Commercial Development Flowchart
Updated 4/2/2025

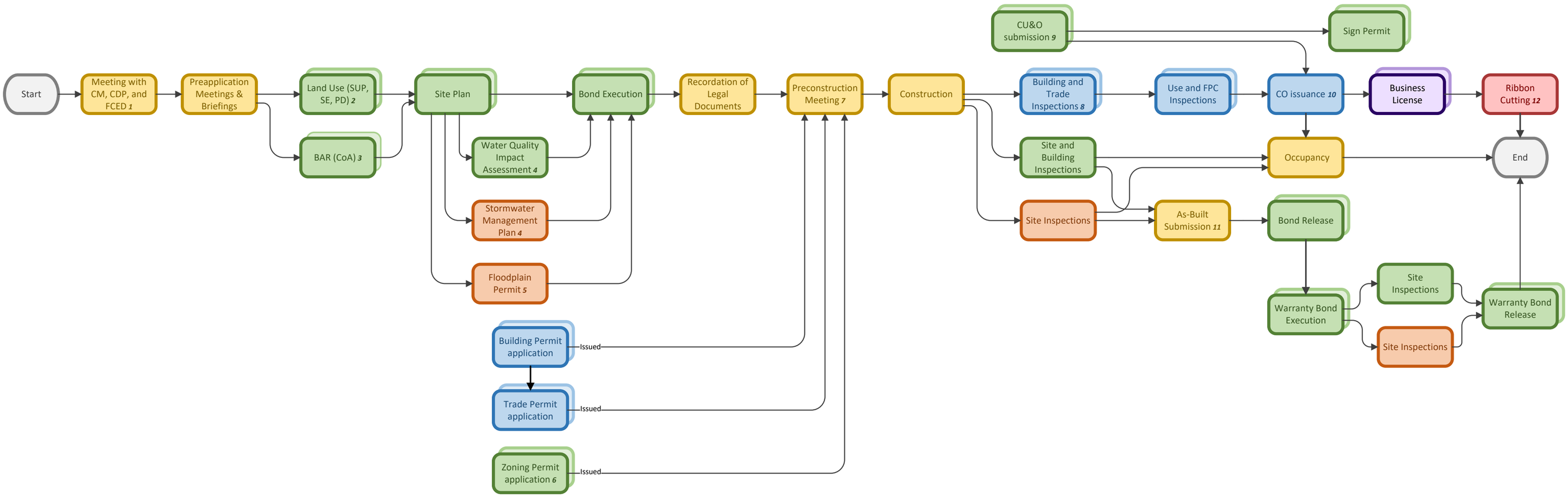
Symbol Key

Development Stage

Start/End | Applicant | Community Development and Planning | Code Administration | Public Works | Revenue | Economic Development | Click for Detailed Flowchart | Note

Note: The relative length of the development stages illustrated on this chart is NOT indicative of how long each stage or process takes. For a live look at how long different application types and reviews are taking on average, please visit the **Permit Resources Hub**.

Preapplication
Land Use
Site Plan
Permitting and Construction
Bonding
Licensing and Occupancy



1. Prospective developers should schedule a meeting with the City Manager, Planning Division Chief, and Director of Economic Development to determine if the project meets City economic development goals.

2. Required if construction does not meet all requirements of the **Zoning Ordinance** (e.g. use, setbacks, height, coverage).

3. Architectural review is required for improvements visible from the public realm (roads, parks, plazas, etc.). See the City's **Design Guidelines**.

4. Required if total land disturbance is > 2500 SF.

5. Required if construction will impact the floodplain. See the City's interactive **Floodplain and RPA map**.

6. Zoning Permits are required to be filed in many cases when a Building Permit is required, unless the work proposed is exclusively interior to a building and does not change the use. Apply through the **Permit Portal**.

7. Preconstruction meetings can be scheduled as an inspection type in the Permit Portal, or by contacting Code Administration staff: 703-385-7830, CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov. See **How To Schedule Inspections** guide.

8. Building and Trade inspections take place throughout the construction process, and are completed with a Final (Complete) inspection. All associated trade permits must be finaled before the building permit can be finaled.

9. Commercial Use and Occupancy (CU&O) Permits are required in order to open and operate a business in the City. A Business License will not be issued without an approved CU&O.

10. The Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is issued at the end of the Building Permit process. No additional submission is required.

11. Download the **As-Built Plan Application** here. The As-Built submission is a requirement for Bond Release. Click the Bond Release box to the right to get a more detailed flowchart explaining that process.

12. Ribbon cuttings are optional publicity opportunities for new businesses opening in the City. Contact Fairfax City Economic Development for more info. Access the online **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Application** here.