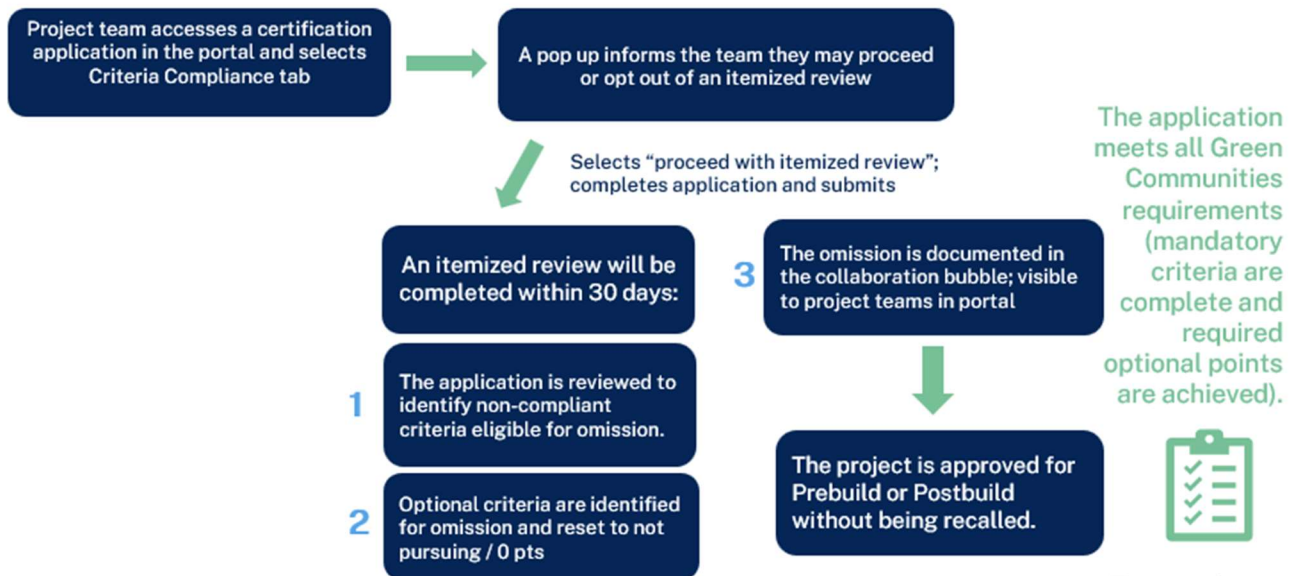
2. **Tools for Support:**

   a. **What new tools are available?** Tools have been added to the Green Communities Criteria and Certification website to better clarify the requirements for certification. These include an updated *Certification Documentation Instructions* matrix for the 2020 Criteria and examples of excellent documentation for the criteria which most often trigger re-reviews.

   b. **What other efforts have been implemented to simplify the review process?** We have updated the certification portal, removing bugs and improving usability. *(Note: These portal improvements are made possible because of your input. Keep it coming!)*

   c. **Where should a project team go for additional support?** As always, teams may reach the Green Communities team by emailing certification@enterprisecommunity.org. Additionally, we have launched regular Office Hours to connect and address questions in real time. Register here!
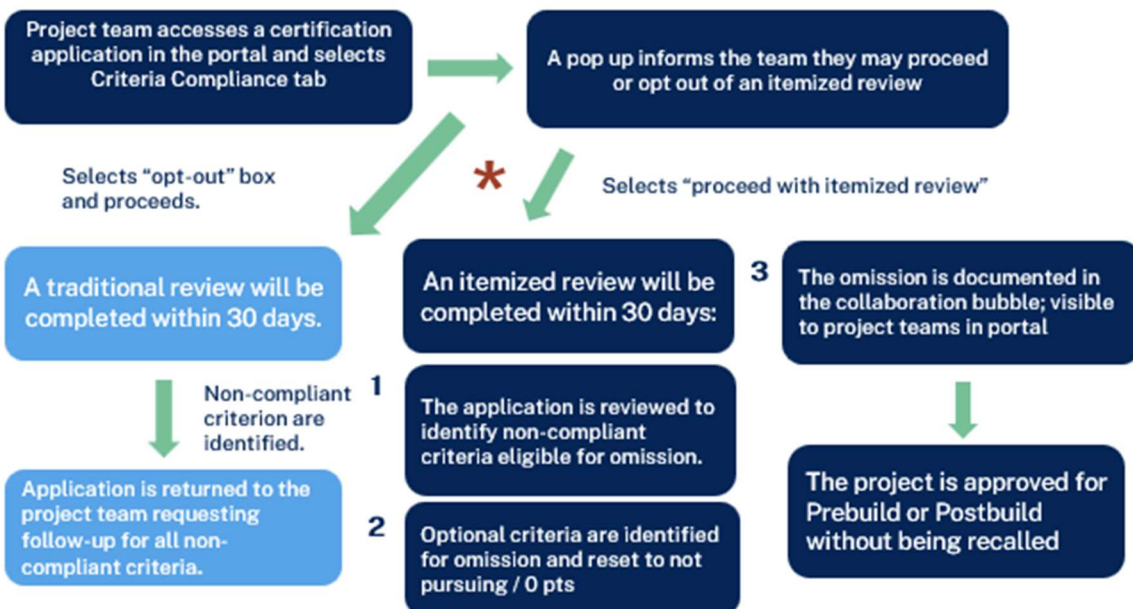
3. **Itemized Review Process:**

   a. **What is an itemized review?** A review of a Prebuild or Postbuild certification application in which non-compliant criteria associated with surplus optional points for certification do not initiate a recall of the application with a request for additional information and resubmission. Instead, these applications are recognized as meeting the minimum program requirements and are approved.

   b. **How does an itemized review differ from the traditional review process?** A traditional review requires that every criterion that a project team submits for review must be approved before that phase of certification is approved. On the other hand, if there is a criterion that is not able to be approved during review in a project application that is undergoing an itemized review, that criterion will simply be removed and the project approved, not triggering the need for the project team to revise and resubmit the project for review. Note that this only applies to criterion that are not required for certification: projects must still be approved for all mandatory criteria and a minimum number of optional points. Both the traditional and the itemized review process include a comprehensive review of the application and all criteria compliance strategies.

   c. **How does the itemized review process work?** *See figure 1, "Itemized Review Process" on page 2.*

Itemized review process

Project team accesses a certification application in the portal and selects Criteria Compliance tab → A pop up informs the team they may proceed or opt out of an itemized review

The application meets all Green Communities requirements (mandatory criteria are complete and required optional points are achieved).

Selects "proceed with itemized review"; completes application and submits

An itemized review will be completed within 30 days:

1 The application is reviewed to identify non-compliant criteria eligible for omission.

2 Optional criteria are identified for omission and reset to not pursuing / 0 pts

3 The omission is documented in the collaboration bubble; visible to project teams in portal

The project is approved for Prebuild or Postbuild without being recalled.

(Fig. 1)

Review process update

Project team accesses a certification application in the portal and selects Criteria Compliance tab → A pop up informs the team they may proceed or opt out of an itemized review

Selects "opt-out" box and proceeds.

* Selects "proceed with itemized review"

A traditional review will be completed within 30 days.

Non-compliant criterion are identified.

Application is returned to the project team requesting follow-up for all non-compliant criteria.

An itemized review will be completed within 30 days:

1 The application is reviewed to identify non-compliant criteria eligible for omission.

2 Optional criteria are identified for omission and reset to not pursuing / 0 pts

3 The omission is documented in the collaboration bubble; visible to project teams in portal

The project is approved for Prebuild or Postbuild without being recalled

(Fig. 2)

d. **Are the minimum number of optional points different for itemized reviews and traditional reviews?** No. The minimum number of optional points varies based on the criteria version and the project type:
    - 2015 – New Construction – 35 optional points
    - 2015 – Rehab – 30 optional points
    - 2020 – New Construction – 40 optional points
    - 2020 – Rehab – 35 optional points
    - 2020 – New York City Overlay New Construction – 60 optional points
    - 2020 – New York City Overlay Rehab – 55 optional points

b. **How will a project team know if optional points were omitted as part of an itemized review?** If points are omitted during an itemized review, the Green Communities team will leave a comment in the collaboration box for that specific criterion; notifying the project team that surplus points were omitted and no further action is needed.

c. **Can a project application still undergo a traditional review?** Yes, while the itemized review process will become the default Green Communities review process, projects may elect to have a traditional review at either the Prebuild phase or the Postbuild phase by opting out of the itemized review in the application portal.

e. **Why might a project team choose to opt out of an itemized review?** Some projects may have individual goals or stakeholders with specific criteria requirements that must be documented beyond those of the Green Communities program. As an example, projects intending to pursue Green Community Certification Plus may want to opt out of the itemized review to ensure Certification Plus is appropriately documented for compliance.

f. **Can a project earn points at Postbuild that were omitted during an itemized review at Prebuild?** Under some circumstances optional points may be attempted and earned at Postbuild that were omitted during Prebuild, but it is not encouraged as many optional points require approval at Prebuild. If there are optional points the project must earn, it is recommended that the project opt out of the itemized review and select a traditional review instead.

g. **What is the review timeline for itemized reviews?** All reviews, including itemized reviews, fall within our standard 30-day review window.

h. **If a project application opts out of the itemized review at Prebuild, can it obtain an itemized review at Postbuild?** Yes. A project will choose whether to undergo an itemized review or traditional review for Prebuild and then will choose again at Postbuild. The given review type (itemized or traditional) will apply for all reviews as part of that phase of certification (Prebuild or Postbuild). Project teams may change their review type when beginning a new review phase at Postbuild.