



PLANNING PERMIT APPLICATION SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Where Do I Start?

Contemplating a development project on your property? Before putting pen to paper, you should first review the feasibility of your project. Does the zoning allow for the type of development you are contemplating? Are there any environmental constraints present on the project site? What are the permitting and construction costs associated with the project being contemplated?

Doing your homework early on, before you formulate your project plans, will save you time and money in the long run. While many projects do not require planning approval, others do. For example, the majority of commercial projects require a Development Permit and most projects located in coastal communities, such as Aptos, La Selva Beach, Pleasure Point and Davenport require a Coastal Permit. Bear in mind that obtaining planning permit approval is typically only one step in the development process.

The Planning Department processes a variety of discretionary permit applications, such as Development Permits, Coastal Permits, Variances, and Subdivisions. This guide is geared towards informing prospective applicants of the Planning Department's permitting process; however additional permits and approvals will likely be required from other County departments and outside agencies. As the property owner, it is important that you familiarize yourself with the fees and permitting requirements of all the relevant reviewing agencies. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to ensure that all the applicable approvals and permits are obtained for your project.

Planning Permit Process and Guidance

Parcel Research

Typically, one of the first steps in developing project plans is determining what the subject property is zoned. The County's Zoning Maps can be found on the link titled *GIS* on the Planning Department's web site: <http://www.sccoplanning.com/>. Instructions to locate the Zoning Maps can also be found on the Planning Department's home page.

Once you have determined what the zoning of the subject property is, you should refer to the applicable Site Development Standards, including setbacks, height, floor area ratio, etc., which are also located on the Planning Department's home page. The development standards should be viewed as guidance in refining your project design. Additional standards may apply.

In addition to zoning research, it is important to be aware of the permit history associated with the project site. Evaluation of the permit history is especially important if the project site is already developed, as the prior permits may place limitations on future development. For example, in situations where a property was initially developed as part of a Planned Unit Development, or the use of the property is restricted by an existing Master Plan or Use Permit.

The permit history can be viewed on the Planning Department's web site under the link titled *Parcel Information Report*. Please note that permits issued prior to 1985 may not be available online. Older permits, as well as any paper permits on file with the department, can be viewed in person at the Records Room (adjacent to the Zoning Counter, 701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor) between the hours of 8 AM and 11:30 AM and 1 PM until 3:30 PM, Monday through Thursday (no appointment necessary).

Next Steps

Once you have refined the scope of your project and completed your on-line research, it is recommended that you visit the Zoning Counter and meet with a planner. At the Zoning Counter, planners are equipped to provide general zoning information, address questions related to the permit application submittal and review processes, identify applicable documents necessary to apply for a permit (in accordance with the County's List of Required Information), and provide you with a fee estimate. In addition, the counter planner may be able to identify specific issues that may arise in processing your application; however, this is not the primary role of the Counter planner. For more in-depth analysis of your potential project, it is recommended that you apply for a Project Consultation (see Project Consultation section below).

Planning staff are available Monday through Thursday (excluding holidays) between 8 AM and 11:30 AM and 1 PM until 3:30 PM (walk-in only – no appointment needed).

Application Forms and Fees

Ready to submit your application? All application submittals require the following:

- A completed Application Packet (attached);
- all required materials listed in the department's List of Required Information, or LORI, as identified by the counter planner (the LORI is available at the Zoning Counter or online at: <http://www.sccoplanning.com/>);
- a Fee Estimate (for Level V projects – see below);
- and a check in the amount of all applicable permit and agency review fees.

A note about fees

Although the Zoning Counter planner will provide you with a Fee Estimate prior to application submittal, we recommend that you come in to apply with a blank check, as the final fee calculation will occur at the time of application intake.

Most application types are processed on an at-cost basis, by the hour. As your application is processed, planning staff will record the amount of time spent on your application. The cost associated with covering staff's time would then be subtracted from your at-cost account. A monthly statement itemizing staff's time, and the charges made to your at-cost account, will be mailed to you.

In addition to the at-cost deposit fee, staff will also collect flat (non-refundable) fees to cover other application related costs, such as a records management fee and an application intake fee. Review fees established by other reviewing departments or agencies, such as the Department of Public Works, Environmental Planning, the Fire District, etcetera, will also be collected at the time of application intake, as applicable.

Once you have compiled the above referenced materials, please refer to the attached Application Flow Chart to see if your project will be processed as a Level V permit or above. If so, an intake appointment is required. Please call (831) 454-3252 to schedule an appointment. All appointments are scheduled for 2 PM, Monday through Thursday. Typically, appointments are scheduled two or more weeks out. If your project is classified as a Level I through IV permit, you may submit your application any time during the Zoning Counter hours of operation.

Please note, the processing time associated with your application is directly related to the how complete and thorough your application is at the time of submittal.

What if I Need Help?

At times, complex development projects warrant hiring a project manager, such as a consulting planner, architect, or designer. Project managers typically serve as the project applicant and assist property owners in researching and applying the policies and regulations administered by the various departments and agencies that may be involved with your project. In addition, project managers typically assist in assembling the required application materials, in addition to representing the property owner at all required public hearings.

Project Review Consultations

Prior to application submittal, in-depth analysis by Planning Department staff is oftentimes useful, especially for larger or more complex projects. In such circumstances, planning staff are available on an at-cost basis via the Project Review Consultation process.

You may apply for a Project Review Consultation at the Zoning Counter any time during Zoning Counter hours. Typically, an at-cost deposit of \$1,000.00 is requested at the time of submittal; however, for smaller projects a lesser amount may be suitable. To apply for a Consultation, you should be prepared to submit a preliminary plan set, program statement, and the deposit fee. Please visit the Zoning Counter, or email the department at planning.zoninginfo@santacruzcounty.us for more information about the Project Review Consultation process and at-cost consultation fees.

The Planning Permit Process

Permit Application Review

Depending on the application type, and the level of review required, the permit process varies. In general, the application review process includes the following steps: Upon application submittal, the project is assigned to a planner for processing. In addition, the application is routed to all other departments and agencies tasked with evaluating one or more aspects of the project. For example, if a project includes roadway and/or drainage improvements, the project would be routed to the Department of Public Works.

Once assigned and routed, staff will analyze your project for completeness and decide whether the plans and materials are consistent with the guidelines set forth in the County's List of Required Information (LORI), as well as whether additional information, reports, or studies are necessary to evaluate the project. Staff will also begin to evaluate your project for conformance with the applicable County policies, guidelines, and regulations. In addition, the project planner will likely conduct a site visit within a few weeks of the project assignment.

Approximately 30 days from the date of application submittal, the project planner will make a completeness determination. The project applicant, as well as the property owner, will be informed of staff's completeness determination in writing. In the event the application is deemed incomplete, an itemized list of the outstanding required information will be provided.

You will have 30 days to resubmit all the outstanding items before your application will expire. If you would like additional time to submit the items, you may request an extension of time before your application expires. Generally, time extensions are granted for a period of up to three months.

Noticing

Once your project has been deemed complete, for Level IV projects and above, a public notice, including the project description, will be mailed to neighboring property owners. Typically, property owners within 300 feet of the project site are notified; however, in some cases a 600 foot radius or more is required. For

Level III projects and below, mailed notices are generally not required. In addition, most discretionary projects require on-site noticing. For Level II, III and IV projects, the on-site notice is generated by planning staff and mailed to the project applicant for posting. For Level V, VI and VII projects, the on-site notice must be fabricated and installed in accordance with the County's Guidelines for Neighborhood Notification of Proposed Development. All requisite on-site noticing is required to be installed on the project site prior to an application being deemed complete. *Additional information about the on-site noticing requirement, as well as the County's Guidelines for Neighborhood Notification of Proposed Development can be obtained at the Zoning Counter, or online on the Planning Department's web page at: <http://www.sccoplanning.com/>) under the Handouts and Forms tab, Zoning and Development, Neighbor Notification of Proposed Development.

Analysis and Evaluation

In addition to fulfilling the noticing requirements, the project planner will move forward with analyzing your project for compliance with the applicable Federal, State, and local policies, regulations, and guidelines that apply, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Most projects are exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the CEQA guidelines; however, some projects require in-depth environmental review in the form of an Initial Study in order to determine whether or not the project would result in environmental impacts. If an Initial Study is required, you will be notified of this by the project planner. Additional fees are required for processing an Initial Study.

In the event your project is determined to be exempt from further review under CEQA, the project planner will move forward with preparation of the staff report, findings, and conditions of approval. Discretionary projects, such as Development Permits, Variances, and Coastal Permits, are evaluated for consistency with various policies, regulations, and guidelines published by the County, as well as specific "findings" that apply to each permit type. For administrative approvals, the project planner will issue their decision in the form of a staff report, findings and conditions of approval. Administrative decisions are typically issued approximately three months after deeming an application complete. Discretionary permits can be appealed within 14 days of the decision.

For projects that require a public hearing before the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors, the staff report, findings, CEQA recommendation, and conditions of approval are submitted to the applicable decision maker/s for review and approval. Members of the public are welcome to attend public hearings and address the decision maker/s. Further, discretionary decisions made on your application, by either the Deputy Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission, can be appealed, either by you, or any member of the public within 14 days of the decision.



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
 (831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131

Discretionary Permit Levels of Review

Discretionary Permit Levels	Site visit done in conjunction with project review	Notification of Neighbors sent to closest 10 property owners (minimum), all property owners within 300 feet, and residents within 100 feet for <u>most</u> applications*	Public Hearing	Approving Body
LEVEL 1 PERMIT (e.g. some minor change of use permits)	As needed	No	No	Planning Director or Designee
LEVEL 2 PERMIT (e.g. significant tree removal permits)	Yes	No	No	Planning Director or Designee
LEVEL 3 PERMIT (e.g. minor variation permits, lot line adjustments, riparian exceptions)	Yes	No	No	Planning Director or Designee
LEVEL 4 PERMIT (e.g. new vacation rental permits, small commercial development permits, minor exception permits, time extensions)	Yes	Yes, notice of pending action sent out	Usually no. In rare cases a public hearing may be scheduled if substantial issues are raised.	Planning Director or Designee
LEVEL 5 PERMIT (e.g. coastal permits, variances, home occupation permits, commercial development permits)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Zoning Administrator
LEVEL 6 PERMIT (e.g. land divisions up to 19 lots, condo/townhouse projects up to 19 units, very large commercial development permits)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planning Commission
LEVEL 7 PERMIT (e.g. General Plan amendments, land divisions with over 20 lots, rezonings)	Yes (except rezonings to Timber Production)	Yes	Yes	Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors

*Applications that must be processed at Levels VI and VII may need a Development Review Group (DRG) meeting *prior to* the submittal of your project application. Please consult with a planner at the Zoning Counter or email Planning staff at planning.zoninginfo@santacruzcounty.us for more information.



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Applicant's Rights Resolution Establishing County Policies for Permit Processing

WHEREAS, the people of the County of Santa Cruz Adopted by vote in 1978, a comprehensive growth management and environmental protection system; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has implemented such a growth management system through a variety of ordinances, regulations, and policies; and

WHEREAS, the concepts of growth management and environmental protection continue to be critically important for and broadly supported by our community; and

WHEREAS, it is equally important that the permit processing system which, in part, implements growth management and environmental protection policies, be as broadly supported as the policies themselves; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors has undertaken an aggressive program of reforming the permit processing system of the Santa Cruz County Planning Department; and

WHEREAS, the permit processing reform effort has resulted in measurable improvements in the system; and

WHEREAS, more progress needs to be made concerning permit processing reform, and the Board of Supervisors is taking actions to achieve such progress; and

WHEREAS, an essential element of a meaningful permit processing reform effort is for the County to provide clear and helpful information to applicants for permits; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the people of the County of Santa Cruz to now set forth policies for the processing of permit applications by the County of Santa Cruz in a manner which will have the effect of upholding all of the policies of growth management and environmental protection, while, at the same time establishing a reliable set of permit processing guidelines;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz that the following policies are hereby adopted for the processing of permit applications by the County of Santa Cruz:

1. An applicant is to be provided with complete information concerning the process which will be followed regarding the application, including specific steps in the process and estimated time frames for each step;

2. An applicant is to receive at the earliest possible time all of the elements required by the County of Santa Cruz which would constitute a complete application;
3. An applicant is to be provided with clear and specific criteria which will be used by the County of Santa Cruz in making decisions pertaining to the application;
4. An applicant is to be provided with information concerning any and all appeals processes available concerning decisions made by the County of Santa Cruz which relate to the application;
5. An applicant is to be entitled to request and be provided with a "single point of contact" for processing the application;
6. An applicant is to be provided, at the earliest possible time, with notice regarding any delays in processing the application beyond the time frames established by the County of Santa Cruz for processing the permit.

Accessibility Announcement

The County of Santa Cruz Planning Department does not discriminate on the basis of a disability, and no person shall, by reason of a disability, be denied the benefits of its services, programs or activities. The Planning Department is located in an accessible facility. If you wish to participate in any Planning program or activity, or wish to receive any Planning service, and you require special assistance, please contact us at least 5 days in advance in order to make arrangements at 831-454-3137.



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

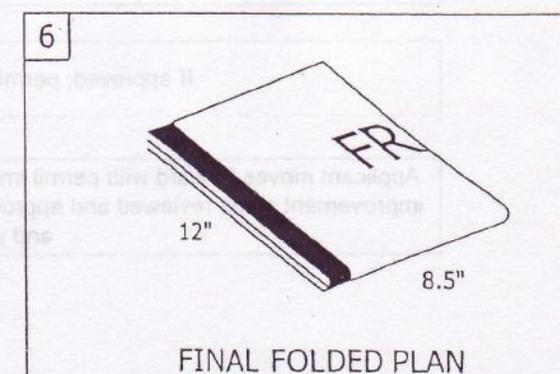
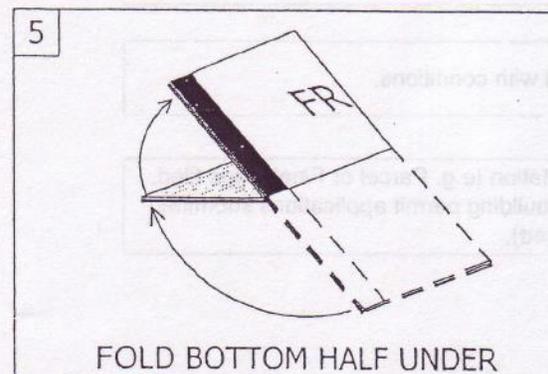
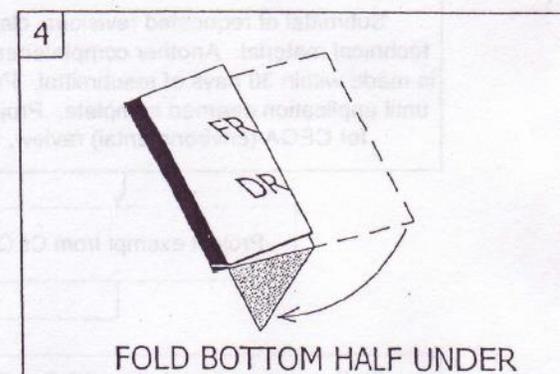
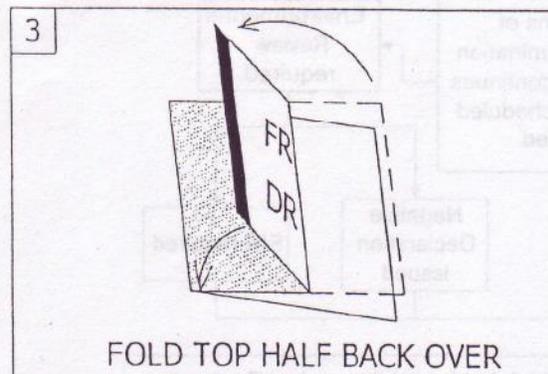
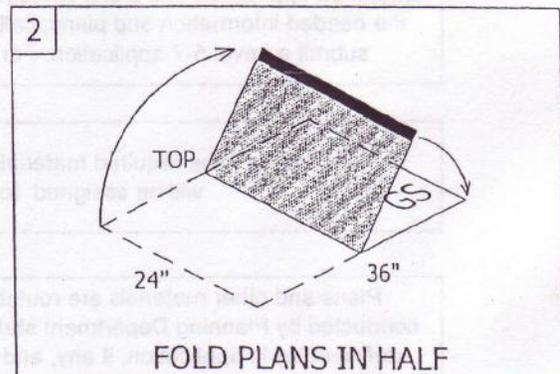
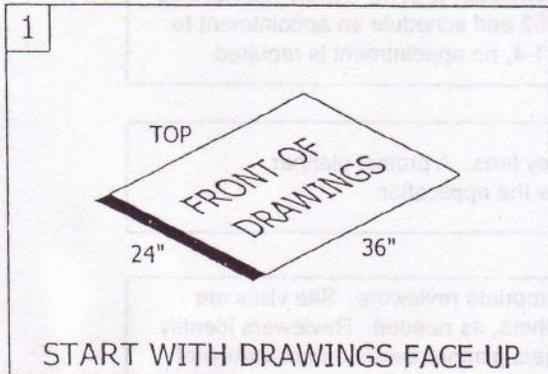
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How to Fold Plans

THIS FORMAT TO BE USED FOR "D" SIZED (24" X 36") SHEETS



FOR OTHER SIZED SHEETS (18" X 24"), PLEASE TALK WITH A BUILDING PERMIT TECH