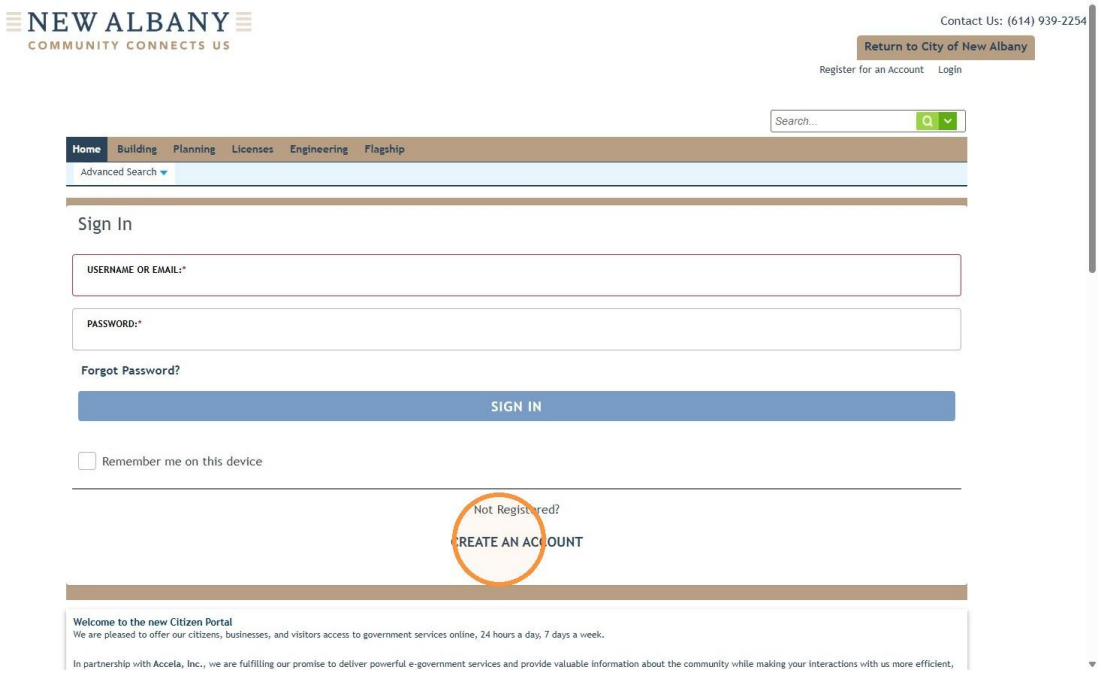
How to Submit a Planning Application in ACA

Learn how to navigate the Accela Citizen Access portal to initiate and complete a planning variance application. This guide walks you through the essential steps, from selecting the application type to uploading your documents.

1. Before submitting an application, applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss the application with planning staff beforehand. Staff can verify the correct type of application, submittal deadlines, and answer questions you have through the submittal process.

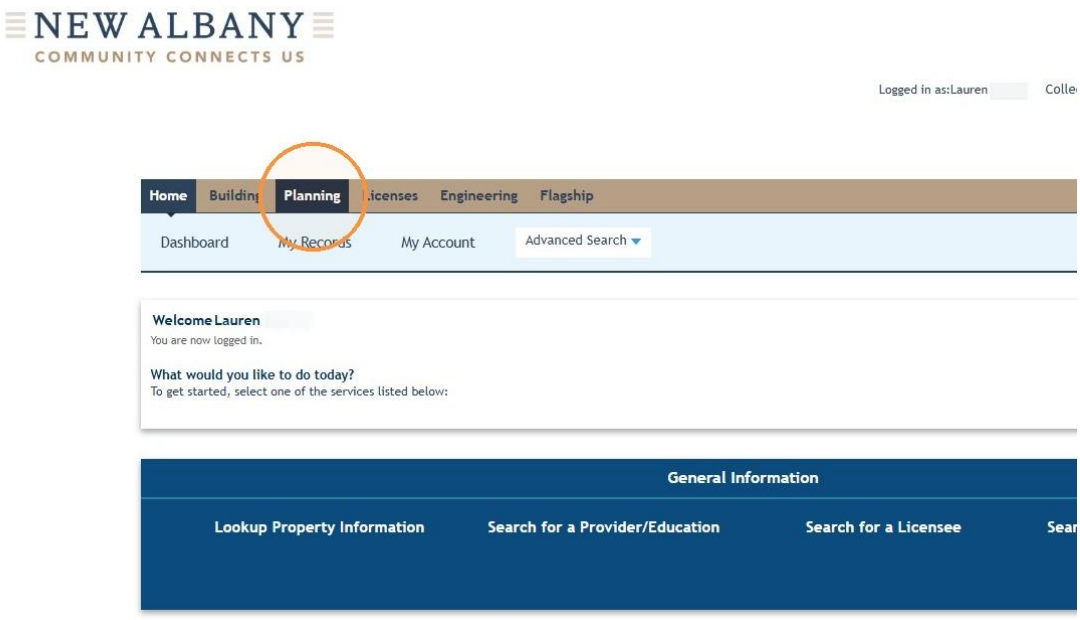
2. Navigate to https://aca-prod.accela.com/ALBANYOH/Welcome.aspx

3. Click "Sign In" OR "Create An Account"

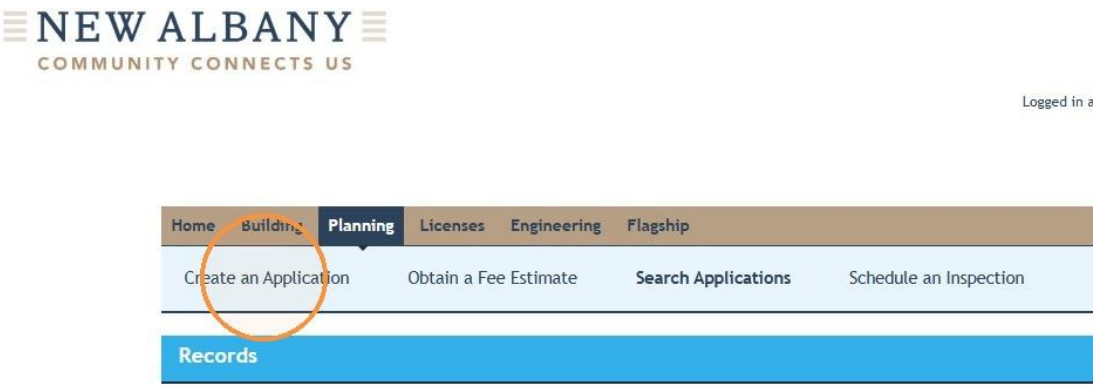


Create an Application

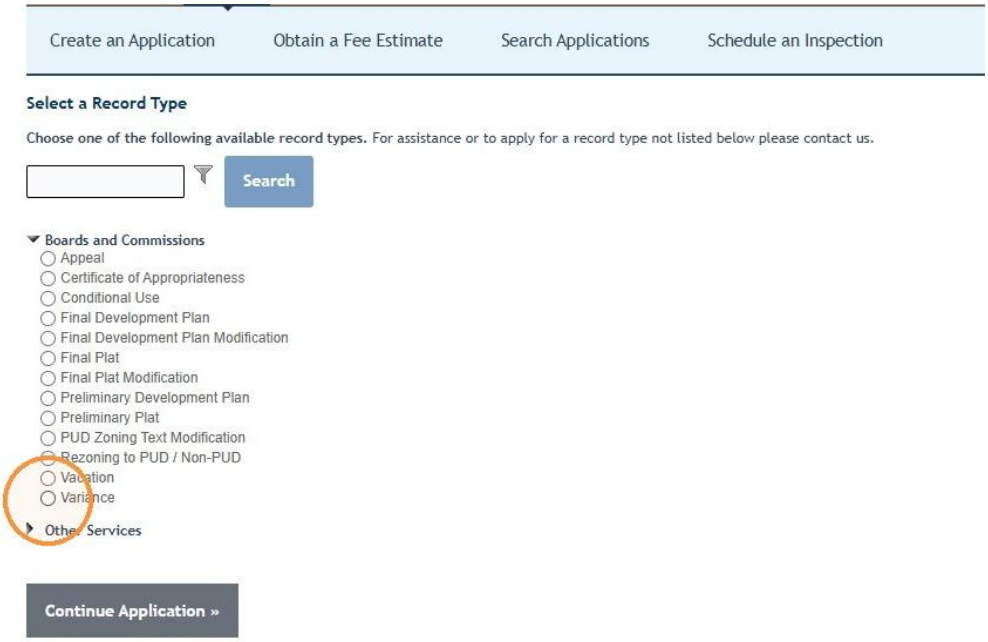
4. Click "Planning."



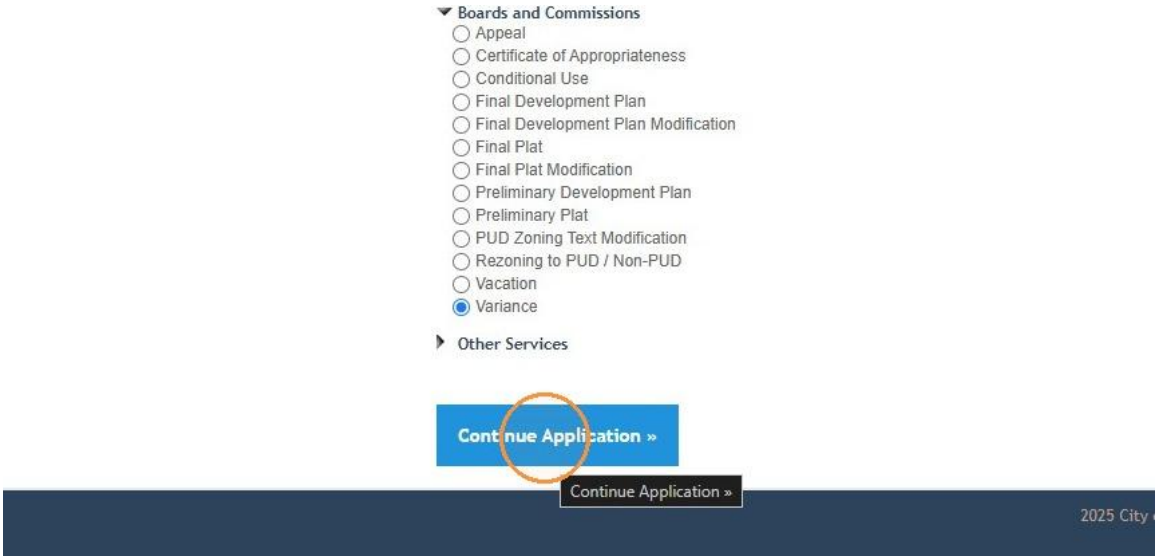
5. Click "Create an Application."



6. Search for the application you want or click the down arrow next to "Board and Commissions" or "Other Services." Select the application type. In this example, a variance will be selected.



7. Click "Continue Application."



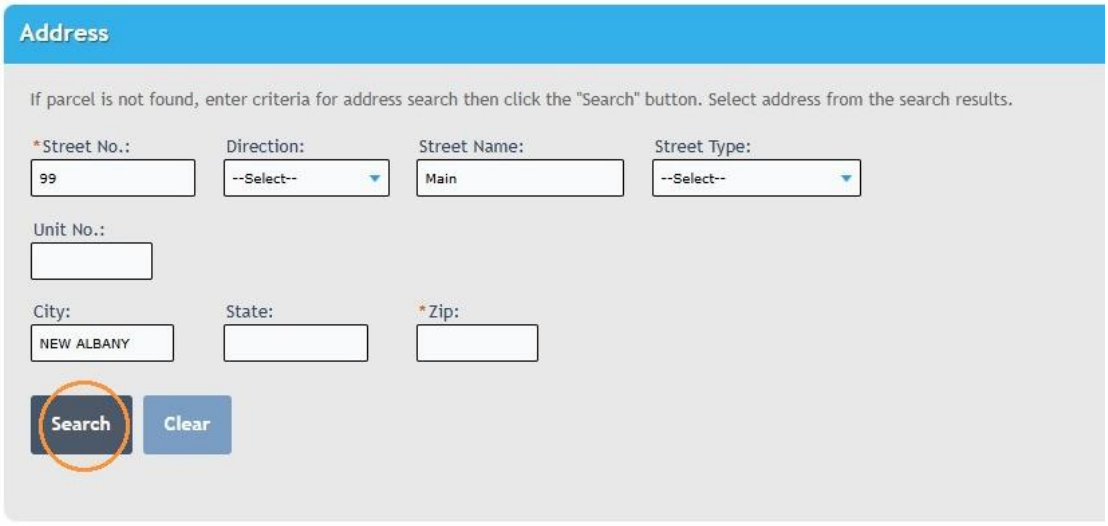
Create an Application: Location

8. At least one location must be chosen. You can search for a site in numerous ways:
    - Use the map to select a parcel. (Ensure pop-ups are on for the site.)
    - Enter a parcel ID and click Search.
    - Enter an address and click Search (**recommended**).
    - Enter a property owner name and click Search.

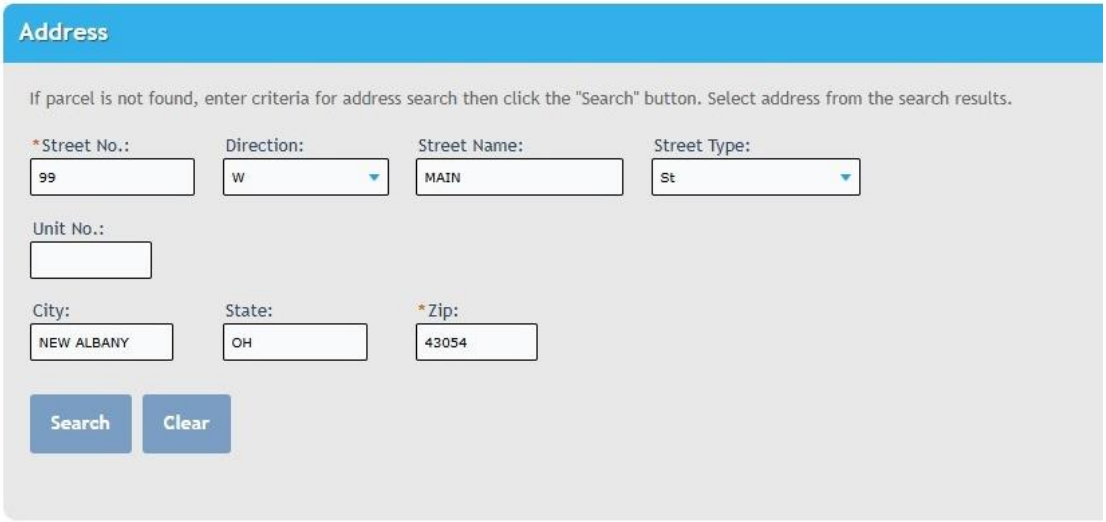
9. If using the "Address" function to select a property, scroll down to "Address."



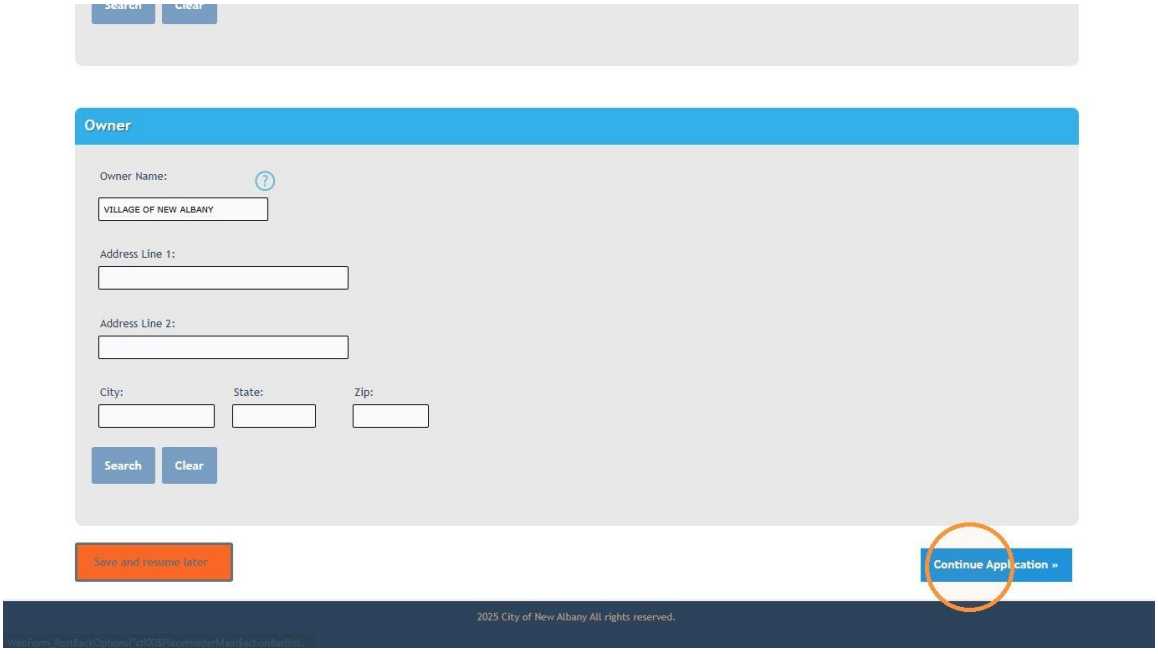
10. Type in at least a street number and click "Search." Select the property from the results.



11. After searching and selecting a result, the **parcel ID**, **address**, and **property owner** information will **auto-fill**.

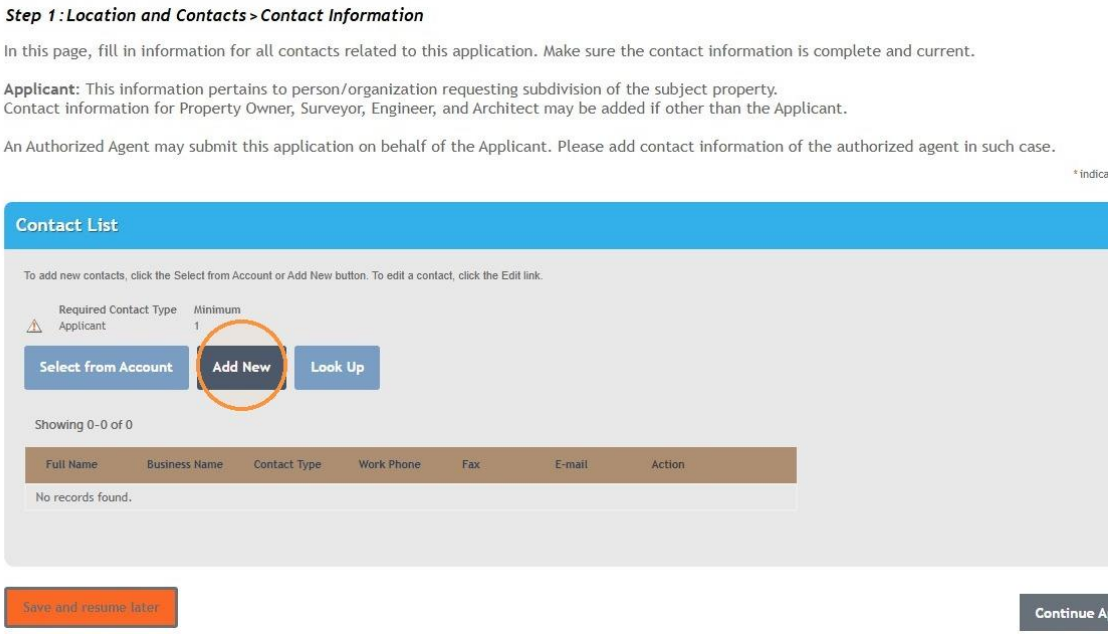


12. Review the information and click "Continue Application."

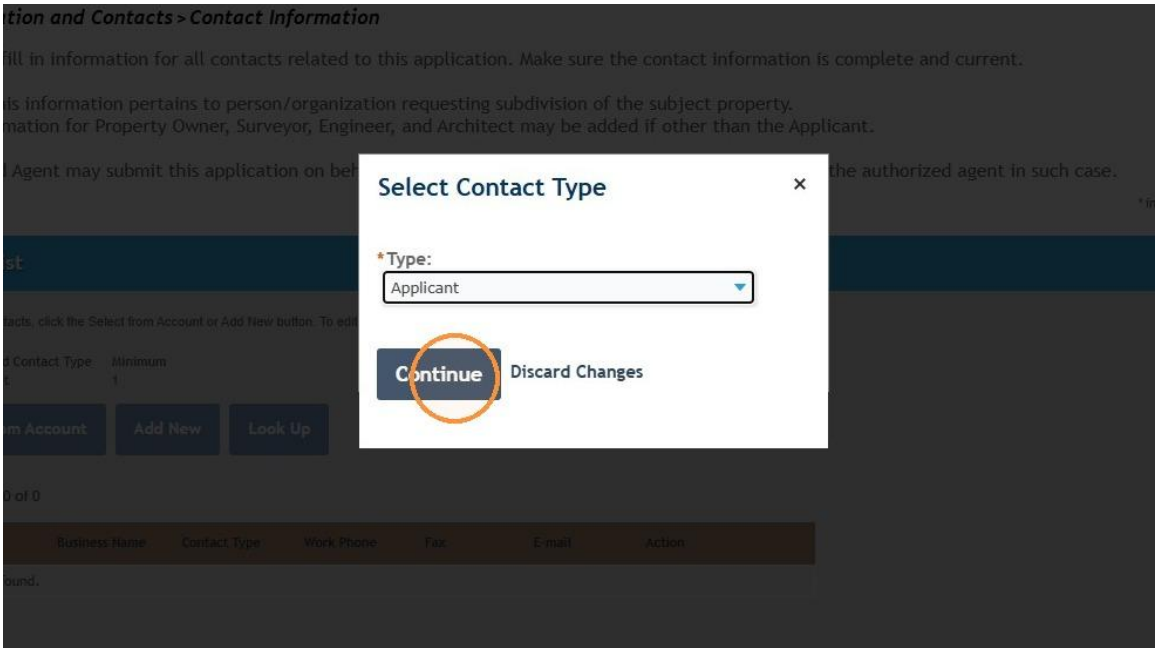


Create an Application: Contact Information

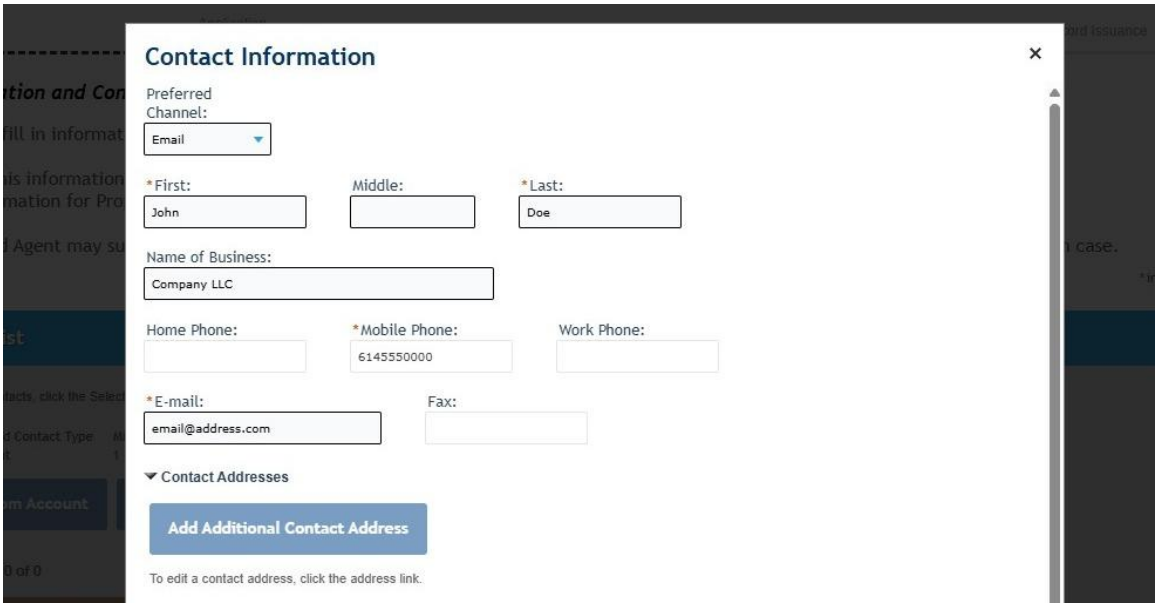
13. Add applicants, contractors, property owners, and more. At a minimum, **one applicant** must be entered. Click "Add New."



14. Open the drop-down menu and select the type of contact. At least one applicant must be included. Click "Continue."

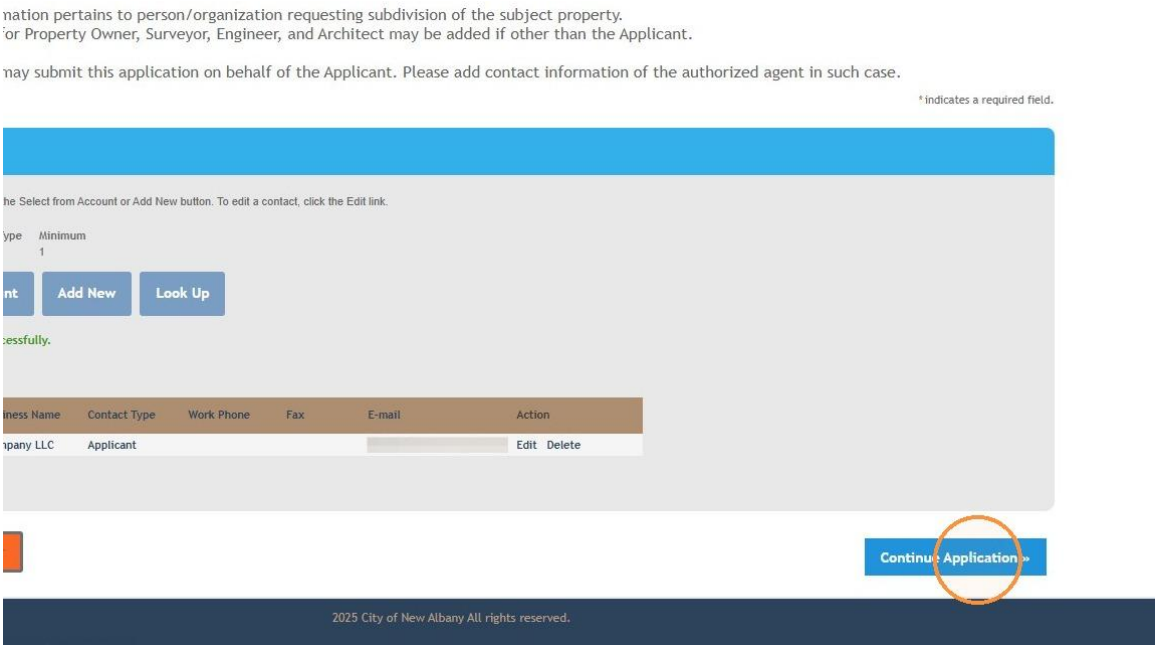


15. For the selected contact, enter at least a first and last name, phone number, and email address. When done, scroll down and click "Continue."



Notifications regarding updates to the application will be sent to the *applicant* email address (above).

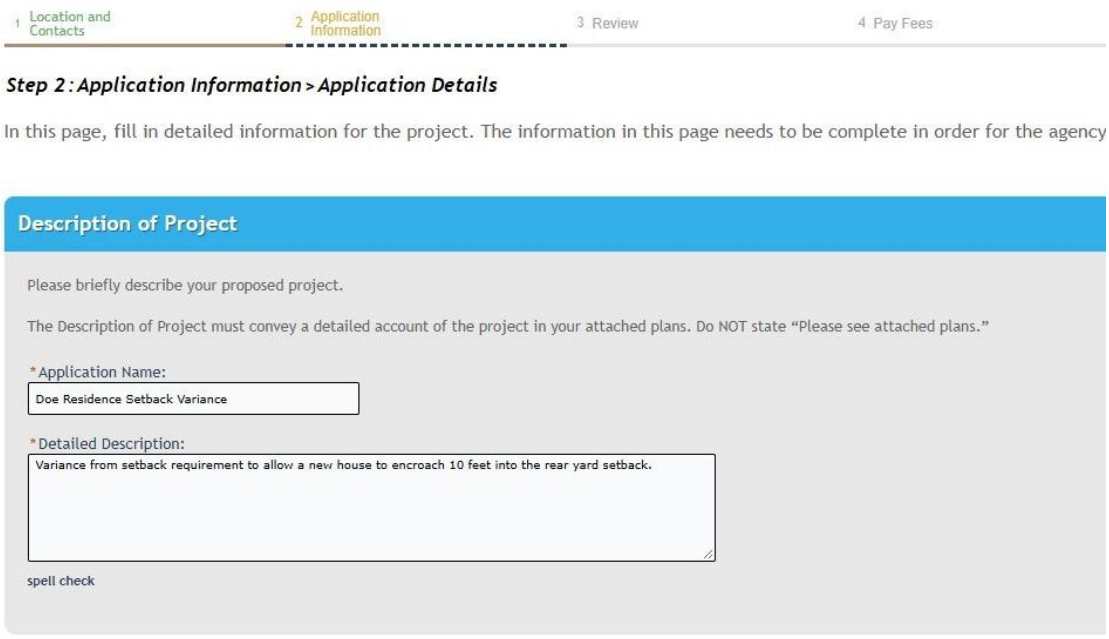
16. Add other contacts as needed. When done, click "Continue Application."



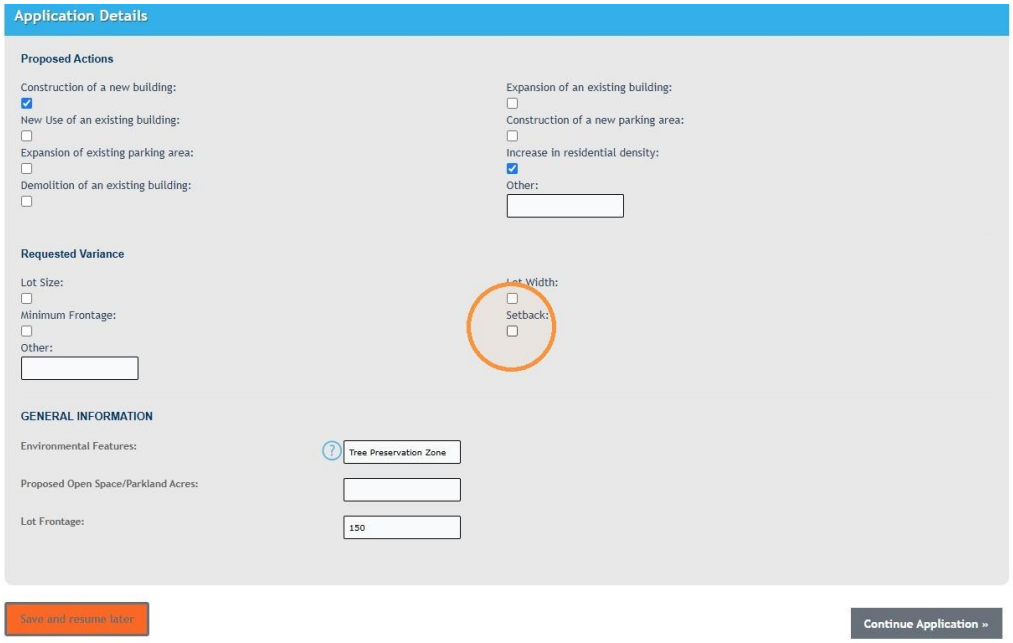
Create an Application: Application Details

Required fields will have an orange asterisk (*) next to the field title. Other fields are optional, but information should be included where possible.

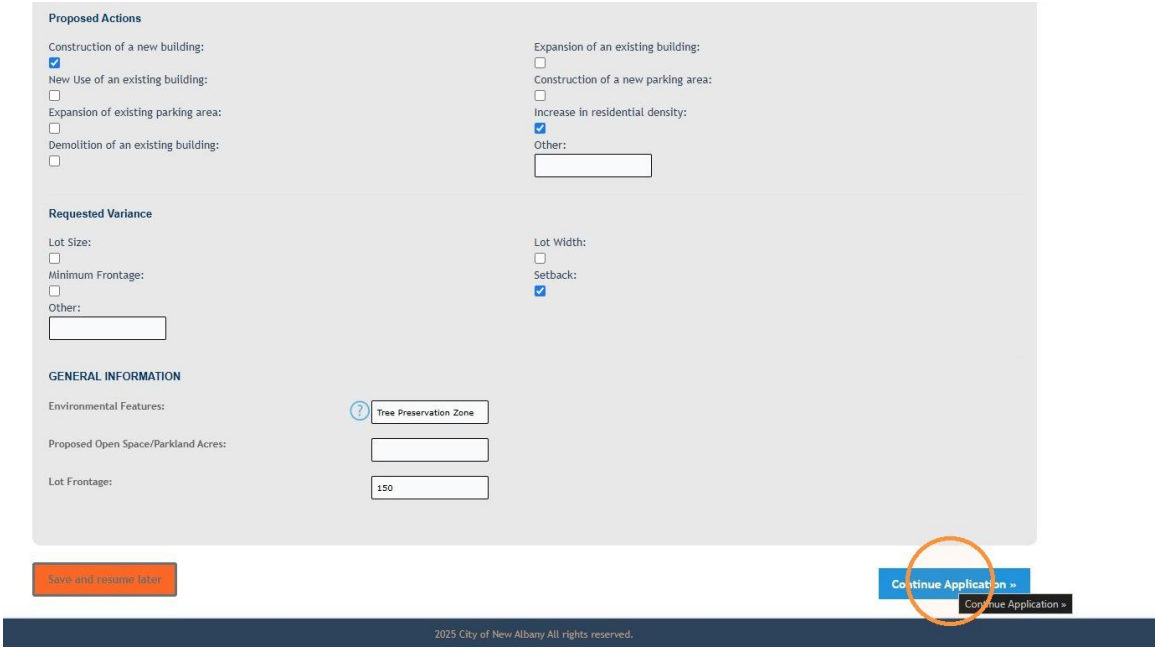
17. Description of Project: Create a name for your application that generally describes what is being proposed. Then, describe the request in more detail.



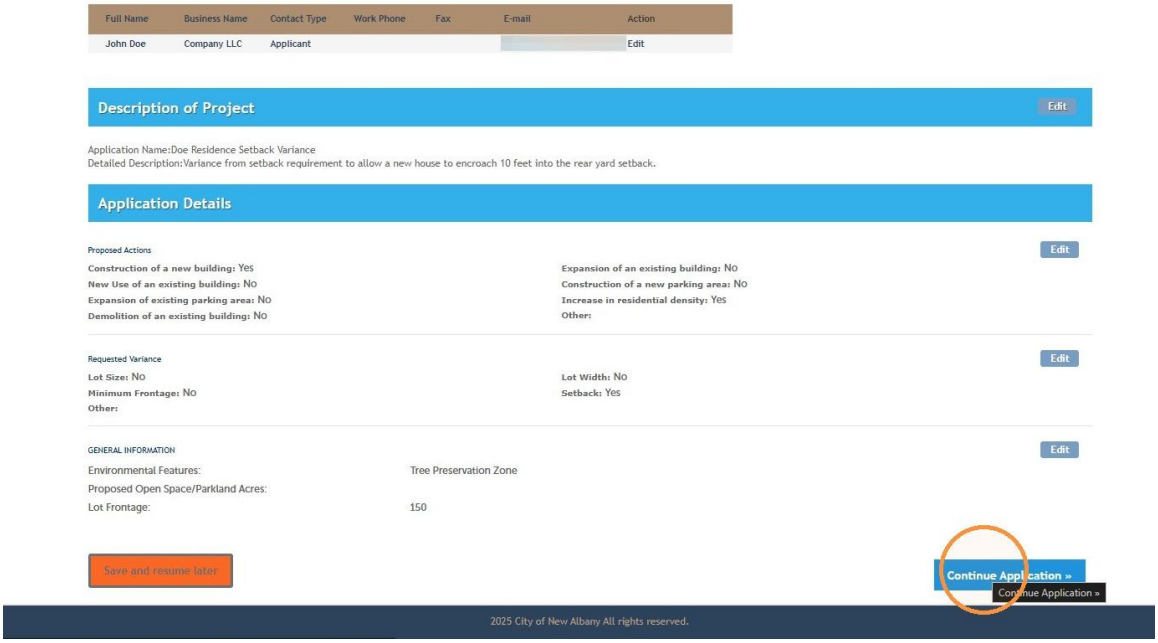
18. Application Details: **This section will vary between different planning application types**. Items with an orange asterisk (*) are required to be filled out/answered.



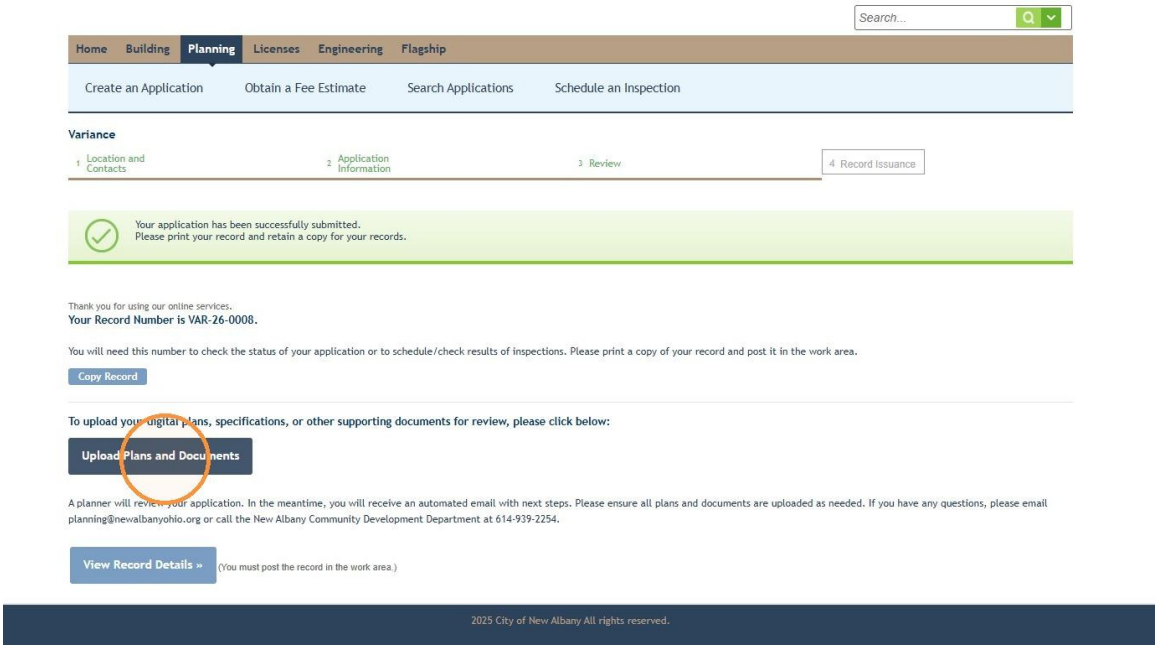
19. Once you have filled out all of the required fields (and any optional fields), **click "Continue Application."**
    An error message will pop up if a required field is not filled out.



20. A **review page** will open. Ensure all information appears accurate and filled out. Click "Continue Application" to continue.



21. After clicking on "Continue Application," the page will notify you that the application has been successfully submitted. **An application submittal is still required to be uploaded for most planning applications at this step**. Click "Upload Plans and Documents."

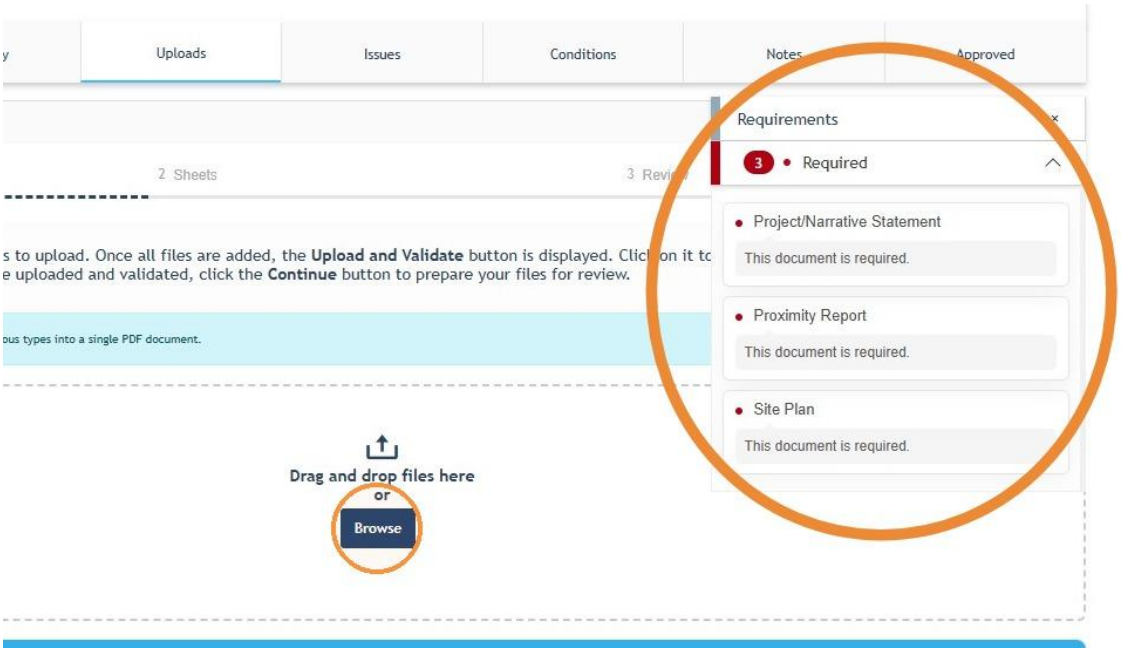


Uploading Files: Add Files

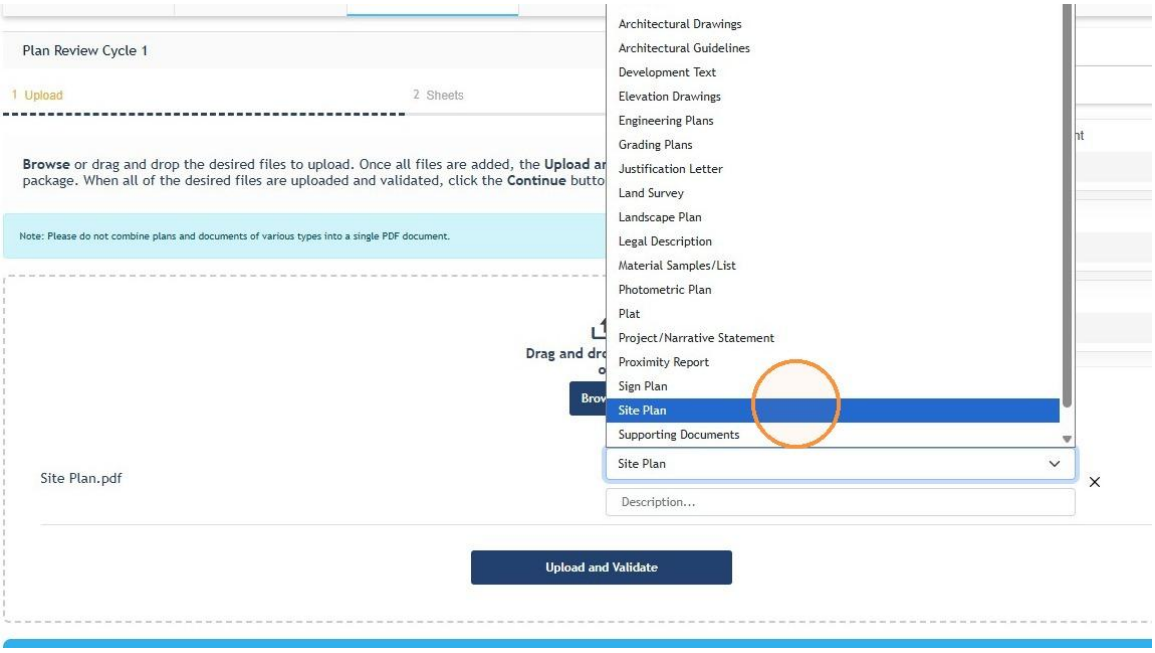
To navigate to the file upload portal from the home page, click on "Planning" OR "My Records" at the top of the page, find your application, and click "Upload Plans" under the "Action" column.

Plan sets will need to be uploaded as **one file** (e.g. all pages of an engineering plan set must be in one PDF), and different file types will need to be uploaded **individually** (e.g. the engineering plan PDF is separate from a narrative statement PDF or a site plan PDF). Files must be in **PDF format**.

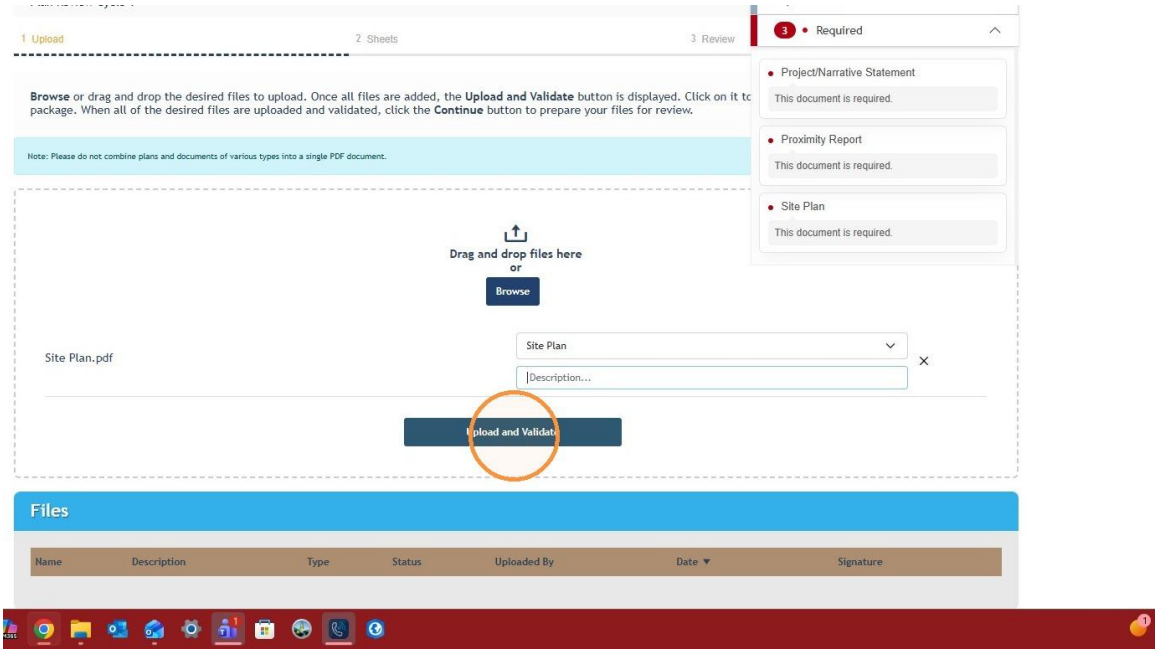
22. Each planning application type has its own **required files**. Open the required-document list to view. To upload a file, click "**Browse**."



23. Once you have opened your file, **select the type of file** you have uploaded. Add a description if needed.

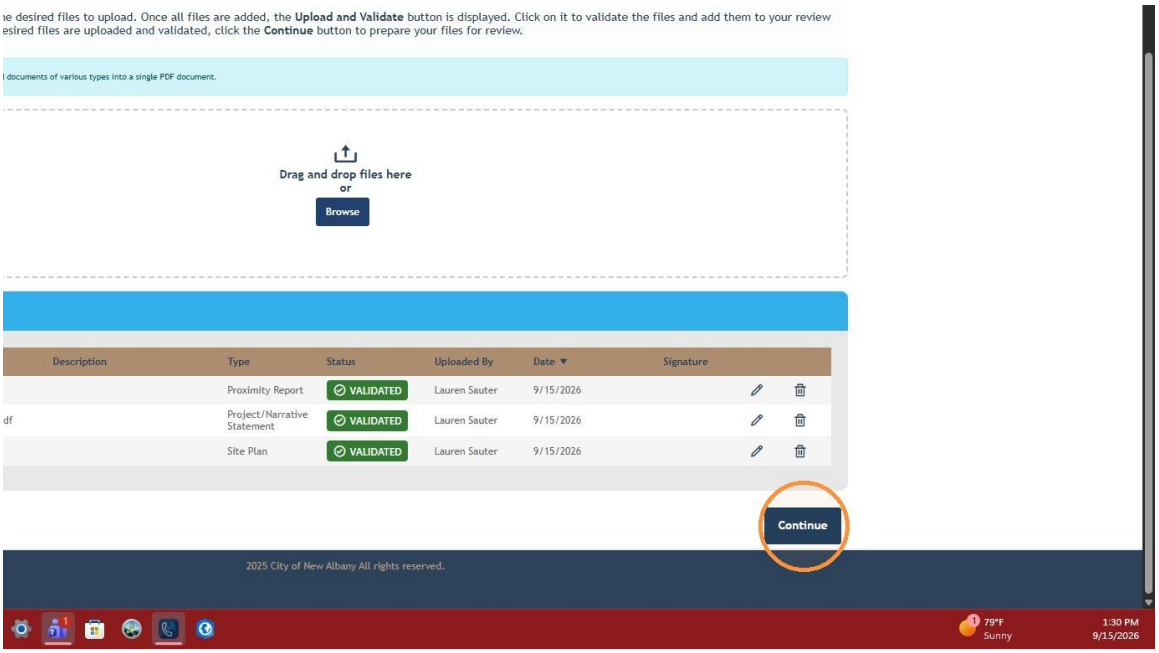


24. Click "Upload and Validate" for the file.



Validating the files ensures staff is able to securely and properly access and read the files. Make sure your document is in PDF format and not password-protected.

25. Continue selecting files and uploading them until all required (and optional) files have been uploaded and validated. Click "Continue."

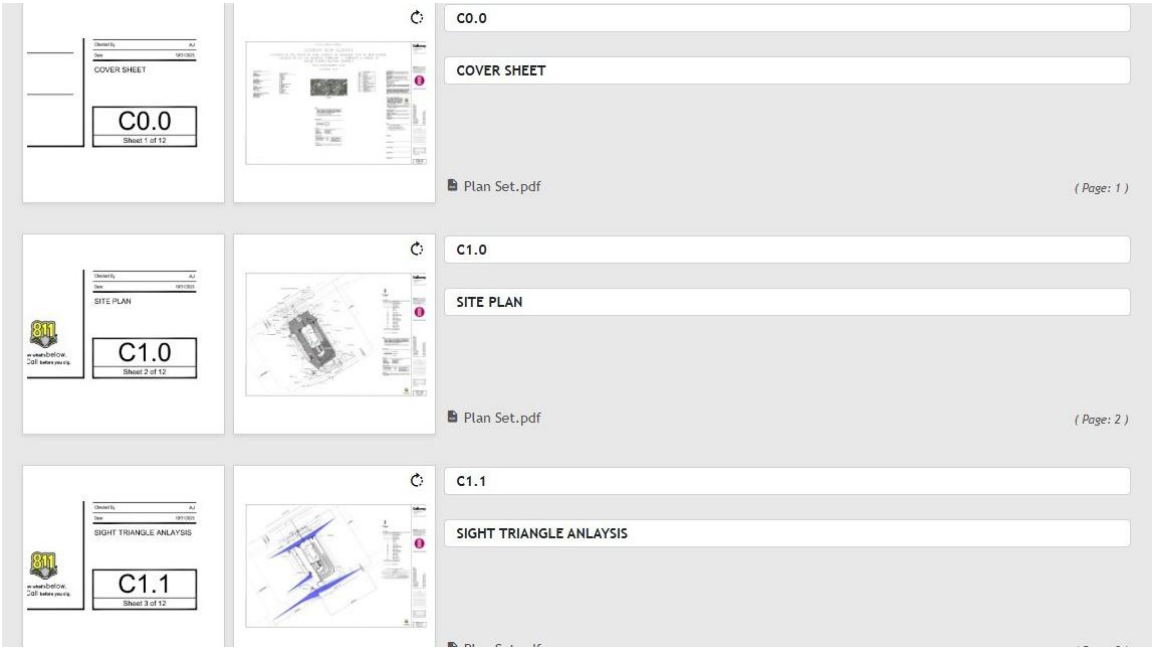


Tip! - You will receive an error message if any required files are not submitted. Ensure all files are separately uploaded. You can submit additional files that are not in the "required" list if you have additional information you would like to submit.

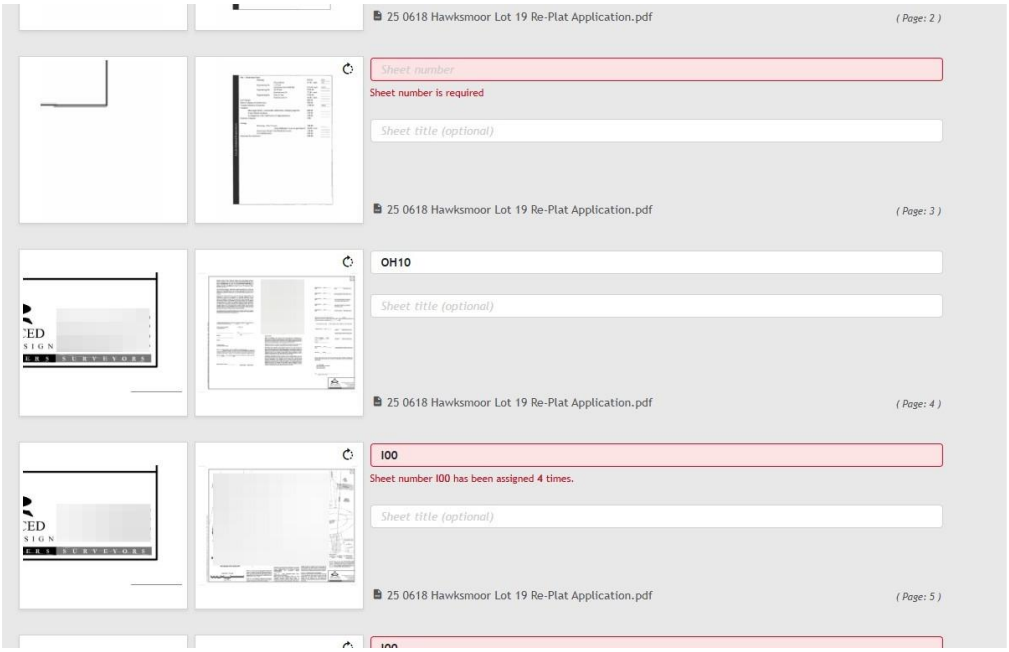
Uploading Files: Sheets

26. For engineering/architectural/similar **plans**, the program will automatically scan for **sheet numbers** and **sheet titles** and fill out the fields. If the program cannot find a sheet number/title or if there are none present, manually label sheet numbers.
    For resubmittals/revisions: Use consistent file names across resubmittals, as the program will automatically label the version number when file names are the same. Make sure the sheet numbers from the original submittal match the sheet numbers in the resubmittal; if adding a new page during resubmittal, insert the page in sequence (for example, for a new page between pages 12 and 13, name it "12A" or "12-1" so that page 13 still aligns with its original version).

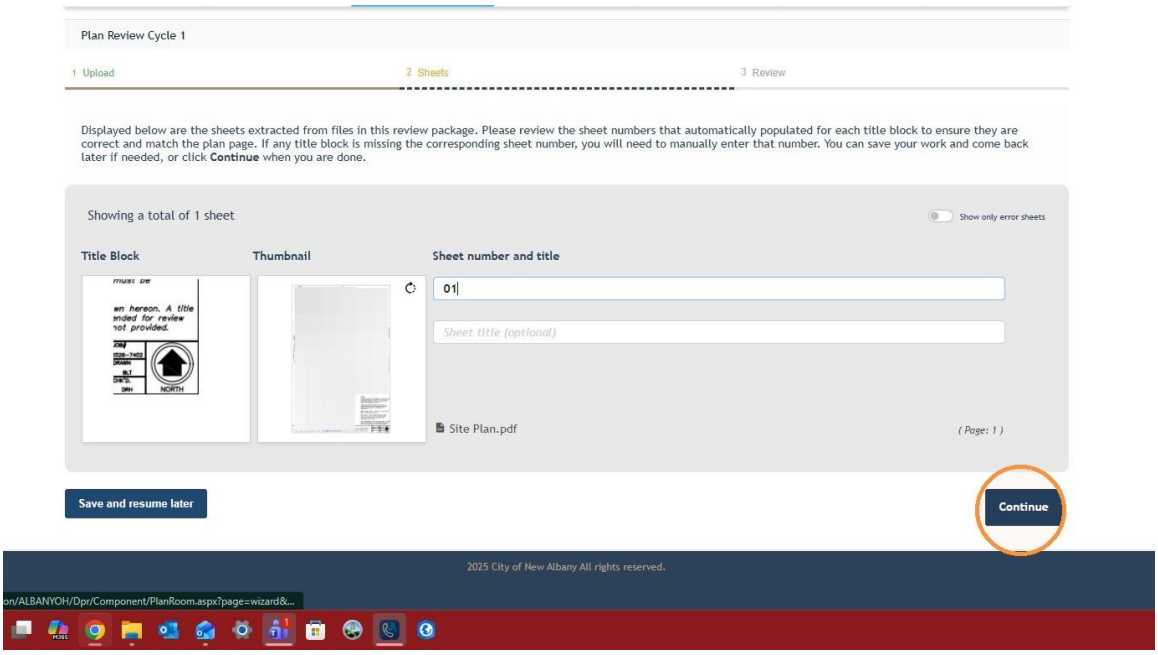
27. *Example 1*: These plans had a clear sheet number and title, and the fields were filled out automatically.



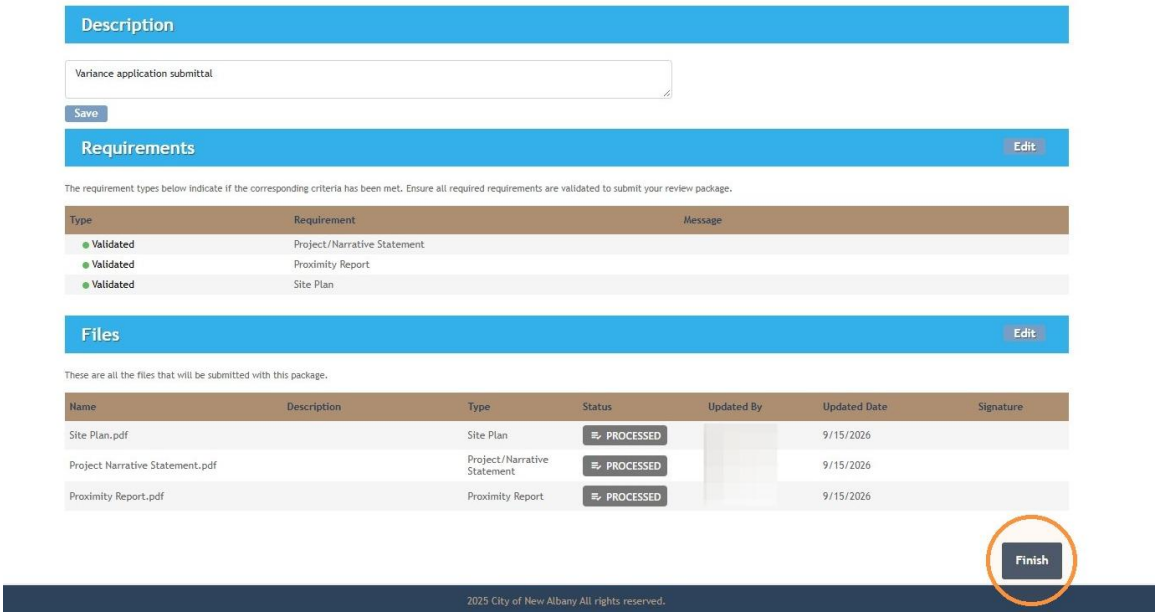
28. *Example 2*: For the first page shown here, the program was not able to find a sheet number OR title. Enter a number.
Example 3: For the third page shown here, the program found redundant page numbers, or it may have scanned something else. Renumber as you see fit; e.g., 100-1, 100-2, 100-3, or A01, B01, B02, or S1, S2, S3...



29. When done, click "Continue."



30. Provide a description of what is being submitted. Click "Finish."



What Next?

31. You can track the status of your application in the **My Records** section of the Citizens Access Portal.

32. The applicant will receive an email from **noreply@newalbanyohio.org**. Make sure to check your Junk Mail if you do not see anything.

    Planning staff will review the submittal for completeness and let you know if any additional materials or changes need to be submitted. If changes are needed, follow the "Uploading Files: Add Files" steps and ensure document titles are the same.

    For Boards and Commissions applications, a planner will prepare a staff report and agenda ahead of the public hearing. Someone familiar with the application should be present at the public hearing to answer questions from the Board/Commission. A Record of Action will be prepared following the hearing; if approved, a permit application may be submitted.

33. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to planning@newalbanyohio.org.