



# Rio Nuevo Area (RNA)

## What is the Rio Nuevo Area?

- The Rio Nuevo Area (RNA) is a subdistrict of the Infill Incentive District (IID). The Rio Nuevo Area generally covers the downtown core and establishes design standards that must be met by all new development in this district. Projects that do not opt in to the IID zoning option must still meet Rio Nuevo design standards and go through a design and historic review process.\*
- The purpose of the RNA is to implement the policies of the City's General Plan, with special emphasis on creating and enhancing the Downtown pedestrian environment that celebrates Tucson's rich historic, cultural, and artistic heritage.
- The design principles, categories, and standards of the RNA support quality development to enliven and revitalize Tucson's Downtown area.
- More information about the RNA design standards and process can be found in Section 5.12.7 of the Unified Development Code (UDC).

\*Refer to the IID handout for more information about the IID zoning option.

## Who is involved in the RNA review?

- The Design Review Board (DRB) reviews for RNA design standards.
- The Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission (TPCHC) Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS) reviews for compatibility with eligible or listed structures and the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

## How long does the process take and is there a fee?

- Time: It typically takes 6-8 weeks to process a RNA application, depending on the project complexity and public meeting calendars.
- Fee: PDSD staff calculates fee. Fee will vary by the type of review process.

## How do I get started?

- Email PDSD Special Districts Staff at [specialdistricts@tucsonaz.gov](mailto:specialdistricts@tucsonaz.gov).
- Courtesy pre-application reviews are available by request.
- The RNA Review application can be found on the PDSD website:  
[www.tucsonaz.gov/pdsd/special-districts](http://www.tucsonaz.gov/pdsd/special-districts)





## Pre-Application Meeting

- Applicant submits a [pre-application meeting request](#) with preliminary development plan.
- Applicant meets with PDS staff to discuss proposal and process.
- PDS staff provide comments on project and an overview of the review process.
- Projects may require either major or minor historic review, or no historic review, depending on the historic status of the property and adjacent sites.



## Application Submittal and Review

- Applicant submits complete application according to checklist included with application and supporting materials.
- PDS staff reviews application for completeness and compliance with RNA standards within 5 working days.
- If complete, the application is accepted for processing and posted online through Property Research Online (PRO) at [www.tucsonaz.gov/PRO/pdsd/](http://www.tucsonaz.gov/PRO/pdsd/).
- PDS staff forwards the application for review and comment to City departments and outside agencies if needed.



## Design Review

- If a Major Historic Review:
  - Applicant attends a meeting of the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission (TPCHC) Plans Review Subcommittee (PRS)\* and presents proposal
  - The PRS will vote on a recommendation for the project
- If a Minor Historic Review:
  - Review is conducted on-site with PDS staff, a member of the PRS and the applicant present
- The Design Review Board (DRB)\* reviews the project for compliance with RNA design standards and makes a recommendation
- The recommendations of the TPCHC Plans Review Subcommittee and Design Review Board are sent to the PDS Director.

*\*These boards typically meet once or twice a month*



## PDS Director's Decision

- PDS Director reviews the application and recommendations.
- The PDS Director will approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application.
- Notice of the PDS Director's Decision is provided to the applicant, the appropriate Historic Preservation Zone (HPZ) Advisory Board, if applicable, and the TPCHC, PRS within 3 working days of the date of decision.
- If denied, the PDS Director's Decision may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment (B/A) within 5 calendar days of the notice.