

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

THE PERMIT PLACE

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DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

Located in the *Mendocino County Administration Center*, the Mendocino County Planning and Building Services Department encompasses the Planning, Building, Code Enforcement, Vehicle Abatement and Cartographic Divisions. A satellite office performing coastal planning, building and code enforcement functions is located in Fort Bragg.

Planning and Building Services Department Offices:

Ukiah Office: 501 Low Gap Road, Room 1440, Ukiah, CA 95482
Planning: (707) 463-4281 Building: (707) 463-4283
FAX: (707) 463-5709 E-Mail: pbs@co.mendocino.ca.us
INTERNET: www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
(Permits are not issued after 4:30 pm)

Coast Office: 790 S. Franklin Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437
(707) 964-5379 FAX: (707) 961-2427
INTERNET: www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planningfb

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 am to 12:00 noon; 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
(Permits are not issued after 4:30 pm)

MISSION STATEMENT

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT. To effectively manage existing and future development by facilitating the availability of adequate services and facilities, advocating the wise use of our natural resources, promoting an awareness and consideration of cultural resources, and facilitating the protection and enhancement of the quality of life in Mendocino County. While recognizing it is not always possible to reconcile the often-diverse interests of our clients (private applicants, interested citizens, general public, decision-makers, other agencies) we will strive to:

1. Provide precise, up-to-date and innovative advice and technical expertise.
2. Be “problem solvers” seeking solutions to issues within the framework of the regulations.
3. Treat all members of the public, applicants, decision-makers and co-workers in a courteous, respectful and professional manner.
4. Improve and maintain effectiveness and efficiency by forgoing working relationships within, and external to the County organizations.
5. Develop and maintain a work environment that strives for excellence and exemplary customer service through teamwork, continuous training, career advancement, innovation, and a culture that encourages creative change.

DEPARTMENT SERVICES. The Planning and Building Services Department's primary responsibilities are to:

1. Administer, implement and enforce state and local building construction regulations in the unincorporated area of the County and the cities of Fort Bragg and Point Arena;
2. Administer, implement and enforce state and local land use planning and zoning laws;
3. Prepare, revise, update, implement and administer the County General Plan, Local Coastal Program and Airport Land Use Plans.
4. Coordinate the abatement of abandoned vehicles in the unincorporated area of the County and the Cities of Willits, Fort Bragg and Point Arena.
5. Coordinate preparation and dissemination of mapping and population information.

State and local construction regulations include the Uniform California Building Code, Plumbing Code, Mechanical Code, Fire Code, Housing Code, Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings, Swimming Pool Code, National Electric Code, State Historic Building Code, Regulations for Limited Density Rural Dwellings, (Class K), the California Administrative Code Titles 24 and 25, and sections of the California Health and Safety Code including access requirements for the physically disabled. Typically, the Department will review or plan check, then inspect structures during the course of construction. Planning and Building Services is responsible for the administration of these construction regulations in the unincorporated area of the County as well as the Cities of Fort Bragg and Point Arena.

Under State and local planning law, the Department is responsible for preparing, updating and implementing the County General Plan and Local Coastal Program, including the Mendocino Town Plan, Gualala Town Plan, Comprehensive Airport Land Use Plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinance (consistent with the State Subdivision Map Act) surface mining ordinance and the California Environmental Quality Act. In administering these codes and regulations, the Department processes all required applications (i.e., General Plan amendment, rezoning, agricultural preserve, subdivision, use permit, coastal development permit, variance, certificate of compliance, boundary line adjustment, etc.) and provides staff support to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Mendocino Historical Review Board, Board of Building and Housing Appeals, Archaeological Commission, Airport Land Use Commission and Subdivision Committee.

Beginning in April 2006, a “Planning Team” has been established as a special assignment within the County Executive Office to (1) update the General Plan, (2) complete the Ukiah Valley Area Plan, (3) implement the certified Housing Element, (4) update the Local Coastal Plan and (5) update the Mendocino Town Plan.

WHERE TO GO FOR PLANNING PERMITS AND SERVICES

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

Permits and services may be obtained at the Ukiah or Coast office as indicated below. Application forms are available at both offices. Some documents are available on the internet at <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning>.

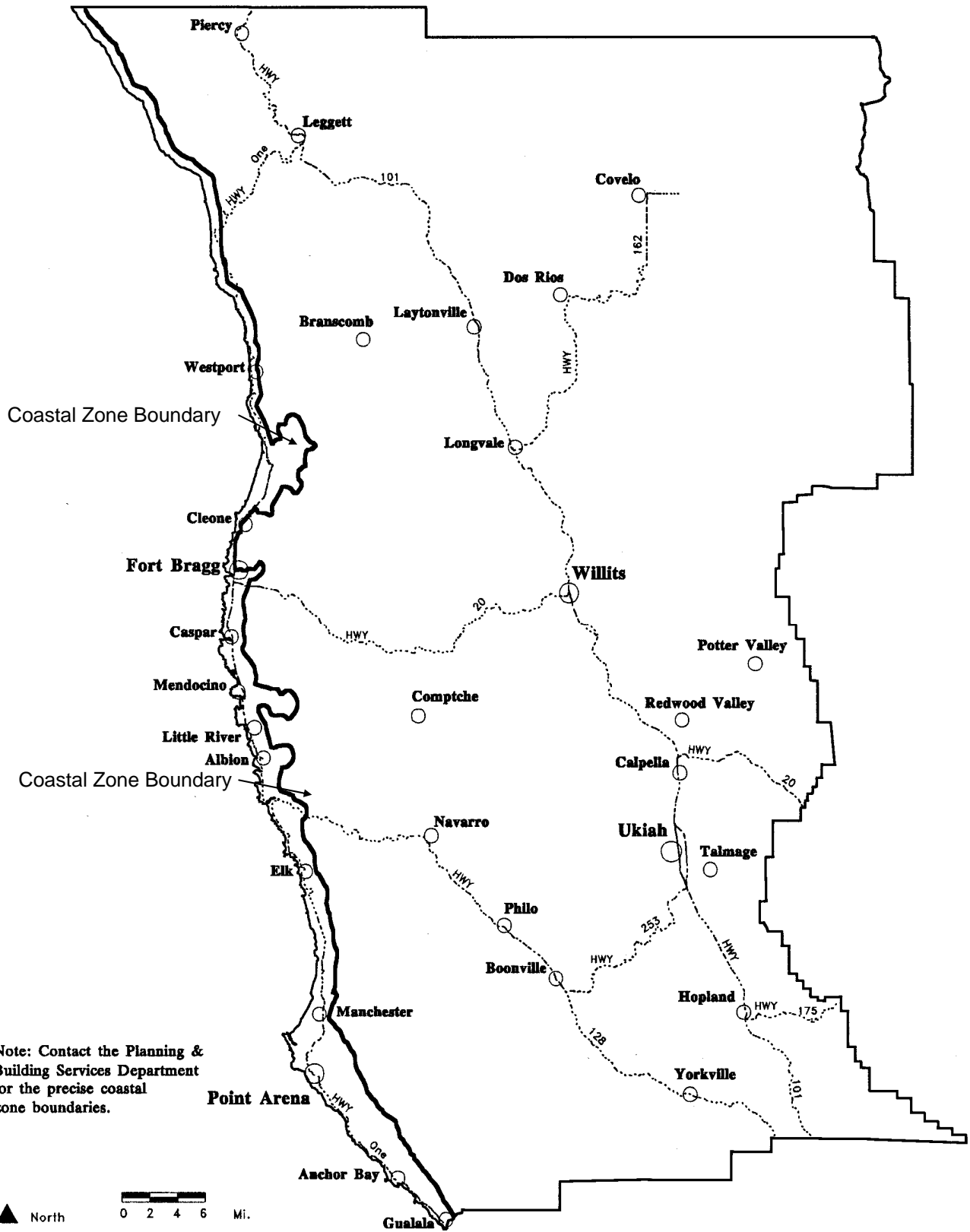
	Ukiah Office	Coast Office	Other Location
Services and Information			
Addresses	X		
Index of Public and Private Roads	X		
Private Road Naming	X		
Census Information	X		
Code Enforcement	X	X	
Preapplication Conferences	Applications processed in Ukiah	Applications processed at Coast	
Property Zoning Information	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning Zoning Lookup Utility
Selected Documents			
County General Plan	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Coastal Land Use Plan	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
General Plan Land Use Maps	X	Review only	
Coastal Land Use Plan Maps	X	Review only	
Zoning Ordinance-Inland (Text)	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Zoning Ordinance-Inland (Maps)*	X		
Zoning Ordinance-Coastal (Text)	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Zoning Ordinance-Town of Mendocino	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Zoning Ordinance-Coastal (Maps)	X	Review only	
Brooktrails Specific Plan	X		http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Land Division (Subdivision Ordinance)	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Subdivision Maps-Official			Transportation - Purchase County Clerk - Review
Mendocino Town Plan	X	X	http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Other Community Plans or Specific Plans	X		
Mendocino Historic Ordinance	X	X	
Mendocino Historic Review Board Design Guidelines	X	X	
Mendocino County Environmental Review Guidelines	X	X	
Mendocino County Airport Land Use Plan	X	Review only	
State Route 1 Corridor Study, 1994	X	Review only	
California Subdivision Map Act	Review only		www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw
California Environmental Quality Act	Review only	Review only	www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw
California General Plan Guidelines	Review only	Review only	www.opr.ca.gov
Environmental Impact Reports for various projects in Mendocino County	X		

Surface Mining and Reclamation Regulations	X		http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Regulations for Limited Density Rural Dwellings	X		http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Development Review within the Brush Street Triangle	X		http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning
Wireless Communications Facility Guidelines	X		http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning

Land Use Permits, Licenses, Entitlements	Applications Processed in Ukiah Office	Applications Processed in Coast Office (Coastal Zone Projects Only)
Business Licenses		
Business License	X	
Special Uses		
Family Care Unit	X	X
Temporary Dwelling During Construction	X	X
Farm Employee Housing- 1 unit	X	
Festival/Parade/Temporary/Seasonal Event	X	X
Other Temporary Uses	X	X
Zoning and General Plan		
Development Review (Inland areas)	X	
Use Permit	X	
Use Permit-Surface Mining Reclamation	X	
Use Permit-Cottage Industry	X	
Variance	X	X
Rezoning/ Ordinance Amendment	X	
Agricultural Preserve Contracts	X	
Agricultural Preserve Contract- Cancellation	X	
General Plan or Coastal Plan Amendment	X	
Coastal Development Permit		
Categorical Exclusion		X
Coastal Development Permit- Standard	X *	X
Coastal Development Permit- Minor		X
Coastal Development Permit- Administrative	X *	X
Coastal Emergency Permit		X
Local Coastal Plan Consistency Review		X
Mendocino Historical Review Board Permit		X
Land Division, Boundary Line Adjustment, Certificate of Compliance		
Major Subdivision	X	
Minor Subdivision	X	
Boundary Line Adjustment	X	
Certificate of Compliance	X	

* Processed at Ukiah office only when filed concurrently with another application, which is processed at the Ukiah office.

MENDOCINO COUNTY COASTAL ZONE BOUNDARY



Source: Mendocino County Department of Planning & Building Services Cartographic Division, March 18, 1999.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESSES: INLAND AREA

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

This table provides a general representation of application processing steps and average time for development in the inland County (areas outside the Coastal Zone). Other agencies and bodies may also provide recommendations on some applications. Project time frames can be expected to increase 12+ months when an environmental impact report is required.

	Administrative Decision	Zoning Administrator	Subdivision Committee	Planning Commission	Board of Supervisors
Business Licenses					
Business License (License is issued by the Tax Collectors Office)	Zoning Review 1-30 days			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Special Uses					
Family Care Unit	Decision 5-30 days			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Temporary Dwelling During Construction	Decision 5-30 days			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Farm Employee Housing	Decision 5-30 days			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Festival/Parade/Temporary or Seasonal Event	Decision 5-30 days	Decision 30+ days		Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Zoning and General Plan					
Development Review	Decision * 0.5 to 2 months	Decision 2-3 months		Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Use Permit- Major				Decision 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Use Permit-Minor		Decision 2-4 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Use Permit-Surface Mining Reclamation				Decision 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Minor Use Permit- Cottage Industry		Decision 2-4 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Variance		Decision 2-4 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Rezoning/ Ordinance Amendment				Recommend** 4-6 months	Decision** 4-6 months
Agricultural Preserve Contract				Recommend** 4-6 months	Decision** 4-6 months
Agricultural Preserve Contract- Cancellation				Recommend** 3-5 months	Decision** 4-6 months
General Plan Amendment				Recommend** 5-17 months	Decision** 6-18 months

Refer to Table Notes on next page.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESSES: INLAND AREA

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

	Administrative Decision	Zoning Administrator	Subdivision Committee	Planning Commission	Board of Supervisors
Land Division, Boundary Adjustment, Certificate of Compliance					
Major Subdivision			Recommend** 2-4 months	Decision 6-12 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Minor Subdivision			Recommend 2-3 months	Decision 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Boundary Line Adjustment			Decision 1-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months
Certificate of Compliance	Decision 4-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months

Notes:

* Projects with potential environmental effects may be referred to the Zoning Administrator for a decision. Timelines will increase.

** Time frames to recommendation or decision represent the time to that point in the process, and are not cumulative.

During the permit process, County requirements or agency requests for additional information or studies may extend the typical time frames shown. For example, project applications which must be referred to the County's Archaeological Commission determinations as to whether an archaeological reconnaissance may be required and the adequacy of the survey may increase the project time frame by 1-3 months or more. Applicants are encouraged to provide studies up front to expedite the hearing process.

Appeal: Decisions of a lower body are appealable to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Zoning Administrator decisions are appealable to the Board of Supervisors only.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESSES: COASTAL ZONE

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

This table provides a general representation of application processing steps and average time for development in the Coastal Zone. Other agencies and bodies may also provide recommendations on some applications. Project time frames can be expected to increase 6-12 months when an environmental impact report is required.

	Administrative Decision	Coastal Permit Administrator	Mendocino Historical Review Bd	Planning Commission	Board of Supervisors	Coastal Commission
Business Licenses						
Business License (License issued by the Tax Collectors Office)	Zoning Review 1-30 days			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	
Coastal Development Permits						
Family Care Unit		Decision 3-5 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Temporary Dwelling During Construction		Decision 3-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Festival/Parade/Temporary or Seasonal Event		Decision 4-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Mendocino Historical Review Board Permit			Decision 3 weeks		Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	
Categorical Exclusion	Decision 1-21 days					
Coastal Development Permit-Standard		Decision 4-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Coastal Development Permit-Administrative		Decision 3-4 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Coastal Emergency Permit		Decision (Director) 1-15 days				
Local Coastal Plan Consistency Review	Compliance Review 1-2 months					Decision 2-4 months
Zoning and General Plan						
Use Permit				Decision 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Use Permit-Surface Mining Reclamation				Decision 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Use Permit-Cottage Industry		Decision 4-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Variance		Decision** 4-6 months			Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years

Refer to Table Notes on next page.

PLANNING APPLICATION PROCESSES: COASTAL ZONE

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

	Administrative Decision	Coastal Permit Administrator	Subdivision Committee	Planning Commission	Board of Supervisors	Coastal Commission
Rezoning/ Ordinance Amendment				Recommend* 4-6 months	Decision* 6-8 months	Decision 6 months to 2 years
Agricultural Preserve Contract				Recommend* 4-6 months	Decision* 6-8 months	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Agricultural Preserve Contract- Cancellation				Recommend* 4-6 months	Decision* 6-8 months	Decision 6 months to 2 years
Coastal Plan Amendment				Recommend* 6-18 months	Decision* 6-18 months	Decision Add 6 months to 2 years
Land Division, Boundary Adjustment, Certificate of Compliance						
Major Subdivision			Recommend* 2-4 months	Decision 6-12 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Minor Subdivision			Recommend* 2-3 months	Decision* 4-6 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Boundary Line Adjustment		Decision*/*** 2-3 months	Decision*/*** 2-3 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 1.5-2 mo	Appeal Add 6 months to 2 years
Certificate of Compliance (includes conditional)	Decision 4-6 months		Appeal 2-3 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	Appeal Add 1.5-2 months	

NOTES:

The Mendocino Historical Review Board makes the decision on projects within the Town of Mendocino, rather than the Coastal Permit Administrator.

* Time frames to recommendation or decision represent the time to that point in the process, and are not cumulative.

** The Mendocino Historical Review Board makes the decision on some variances within the Town of Mendocino.

*** When the Coastal Permit Administrator and Subdivision Committee are both decision makers, they generally take action on the same day.

During the permit process, County requirements or agency requests for additional information or studies may extend the typical time frames shown. For example, project applications which must be referred to the County's Archaeological Commission to determine as to whether an archaeological reconnaissance may be required and the adequacy of the survey may increase the project time frame by 1-3 months or more.

Decisions: Some Board of Supervisors' decisions may be appealed to Coastal Commission, who may deny or modify the project.

Appeals: Decisions of the lower body are appealable to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Zoning Administrator decisions are appealable to the Board only. Some projects may be appealed to the Coastal Commission.

PLANNING - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

1. I get two tax bills and have two separate Assessor's parcel numbers for my property -- do I have two separate salable parcels?

The fact that an area of land has multiple Assessor's parcel numbers does not mean that there are multiple salable and developable lots. The Assessor assigns parcel numbers solely for assessment purposes and a single lot may have two or more Assessor's parcel numbers.

2. Can I put a second residential dwelling on my property?

A second dwelling unit is allowed on most property outside of the Coastal Zone.¹ If you intend to use a septic system and onsite well, a minimum of one acre is required, except in Redwood Valley 1.2 acres are required unless a connection to the Redwood Valley County Water District is obtained. If you intend to use a septic system and public water supply, a minimum of 24,000 square feet are required. You should check with the County Division of Environmental Health regarding proof of water and sewage disposal requirements.

3. What are the restrictions on fences?

Solid, view-obscuring fences are limited to 3 ½ feet in height in the front yard setback. A building permit is required for a fence over 6 feet high. A Coastal Development Permit may be required if the property is in the Coastal Zone.

4. Where can I obtain the County General Plan or zoning ordinance?

The General Plan and Coastal Element, and Zoning Ordinances are available for purchase at the Ukiah or Fort Bragg offices of the Department of Planning and Building Services. Call for the current fees. General Plan and zoning maps are sold separately. The General Plan can be viewed at the County library or on the Internet at <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning>. The Zoning Ordinances can also be viewed at <http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planning>.

5. Does the County enforce the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&R's) in my subdivision?

Many subdivisions in the County are privately regulated through CC&R's. The County does not enforce these restrictions established by the subdivider to regulate development within the subdivision. Enforcement is a civil matter among the affected lot owners.

6. What is the address of my property?

County Code establishes the Department of Planning and Building Services as responsible for assigning addresses throughout the unincorporated area of the County. You should call 707-463-4281 with your Assessor's parcel number to obtain the address of your property.

7. My property is located on the east side of Highway 1 – am I in the Coastal Zone?

The Coastal Zone boundary is not a standard distance from the ocean. The eastern boundary of the Coastal Zone varies from Highway 1 to several miles inland. In general, areas near rivers and streams are more likely to be within the Coastal Zone. A very generalized location map of the Coastal Zone appears earlier in this chapter. You should check with a Planner in our Ukiah or Fort Bragg office for precise locations.

8. What is the difference between the General Plan and Zoning?

¹ A second dwelling is allowed in limited areas of the Coastal Zone; however a coastal development permit may be required-check with the Planning staff in the Fort Bragg office.

The General Plan is the County's long-term plan for land use development in the County, including land use densities and uses based on environmental resources, physical hazards and social and economic goals. Zoning sets forth the specific lot sizes, land uses and other land use standards for each parcel in the County. They are both important in guiding development, to varying degrees depending on what you want to do.

9. What permits are needed to build my project or open my business?

The Permit Place binder lists all County permits that may be required. County staff will assist you in identifying permits required for your project. Permits commonly required by state, federal or local agencies and contacts will also be listed in *The Permit Place* binder.

10. What information should I have when I call or come in regarding building a new business or other project?

At minimum, provide the Assessor's parcel number (the number can be obtained from your tax bill) and site address if there is one. Be able to state precisely what you want to do, including your ultimate plans. A plot plan is useful. County staff will direct you further.

11. What is the difference between a dwelling and a guest cottage?

A "Guest Cottage" has no kitchen, may not exceed 640 square feet and is used by the family or guests without compensation. A second unit is a detached or attached independent dwelling unit on the same parcel as the existing dwelling.

12. Are fees refundable if my project is denied?

No. Fees represent the cost of processing your application. If you withdraw the project application during the process, you may request a refund of the unused portion.

13. Do I need a permit to remove gravel on my property?

Outside the Coastal Zone, a permit is not required unless the removal involves more than one acre or more than 1,000 cubic yards of material. If the removal exceeds these amounts cumulatively, a use permit and reclamation plan will need to be secured. Any stream disturbance, no matter how large or small, will require a stream alteration agreement from the Department of Fish and Game and may require a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers.

14. May I live in a travel trailer while I build my home?

Yes, you may occupy a travel trailer, provided you have a valid building permit for the proposed residence and you secure an Administrative Permit for the "temporary occupancy of a travel trailer while constructing a residence." The permit is valid for two years unless renewed.

BUILDING INSPECTION - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

1. What types of projects do not require a building permit? *

- a. One story detached accessory buildings used as tool and storage sheds, play houses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet (electrical service requires a permit).
- b. Fences not over 6 feet in height.
- c. Movable cases, counter partitions not over 5 feet, 9 inches high.
- d. Retaining walls not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge or impounding Class I, II or III-A liquids.
- e. Water tanks supported directly upon grade if the capacity does not exceed 10,000 gallons and the ratio of height to width does not exceed 2 to 1.
- f. Platforms, walks and driveways not more than 30 inches above grade and not over any basement or story below.
- g. Painting, papering and finish work.
- h. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets.
- i. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall on dwellings and accessory structures when projecting not more than 54 inches.
- j. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a dwelling in which the pool walls are entirely above the adjacent grade and the capacity does not exceed 5,000 gallons.
- k. Signs no larger than six feet by eight feet, not more than six feet in height.
- l. Detached shade structures not more than 15 feet in height with no rigid roof covering.

2. Do I need a building permit for reroofing?

Yes.

3. Does the County have a grading ordinance? Do I need to obtain a permit to grade my property?

The County has adopted Chapter 70 of the 1991 Uniform Building Code which regulates grading. Grading within the Coastal Zone may be subject to a Coastal Development Permit and is subject to the standards in the Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

4. Do my plans have to be drawn by an architect or engineer?

In general, state law requires that plans for 4 or more houses on any one lot, commercial and industrial projects be drawn by a licensed engineer or architect. Other structures of a complex design or those not conforming to the California Building Code definition of conventional construction may also require plans by a licensed engineer or architect.

5. What information must I submit with any building permit application?

1. Three sets of plans.
2. Three copies of the plot plan.
3. Two copies of engineering calculations (if applicable).
4. Two copies of California Energy Compliance (for conditioned space).
5. One copy of CalFire Fire Safe Clearance (in State Responsibility Area).
6. Recycling information if construction exceeds 5000 square feet or demolition exceeds 1000 square feet.

* Some uses require a Coastal Development Permit or MHRB Permit in the Coastal Zone. Some uses are subject to setbacks and other zoning regulations.

6. Why do I need to prepare a plot plan with my building permit application?

Most applications require that a plot plan be submitted. The information assists the County in determining setbacks, distance to other structures, septic tank and leach field location and other information necessary to evaluate the application for consistency with the County Codes. The Plot Plan also provides a record of improvements for future owners/buyers/sellers.

7. Why do I need energy calculations and where do I get those done?

Any conditioned space requires energy calculations. We cannot recommend anyone in particular but you may wish to check the yellow pages of the telephone directory under “architects” for assistance.

8. How long will it take to process my building permit?

For “non-conditioned” space (i.e., garage, swimming pool, outbuilding, etc.), the County’s goal is to plan check the project within 5 working days. For “conditioned” space (i.e., addition to single family dwelling, dwellings, commercial, industrial), the project will normally be plan checked in 2 to 3 weeks from the date the application was submitted. Keep in mind that these time frames are for the initial plan check and may not represent “How long will it take to obtain my permit.”

9. I need to close escrow, build before it rains, etc. Can I be moved to the front of the plan check line?

The County plan checks structures in the order that the application was received – first come, first served. Provisions may be made for “foundation only” permits for commercial projects.

10. I don’t have any children in public schools, so why do I have to pay school impact fees?

School impact fees are established by the local school district and are assessed on new residential and commercial construction of 500 square feet or more regardless of whether or not there are school age children in the household. School fees for residential construction applies to living space only. Garages and workshops are exempt.

11. Where can I get a copy of the Code Books?

Copies of the California Codes are available for review at the County libraries. Copies can be purchased from the International Code Council, Phone: (888) 422-7233, Web Site: www.iccsafe.org.

12. What is Class K?

Class K is a relaxed construction standard available to owner-built rural dwellings and appurtenant structures intended “...to allow and facilitate the use of alternatives to the specifications prescribed by the technical codes to the extent that a reasonable degree of health and safety is provided...” To qualify, the property must be zoned for one acre minimums or large acre minimums. The structure must be “Owner Built” and occupied and cannot be used for the purpose of sale, lease, or rent.

13. How do building, planning, environmental health, CDF, and local water or sewer district permits relate?

A building permit will not be issued until permits or approvals required by Environmental Health and Planning have been issued or tentatively approved and until a fire safe preliminary clearance has been granted as required by the CalFire. In addition, the project owner or contractor is responsible for obtaining all permits or clearances required by local service districts.

STANDARDS FOR HOME OCCUPATIONS AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES- INLAND AREA (OUTSIDE THE COASTAL ZONE)

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

Home occupations are authorized by the Mendocino County Zoning Code to provide limited opportunities for the conduct of a business in conjunction with, and incidental to, the residential use of a parcel. The operation and appearance of home occupations must not change or disturb the residential character of the premises or the surrounding neighborhood. Home occupations do not require a use permit, but must comply with the standards below and all other applicable regulations, such as off-street parking, and building and health requirements. They require a County business license.

The types of uses that typically qualify as home occupations include: artists and sculptors, authors and composers, babysitters and day care for 6 or fewer, beauticians and barbers limited to one chair, home crafts, home offices, off-site service providers, food and beverage preparation without onsite consumption, and mail order businesses. Depending on the intensity of the use, other permits may be required by other departments/agencies. In contrast, cottage industries, which can encompass larger operations and a greater range of business types, require a use permit (please refer to “How to Apply for a Cottage Industry Use Permit”). The following table summarizes the standards that apply to home occupations and cottage industries conducted outside the Coastal Zone.

STANDARDS	HOME OCCUPATIONS	COTTAGE INDUSTRIES— LIMITED	COTTAGE INDUSTRIES— GENERAL
Permit required	None	Minor use permit	Minor use permit
Permit term limit	None	Per minor use permit	Per minor use permit
Number of employees	Members of family residing on property, plus 1 if property is at least 40,000 square feet	Members of family residing on property, plus 2	Members of family residing on property, plus 3
Size of property	No standard ²	No standard	No standard
Place of conduct	Dwelling or accessory building (provided there is a dwelling on the property)	In zones that allow cottage industries, provided there is a dwelling on the property	In zones that allow cottage industries, provided there is a dwelling on the property
Area (includes storage)	640 square feet for all uses	1,000 square feet for all uses	2,000 square feet for all uses
Character of use	Clearly incidental/ subordinate to residential uses	Clearly incidental/ subordinate to residential uses	Clearly incidental/ subordinate to residential uses
Multiple uses	Yes	Yes	Yes
Outdoor activities	No	No	Per minor use permit
Outdoor storage	No	Yes-screened (setback may be imposed by use permit)	Per minor use permit (setback may be imposed)
Signs (non-illuminated)	1 sign, 2 square foot maximum	1 sign, 4 square foot maximum	1 sign, 4 square foot maximum
No. of customers/day	10	10	10
Hours of visitation	8 am to 8 pm	Per use permit	8 am to 8 pm
Equipment	Customary of specifications or type typical of home vocation	No impacts or nuisances may be caused by equipment	No impacts or nuisances may be caused by equipment
Sale of merchandise produced off-site ³	Incidental to use	Incidental	Incidental
Vehicles used for deliveries	Maximum 3 per day/ no heavy commercial vehicles	Maximum 3 per day	Per minor use permit
Use of heavy vehicles (maintained on-site)	Not Allowed	Customary for neighborhood	Per minor use permit
Outdoor parking for vehicles being repaired	Not applicable	One in view; screen others (included as outdoor storage)	Per minor use permit
Noise	Customary for single family uses in neighborhood	As set forth in Mendocino County Zoning Code	As set forth in Mendocino County Zoning Code
Nuisance conditions	General clause	General clause	General clause

² 40,000 square feet if one employee is involved.

³ Mail order businesses may include wholesale sales of products produced off-site.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A COTTAGE INDUSTRY USE PERMIT

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

What is the purpose of a cottage industry use permit?

Cottage Industries are intended to allow limited commercial or industrial uses conducted by persons who live in a dwelling on the same property. The type, scale and conduct of the activity or use must strictly conform to specified criteria and be conducted in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and does not affect the environment. The requirement for a Use Permit gives the County the ability to review the proposed project to insure that it will be compatible with surrounding land uses and will not adversely affect neighbors or the environment. The public hearing allows neighbors to voice their opinion. **You are advised that a cottage industry, which expands beyond the cottage industries limitations, must be relocated to property with the appropriate zoning.**

What should I do first?

You should review the Cottage Industries section of the County Zoning Ordinance. Cottage Industries are categorized as “Limited” or “General,”⁴ depending on the zone in which the use is located. The regulations specify a list of uses that are allowed as Cottage Industries in the zoning district in which your project is located, as well as criteria that the project must comply with. You should also inquire about building permits, health permits, or other permits that may be needed to accomplish the use. You may wish to make an appointment to meet with a staff planner, as well as staff from the Building Division, Environmental Health or other departments to discuss your project.

While allowances for Cottage Industries give a small business a chance to get started, you should be aware that Cottage Industries may not expand beyond the limits specified in the Zoning Ordinance. Prior to the expansion of a Cottage Industry beyond the limits specified, the Cottage Industry would need to be relocated to another property with the proper zoning.

How do I apply for a cottage industry use permit?

Submit the required number of Use Permit application forms to the Department of Planning and Building Services along with the appropriate filing fee. As part of the application process, you will be required to submit the appropriate number of copies of the following:

- ✓ Application forms.
- ✓ Plot Plan and Location Map.
- ✓ Filing Fee.

How long does it take to process a cottage industry use permit?

The process takes approximately 4 to 6 months from the time you submit a complete application to the day of the public hearing.

What happens after I apply?

Preliminary Review of Application. Planning staff will review your application for completeness. If the application is deemed incomplete; that is, all information is not submitted or is found inadequate, you will be notified by mail as to what additional information is required.

⁴ There is no distinction in the Coastal Zone as to “limited” or “general”

If the application is deemed complete, it will be assigned to a project coordinator who will be your contact through completion of the project. The application will be referred to various agencies, which may request additional information or request that conditions of approval be attached to your Use Permit.

Environmental Review. The Use Permit application requires preliminary environmental review by the project coordinator to determine if the project would cause any environmental impact. You may be required to submit additional information regarding noise, water availability, etc.

Staff Report. Once all information is submitted and responses from agencies are received, the project coordinator will prepare a staff report and schedule the Use Permit for a public hearing. You will receive a copy of the staff report. Notice of the public hearing will be provided to the neighbors and interested agencies.

Who will take action on my cottage industry use permit?

Your application will be considered during a public hearing by the Zoning Administrator. In controversial or unusually complex cases, the application may be heard by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.

You will be notified by mail of the time and place that the Zoning Administrator or other hearing body will consider your application. You or a representative should be present at this hearing. In addition, public notice of the hearing for your application will be published in a local newspaper and owners of property within 300 feet will be notified of the application and hearing date.

What can I do to give my application the best chance of approval?

- ✓ Talk to your neighbors in advance to discuss your project with them.
- ✓ Show how the project will comply with the criteria in the Zoning Ordinance for the type of Cottage Industry you have applied for.
- ✓ When planning your project, consider how you can complete it in such a way that it harmonizes with its surroundings and does not disrupt the neighborhood by creating undue noise, traffic, etc.
- ✓ You must convince the decision-maker(s) that your project should be approved. When you submit your application, provide the best information possible supporting your request.
- ✓ Attend the public hearing so that you can speak for your project and respond to questions posed by those who may be worried about how your land use might affect them.

What happens during the public hearing on my application?

The staff report prepared for your application will be presented and summarized by County staff.

You will be provided an opportunity to describe your project and address any issues raised in the staff report.

Members of the public will be given an opportunity to express positive or negative comments regarding your application.

The Zoning Administrator, or if referred, the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, will consider the staff report, comments from you and the public, and take action on the application.

Can the decision on my application be appealed?

During the 10-day appeal period after the public hearing, you or any interested party may appeal the decision to the Board of Supervisors. Even if your application is approved, you may still appeal any of the conditions that are attached to the permit. Appeals must be filed in writing, accompanied by a fee, with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

If an appeal is filed, the project coordinator will prepare a written report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Notification of the Board of Supervisors' hearing will be provided in the same manner as the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission's hearing.

Approved Use Permits for projects in the Coastal Zone may be appealable to the California Coastal Commission within 10 working days following the Coastal Commission's receipt of Notice of Final Action on the project.

When does a cottage industry use permit expire?

If you do not make use of the Permit within two years from the date of approval, the Use Permit becomes invalid.

An expiration date may be placed on your Use Permit as a condition of approval. Prior to the expiration date, you will need to apply for a Use Permit renewal. Use Permits may also be scheduled for modification or revocation if conditions of approval have not been met.

What happens after my cottage industry use permit is approved?

In most instances, a Cottage Industry Use Permit is only the first step in establishing a business or use. You are required to comply with conditions of the Use Permit over the life of the permit, and may be required to obtain other permits or clearances such as a County Business License, State resale license, building change of occupancy permit, etc.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A USE PERMIT

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

What is the purpose of a use permit?

Throughout the County, people use their properties in many different ways. They build homes, apartments, office buildings, gas stations, stores, restaurants and many other types of facilities. To ensure that the use of properties is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, the County has been divided into different types of zoning districts. What you may do with your property depends upon the zoning district in which your property is located.

In each district, some uses are automatically permitted, some uses are permitted only if you apply for and are granted a use permit, and some uses are specifically prohibited.

A use permit gives the County the ability to conduct a more thorough review of a proposed project and subjects projects to public hearings to insure that the project will be compatible with surrounding land uses and will not adversely affect neighbors or the environment.

What should I do first?

You should review the section of the County Zoning Ordinance that regulates the zoning district in which your project is located. A staff member can help you identify which section of the ordinance you need. You may wish to make an appointment to meet with a staff planner to discuss your project. You may be advised to meet with staff from other departments or agencies to discuss your project.

How do I apply for a use permit?

Submit completed Use Permit application forms to the Department of Planning and Building Services along with the appropriate filing fee (see the application form or a planner for appropriate number of copies and filing fee). As part of the application process, you will be required to submit the appropriate number of copies of the following:

- ✓ Application forms and initial site and project description questionnaires.
- ✓ Plot Plans.
- ✓ Location Maps.
- ✓ Certification and site view authorization.
- ✓ Mail Direction form.
- ✓ Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement.
- ✓ Filing Fee.

What happens after I apply?

Preliminary Review of Application. Planning staff will review the application for completeness. If the application is deemed incomplete; that is, all information is not submitted or is found inadequate, you will be notified by mail as to what additional information is required.

The application will be referred to various agencies, which may request additional information or request that conditions of approval be attached to your use permit.

If the application is deemed complete, it will be assigned to a project coordinator for further processing. The project coordinator will be your contact through completion of the project.

Environmental Review. All Use Permit applications require preliminary environmental review by the project coordinator to determine if the project would cause any environmental impact. You may be required to submit additional information regarding traffic, noise, water availability, etc.

Staff Report. Once all information is submitted and responses from agencies received the project coordinator will prepare a staff report and schedule the use permit for a public hearing.

Who will take action on my use permit?

Your application will be considered during a public hearing by the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator. Generally speaking, more complex or controversial applications (major use permits) are heard by the Planning Commission, while simpler and more routine applications (minor use permits) are heard by the Zoning Administrator, or Coastal Permit Administrator if located in the Coastal Zone.

You will be notified by mail of the time and place that your application will be considered by the Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, or Coastal Permit Administrator if located in the Coastal Zone. You or a representative should be present at this hearing.

In addition, public notice of the hearing for your application will be published in a local newspaper and owners of property within 300 feet will be notified of the application.

What happens during the public hearing on my application?

The staff report prepared for your application will be presented and summarized.

You will be provided an opportunity to describe your project and address any issues raised in the staff report.

Members of the public will be given an opportunity to express positive or negative comments regarding your application.

The Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, or Coastal Permit Administrator if located in the Coastal Zone, will consider the staff report, comments from you and the public, and take action on the application.

What can I do to give my application the best chance of approval?

- ✓ When planning your project, consider how you can complete it in such a way that it harmonizes with its surroundings and does not disrupt the neighborhood by creating undue noise, traffic, etc.
- ✓ You must convince the decision-makers that your plan should be approved. When you submit your application, provide the best information possible.
- ✓ Attend public hearings so that you can speak for your project and respond to questions posed by those who may be worried about how your land use might affect them.

How long does it take to process a use permit?

The process takes approximately four to six months from the time you submit a complete application to the day of the public hearing.

Can the decision on my application be appealed?

During the 10-day appeal period after the Zoning Administrator, Coastal Permit Administrator, or Planning Commission hearing, you or any interested party may appeal the decision to the Board of Supervisors. Even if your application is approved, you may still appeal any of the conditions that are attached to the permit. Appeals must be filed in writing, accompanied by a fee, with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

If an appeal is filed, the project coordinator will prepare a written report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Notification of the Board of Supervisors' hearing will be provided in the same manner as the Zoning Administrator, Coastal Permit Administrator, or Planning Commission's hearing.

In the case of projects located within the Coastal Zone, approved use permits may be appealable to the California Coastal Commission within 10 working days following the Coastal Commission's receipt of the Notice of Final Action on the project.

What happens after my use permit is approved?

In most instances, a Use Permit is only the first step in establishing a business or use. You are required to comply with conditions of the Use Permit over the life of the permit, and may be required to obtain other permits or clearances such as a County Business License, State resale license, building change of occupancy permit, etc.

When does a use permit expire?

An expiration date may be placed on your use permit as a condition of approval. Prior to the expiration date, you will need to apply for a use permit renewal. Use permits may also be scheduled for modification or revocation if conditions of approval have not been met. If you do not make use of the permit within two years from the date of approval, the use permit becomes invalid.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A VARIANCE

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

What is a variance?

A variance allows you, under special circumstances, to develop your property in a manner that varies from zoning regulation requirements. You may request a variance when strict enforcement of the regulations would:

- ✓ Make it difficult for you to develop your parcel.
- ✓ Cause you unnecessary hardships.
- ✓ Result in inconsistencies with the intent of zoning regulations.

In general, a variance may be appropriate if your property has some unique characteristic such as severe slope or an odd shape that prevents you from enjoying the same kind of property use that your neighbors have. You may request a variance for building height, fence heights, building location and setbacks. You may not request a variance to develop your property for a use that is not allowed in your zoning district.

How do I apply for a variance?

Submit completed Variance application forms to the Department of Planning and Building Services along with the appropriate filing fee (see the application form or a planner for appropriate number of copies and filing fee). As part of the application process, you will be required to submit the appropriate number of copies of the following:

- ✓ Application forms and initial site and project description questionnaires.
- ✓ Plot Plans.
- ✓ Location Maps.
- ✓ Architectural building elevations and sign details, if applicable.
- ✓ Certification and Site View Authorization.
- ✓ Mail Direction Form.
- ✓ Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement.
- ✓ Filing Fee.

What are the criteria used in reviewing a variance?

According to State law and County Code, a variance can only be granted where:

- ✓ There are special circumstances applicable to the property involved, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings.
- ✓ The special circumstances or conditions necessitating the variance are not due to any action on your part subsequent to the application of the applicable zoning regulations.
- ✓ The variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right possessed by other property in the same vicinity and zone and denied to you.
- ✓ The granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the vicinity and zone in which your property is located.
- ✓ The variance does not authorize a use or activity that is not otherwise expressly authorized by the zoning provisions governing the parcel.
- ✓ The granting of the variance will not adversely affect the General Plan; or, in the case of projects located within the Coastal Zone, the Local Coastal Program and Coastal Act; or, in the case of projects located within the Town of Mendocino, the Mendocino Town Plan and the Coastal Act.

What will give my application the best chance of approval?

You must prove that your situation meets the above criteria. When you submit your application, provide the best information possible. Attend public hearings so that you can speak for your project and respond to questions from those who may be worried about how your land use might affect them. Evaluate other alternatives. If they are not suitable, explain why in your application.

What happens after I apply?

- ✓ **Preliminary Review of Application.** The application will be reviewed for completeness. If the application is deemed incomplete; that is, all information is not submitted or is found inadequate, you will be notified by mail as to what additional information is required.

The application will be referred to various agencies, which may request additional information or request that conditions of approval be attached to your variance.

If the application is deemed complete, it will be assigned to a project coordinator for further processing. The project coordinator will be your contact through completion of the project.

- ✓ **Environmental Review.** Generally, most variance applications are exempt from environmental review, however, should the project coordinator determine that your project is subject to environmental review, you may be required to submit additional information regarding traffic, noise, water availability, etc.
- ✓ **Staff Report.** Once all information is submitted and responses from agencies received, the project coordinator will prepare a staff report and schedule the variance for a public hearing.

Who will take action on my variance?

Your application will be considered during a public hearing by the Zoning Administrator, Coastal Permit Administrator if located in the Coastal Zone, or Planning Commission. Most variance applications are heard by the Zoning Administrator.

You will be notified by mail of the time and place that your application will be considered. You or a representative should be present at this hearing. In addition, public notice of the hearing for your application will be published in a local newspaper and owners of adjoining property will be notified of the application.

What happens during the public hearing on my application?

The staff report prepared for your application will be presented and summarized.

You will be provided an opportunity to describe your project and address any issues raised in the staff report.

Members of the public will be given an opportunity to express positive or negative comments regarding your application.

The Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, or Coastal Permit Administrator if located in the Coastal Zone, will consider the staff report and comments from you and the public, and take action on the application.

How long does it take to process a variance?

The process takes approximately 4-6 months from the time you submit a complete application to the day of the public hearing.

Can the decision on my application be appealed?

During the 10-day appeal period after the Zoning Administrator, Coastal Permit Administrator, or Planning Commission hearing, you or any interested party may appeal the decision to the Board of Supervisors or the Coastal Commission if the project is located in the Coastal Zone. Even if your application is approved, you may still appeal any conditions attached to the variance. Appeals must be filed in writing, accompanied by a fee, with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

If an appeal is filed, the project coordinator will prepare a written report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Notification of the Board of Supervisors' hearing will be provided in the same manner as the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission's hearing.

In the case of projects located within the Coastal Zone, approved variances may be appealable to the California Coastal Commission within 10 working days following the Coastal Commission's receipt of the Notice of Final Action on the project.

When does a variance expire?

Variances expire two years after the date of approval if the variance is not used within that time.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A MINOR SUBDIVISION

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

What is a subdivision?

A subdivision is the division of land into two or more lots or parcels for the purpose of sale, lease or financing, except for leases of agricultural land for agricultural purposes. Subdivision also includes a condominium project, a community apartment project or the conversion of five or more existing dwelling units to a stock cooperative. Agricultural purposes means the cultivation of food or fiber or the grazing or pasturing of livestock.

What is a minor subdivision?

A minor subdivision is the creation of four or fewer parcels, with or without a remainder parcel. In determining how many parcels a subdivider may create through the minor subdivision process, in addition to the parcels being proposed, there shall be counted every contiguous parcel, which was created by the same subdivider.

How do I apply for a minor subdivision?

Submit completed Minor Subdivision application forms to the Department of Planning and Building Services along with the appropriate filing fee (see the application form or a planner for appropriate number of copies and filing fee). As part of the application process, you will be required to submit the appropriate number of copies of the following:

- ✓ Application forms and initial site and project description questionnaires.
- ✓ Tentative Maps (legibly drawn at a workable scale) in addition , one 8x11 inch reproducible map.
- ✓ Preliminary Title Reports issued within the previous 30 days.
- ✓ Certification and site view authorization.
- ✓ Mail Direction form.
- ✓ Indemnification and Hold Harmless Agreement.
- ✓ Filing Fee.

What should the Tentative Map contain?

The Tentative Map shall be a sketch clearly and legibly drawn. The minimum sheet size shall be 8 ½ by 11 inches. The minimum scale shall be one inch equals one hundred feet. The Tentative Map must contain the following information:

- ✓ Name, addresses and telephone numbers of owners, subdivider and person who prepared the map.
- ✓ Date map was prepared, north point and scale.
- ✓ The approximate width and location of all proposed or existing easements together with the purpose thereof. Roadway easements shall extend to a publicly maintained road.
- ✓ The proposed lot lay-out, approximate dimensions and approximate area of all lots. All proposed lots or parcels shall be numbered consecutively throughout the entire division of land.
- ✓ A red border on the map to indicate the boundaries of the land to be divided.
- ✓ Approximate location, width, name and status as public or private of all existing and proposed streets lying within and adjacent to the division of land.
- ✓ The outline of any existing buildings to remain in place and their approximate locations in relation to existing or proposed lot lines.
- ✓ Lines indicating direction of slope and approximate percent of grade or sufficient contour lines to indicate the general slope of land.

- ✓ The approximate locations of areas subject to inundation; the approximate location of existing or proposed lakes, ponds springs, or reservoirs; and the location, width and direction of flow of all significant water courses.
- ✓ The approximate location of property line fences, wells, sewage disposal systems, culverts, drainpipes, underground structures, overhead structures, major excavations, mining shafts or other hazards within the area of the land to be divided two hundred (200') feet adjacent thereto.
- ✓ The Assessor's Parcel Numbers of the property to be divided, together with the Assessor's Parcel Numbers and date acquired, transferred, leased or financed to any property contiguous to the property to be divided in which the owner or subdivider of said property has had any ownership interest subsequent to September 20, 1963.
- ✓ A site sketch showing the location of the proposed minor division in relation to the surrounding area.

What is a waiver of parcel map (unilateral agreement)?

A waiver of a parcel map may be requested by a subdivider and granted by the Planning Commission for a minor subdivision which:

- ✓ Results in the creation of only two parcels and where the parcel to be divided was not created through a previous minor subdivision process whereby a parcel map was waived and a unilateral agreement was allowed in lieu of a parcel map.
- ✓ Results in the creation of parcels with a minimum gross area of 40 acres or more or each parcel is a quarter-quarter section as determined by government survey.
- ✓ Does not result in a requirement for a right of way dedication or other easements for access, drainage or utilities.

What happens after I apply?

- ✓ **Preliminary Review of Application.** The application will be reviewed for completeness. If the application is deemed incomplete, that is, all information is not submitted or is found inadequate, you will be notified by mail as to what additional information is required. The application will be referred to various agencies, which may request additional information or request that conditions of approval be attached to your subdivision. The application will be assigned to a project coordinator who will be your contact through completion of the project.
- ✓ **Subdivision Committee.** The Subdivision Committee, which consists of representatives from the Department of Planning and Building Services, the Division of Environmental Health and the Department of Transportation, will meet to discuss and make recommendations regarding your subdivision. You will be notified of the time and place that the Subdivision Committee will consider your subdivision and a representative for the project should attend the meeting.
- ✓ **Environmental Review.** The project coordinator will evaluate the project's impact on the environment and consistency with the General Plan and other applicable plans and ordinances. At any time during the project review, you may be requested to provide additional information, such as archaeological, botanical, water availability or engineering studies, to assist in the evaluation.
- ✓ **Staff Report.** The project coordinator will prepare a written staff report at least 21 days prior to any public hearing. It will include agency comments, and staff's recommendation on whether the Planning Commission should approve or deny the application.

Who will take action on my application?

Your application will be considered during a public hearing by the Planning Commission. You will be notified by mail of the time and place that your application will be considered by the Planning Commission. You or a representative should be present at this hearing.

In addition, public notice of the hearing for your application will be published in a local newspaper and owners of adjoining property will be notified of the application.

What happens during the public hearing on my application?

The staff report prepared for your application will be presented and summarized.

You will be provided an opportunity to describe your project and address any issues raised in the staff report.

Members of the public will be given an opportunity to express positive or negative comments regarding your application.

The Planning Commission will consider the staff report, comments from you and the public and take action on the application.

What can I do to give my application the best chance of approval?

- ✓ When planning your project, consider how you can complete it in such a way that it harmonizes with its surroundings and does not disrupt the neighborhood by creating undue noise, traffic, etc.
- ✓ You must convince the decision-makers that your subdivision should be approved. When you submit your application, provide the best information possible.
- ✓ Attend the public hearing so that you can speak for your project and respond to questions posed by those who may be worried about how your land use might affect them.

Can the decision on my application be appealed?

During the 10-day appeal period after the Planning Commission hearing, you or any interested party may appeal the decision to the Board of Supervisors. Even if your application is approved, you may still appeal any of the conditions that are attached to the subdivision. Appeals must be filed in writing, accompanied by a fee, with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

If an appeal is filed, the project coordinator will prepare a written report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Notification of the Board of Supervisors' hearing will be provided in the same manner as the Planning Commission's hearing.

In the case of projects located within the Coastal Zone, approved minor subdivisions may be appealable to the California Coastal Commission within 10 working days following the Coastal Commission's receipt of the Notice of Final Action on the project.

How long does it take to process a minor subdivision?

The process takes approximately four to six months from the time you submit a complete application to the day of the public hearing. The process may take longer if significant environmental issues requiring additional study are discovered in the process.

What happens after my subdivision is approved?

After approval of the application and expiration of the appeal period (or action on an appeal if any appeal was filed) you must satisfy any conditions that were imposed by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. Typically, conditions include requirements to complete improvements to the subdivision access road, water and soil testing for wells and septic systems, etc. These requirements are administered through the County Environmental Health Division and Department of Transportation and are discussed in sections of the Binder for those Departments.

Upon completion of the conditions, you will have to file either a Parcel Map with the County Surveyor at the Department of Transportation, or, if a Waiver of Parcel Map was approved, a Unilateral Agreement must be filed with the Department of Planning and Building Services. These documents must be prepared by a licensed engineer or surveyor and will be checked by the County Surveyor within the Department of Transportation. You will have two years to complete the conditions and file the Parcel Map or Unilateral Agreement, however, extensions are possible upon application to the Department of Planning and Building Services prior to the expiration of the Tentative Map. Once the Parcel Map or Unilateral Agreement is recorded with the County Recorder, your Minor Subdivision is complete

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

What is the purpose of the General Plan?

The General Plan is the County's comprehensive long-term plan for land use and development in the community. Its purpose is to promote the orderly and balanced use of land and resources. The goals, policies and land use classifications in the General Plan guide the location, density, and intensity of development for each parcel.

What should I do first?

Staff will advise you whether an amendment to the General Plan maps or text, or both, is required for your project. You will also be advised whether a rezoning application is required. You are encouraged to schedule a preapplication conference with a staff planner at the Ukiah office to discuss project options and application processing.

How do I apply for a General Plan amendment?

Submit a completed General Pan amendment application (including a rezone if required) to the Department of Planning and Building Services, Ukiah office. Check with staff for the filing deadline, required number of copies, and fees. You are encouraged to submit one copy first for a preliminary review.

- Application Form
- General Plan Land Use Map (may be obtained from staff)
- Zoning Map (if a rezone is required) (may be obtained from staff)
- Location Map
- Application Fees
- Other reports suggested by staff
- Any other information that you desire to portray your project

How long does it take to process a General Plan amendment?

General Plan amendments can be filed anytime but processing does not begin until the filing deadline for the geographic area in which the project is located. The entire process takes approximately 6 - 18 months from the filing deadline until the public hearing before the Board of Supervisors. In the Coastal Zone, the process takes about 6 months more. Currently, the General Plan is being updated. Additionally, the Coastal Commission has advised that they will not approve a Coastal Plan Amendment until such time that a County initiated update has been completed. General Plan Amendments are not being processed unless the Director determines that are special circumstances that warrant the need for the request.

What happens after I apply?

- **Application Filing.** The application will be assigned to a project coordinator who will review it for completeness. If it is not "deemed complete," you will be notified of additional information or modifications required.
- **Referral.** The application will be referred to various agencies and potential service providers that may request additional information, or may make project recommendations to approve, deny, modify or add conditions to the project.

- **Staff Review.** The staff coordinator will, in most cases, site view the project site. Staff will evaluate the project's impact on the environment and consistency with the General Plan and other adopted plans. The cumulative impact of your project and past projects will also be evaluated. At any time during project review, you may be requested to provide additional information, such as archaeological, botanical, water availability or engineering studies, to assist in the evaluation.
- **Staff Report.** The staff coordinator will prepare a written staff report at least 21 days before a public hearing. It will include agency comments, and staff's recommendation on whether the Board of Supervisors should approve or deny the application.

Who will take action on my application?

Your application will be considered during a public hearing by the Planning Commission, for recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing and makes the final decision. However, for projects in the Coastal Zone, the Coastal Commission also holds a public hearing.

You will be notified by mail of the date of all hearings. Notice of hearings will be published in a local newspaper and mailed to owners of adjoining property and referral agencies. You are advised to be present at all hearings.

During the hearing, the staff report will be presented and summarized. You and your representatives will be provided an opportunity to describe the project and address issues in the staff report. Landowners, the interested public and agencies may express positive or negative comments regarding your application.

What can I do to maximize the chance of approval?

- **Educate yourself.** Consider how your project can be designed to harmonize with the surrounding land uses. Before making an application, ask staff about a preapplication conference, project options and the application process.
- **Be proactive.** Carefully read and respond promptly to correspondence about the project. If you have questions about the staff report, ask the staff coordinator. Periodically check the progress of your project. Review and respond to comments from agencies and the public.
- **Prepare for the hearing.** Your task is to convince the decision-makers that the project is consistent with planning for the community, and will not adversely affect the neighborhood, services or the environment. Discuss your presentation with the staff coordinator.
- **Attend public hearings** to speak for the project and respond to questions posed by those worried about how your land use may affect them or the community.

What happens after my application is approved?

In most instances, a General Plan amendment is only the first step in subdividing, building or establishing a business. You may be required to comply with conditions of application approval, or to obtain other permits or clearances.

BUILDING DIVISION PERMIT PROCESSES

MENDOCINO COUNTY PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

BUILDING PERMITS

Generally any new construction, or any addition, alteration or repair to an existing building (including re-roofs, fireplaces, swimming pools, carports, etc.) requires a Building Permit.⁵

A Building Permit may be issued only to a California licensed contractor or an owner-builder.

The County of Mendocino utilizes a single-permit system for every structure; that is, one Building Permit application is filed for all work, whether it is a building, electrical, mechanical, or plumbing project.

HOW TO OBTAIN A BUILDING PERMIT

If your construction project requires any kind of Planning Division approval (such as development review, administrative permit or use permit), you must submit the appropriate planning application, **either prior to or concurrent with** your application for a building permit.

Step 1 - Filing of Application and Submittal Requirement

Your first step is to complete a Building Permit Application form and submit it to the Building Division of the Planning and Building Services Department together with three complete sets of plans.

a. The plans must include the following:

1. **Plot Plan:** On 8 1/2" x 11" paper, draw perimeter of entire parcel fully dimensioned with a north arrow. Show all existing and proposed structures. Identify distance to property lines from existing and proposed buildings that affect the property. See attached sample plot plan. Please submit three copies of the plot plan.
2. **Floor Plan:** Show complete dimensions, size and use of each room, location and size of windows and doors; show electrical outlets and subpanels, plumbing and heating fixtures. Show BTU output rating of furnace and hot water heater on plans. Identify energy features and California Energy Commission compliance (CEC) requirements.
3. **Foundation Plan:** Complete dimension plan, including, pier blocks, interior footings and fireplace support. Label and locate porches, patios, planters, garage, etc. Show stepped footings on sloped lots. Show size of footings and stem walls. Show footing depths, rebar and anchor bolt locations.
4. **Elevations:** An elevation is a drawing of the finished exterior of the structure. Minimum of two elevation views showing all openings, siding material, original and finished grade, stepped footing outline, roof pitch and type of roofing material.
5. **Framing Plans:** For floors and roof. Plans to state lumber grade, size and spacing of floor girders, floor joists, wall studs, ceiling joist and roof rafters and/or roof trusses.

6. **Cross-Section:** Provide true section through building showing structural elements, foundation through roof, fireplace section, other sections as needed, earth-to-wood clearances and floor-to-ceiling heights.
7. **Wet Signature:** of person responsible for the plan preparation is required to be on all plans. A licensed professional architect or engineer is required for certain specific conditions such as design of special foundations, large beam spans, truss designs and other items which deviate from standard code practices.

b. Other data that may be required:

1. Two sets of California Energy Commission compliance calculations when required for residential and commercial construction of habitable, conditioned space shall be copied onto the construction plans.
2. Two sets of structural calculations if applicable.
3. Two sets of specifications and engineering calculations if applicable.
4. Two sets of soils report if applicable.
5. Statement from the CalFire if the project is located within a State Responsibility Area.

The omission of any of the above items may result in the permit application not being accepted, a delay of plan checking or return of the plans due to insufficient information.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Building permits require review and approval from other agencies and County departments, such as: Planning, Environmental Health, Air Quality, Public Works, Local fire departments and Water districts etc. Be sure to contact these agencies and departments for their requirements.

FEES

Plan check and permit fees (except Mobile Home setup and building alterations) are based upon project valuation as established by a fee schedule approved by the Board of Supervisors. Fees are necessary to cover plan check, processing and inspection costs of the County. The fees set by the Building Division do not affect the assessed valuation of the structure as determined by the County Assessor.

The types of fees mentioned are not meant to be all-inclusive, as additional fees may be imposed by law.

1. Fees Due When Filing Application

At the time you apply for your Building Permit, you will be required to pay a plan check fee.

2. Fees Due When Permit is Issued

At the time the permit is issued, you must pay all Building Permit fees (Building, plumbing, electrical and mechanical). Any previously paid plan check deposits will be adjusted at this time.

Prior to issuing building permits, any required school impact fees must be paid to the appropriate school district and proof of payment or exemption must be submitted to the Building Division.

CONDITIONS TO BE MET BEFORE BUILDING PERMIT IS ISSUED

1. All fees paid as noted above.
2. Any required planning actions, such as design review or use permit, shall have been completed and conditions of approval complied with. If the property is located within the Coastal Zone, it may be necessary that you apply for and receive a Coastal Development permit before your building permit can be issued.
3. Clearance must be obtained from the Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health. If you propose to use a septic tank, you must secure a septic tank permit. The Division of Environmental Health Department is located at:

UKIAH OFFICE
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1326
Ukiah, CA 95482
463-4466

FORT BRAGG OFFICE
790 South Franklin Street
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
961-2714

4. Any required school impact fees paid to the school district.
5. Fire District Impact fees.
6. Recycle Reuse fees.

ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMIT

Building permit applications are processed on a "first in, first out" basis.

When your plans have been checked, required corrections made, and approval from related agencies has been obtained, your permit is ready to be issued. The Building Division staff will request you to come to the office, pay the remaining fees, and pick up your permit.

If the owner or contractor intends to hire anyone in connection with the project, he/she must furnish a certificate of Workers' Compensation Insurance naming the County of Mendocino as a certificate holder. This certificate, with a current expiration date, must be on file before the permit can be issued. This certificate must be identical in name style to the contractor's license.

Contractors must also present evidence of a current contractor's license (pocket card) and must have a current Mendocino County business license at the time of permit issuance.

TIME LIMITS

You must obtain your permit within 180 calendar days from the date you submitted the application, or submit a written request for an extension prior to the 180th day. (If this time span should lapse, your permit will be canceled). After the permit has been issued to you, you have one year from the date of permit issuance to start work on your building and call for an inspection by the Building Division. After you have received your first inspection, you must call for and receive an inspection every 180 days or your permit will expire and you will be required to reinstate your permit at established fees. If you are unable to meet the 180 day time frame, you may submit a written request for an extension provided the request is submitted prior to the six month period. Two six month extensions can be granted during the lifetime of the permit.

CHANGES

After a permit has been issued, any changes to the plans must be approved by the Building Division. Changes or revisions may delay your project. Two sets of the proposed changes must be prepared and/or initialed by the architect, engineer or plan preparer and submitted for Building Division review. When approved, one set will be given to you for the job site and one retained in the file.

INSPECTIONS

At each stage of construction you will be required to call for and obtain an inspection from the Building Division. The Building Division requires at least a one day advance notice for all inspections. You may call the morning of the scheduled inspection to get an approximate time that the inspector will be at your job site.

An approved copy of the plans and permit must be present at the job site on the day of the inspection.

TO HELP THE INSPECTOR LOCATE YOUR PROJECT SITE, YOU MUST POST THE JOB ADDRESS IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE AT THE DRIVEWAY ENTRANCE PRIOR TO INSPECTION.

The Building Division is required to make the following inspections and shall either approve that portion of the construction as completed or notify you if the construction fails to comply with the adopted codes:

1. **Foundation Inspection:** To be made after excavations for footings are complete and any required reinforcing steel is in place. For concrete foundations, any required forms shall be in place prior to inspection. All materials for the foundation shall be on the job, except where concrete is ready mixed in accordance with California Building Code Standard the concrete need not be on the job. Where the foundation is to be constructed of approved treated wood, additional inspections may be required by the building official.
2. **Concrete Slab or Underfloor Inspection:** To be made after all in-slab or underfloor building service equipment, conduit, piping accessories and other ancillary equipment items are in place but before any concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed, including the subfloor.
3. **Frame Inspection:** To be made after the roof sheathing, all framing, fire blocking and bracing are in place and all pipes, chimneys and vents are complete and the rough electrical, plumbing, and heating wires, pipes and ducts are installed.
4. **Lath and/or Gypsum Board Inspection:** To be made after all lathing and gypsum board, interior and exterior, is in place but before any plastering is applied or before gypsum board joints and fasteners are taped and finished.
5. **Final Inspection:** To be made after finish grading and the building is completed and ready for occupancy. When applicable, provide a CalFire final clearance letter for the inspector at the final inspection.

Other Inspections: In addition to the called inspections specified above, the building inspector may make or require other inspections of any construction work to ascertain compliance with the provisions of the codes.

COMPLETION

A CalFire (California Division of Forestry) final clearance letter must be submitted to the Building Division. After your building has been 'finalized' by the Building Inspector, the local utility company is notified that approval has been granted for the connection of utilities. However, you must subsequently contact the utility company to arrange for service in advance of occupying the building.

BOARD OF BUILDING AND HOUSING APPEALS

The County has established a Board of Building and Housing Appeals to determine the suitability of alternate materials and methods of construction and to provide reasonable interpretations of the building regulations. If you do not agree with the decision of the building inspector, you have the right to appeal to the Board of Building and Housing Appeals. Before submitting your appeal and processing fee, it is recommended that you discuss your situation with the Building Inspector, Chief Inspector and Department Director.

CONSTRUCTION INFORMATION

Construction projects must comply with the uniform codes (building, plumbing, mechanical) mandated by the State of California. To purchase any codebook, go online to www.iccsafe.org, International Code Council.

The County has adopted regulations for Limited Density Rural Dwellings (Class K). These regulations may provide the builder an alternative to the uniform codes. You should contact the Building Division for Class K standards and procedures.

WEB SITES

International Code Council (ICC) www.iccsafe.org
(publishes the California Building and Fire Codes). They also sell the Plumbing and Mechanical codes.

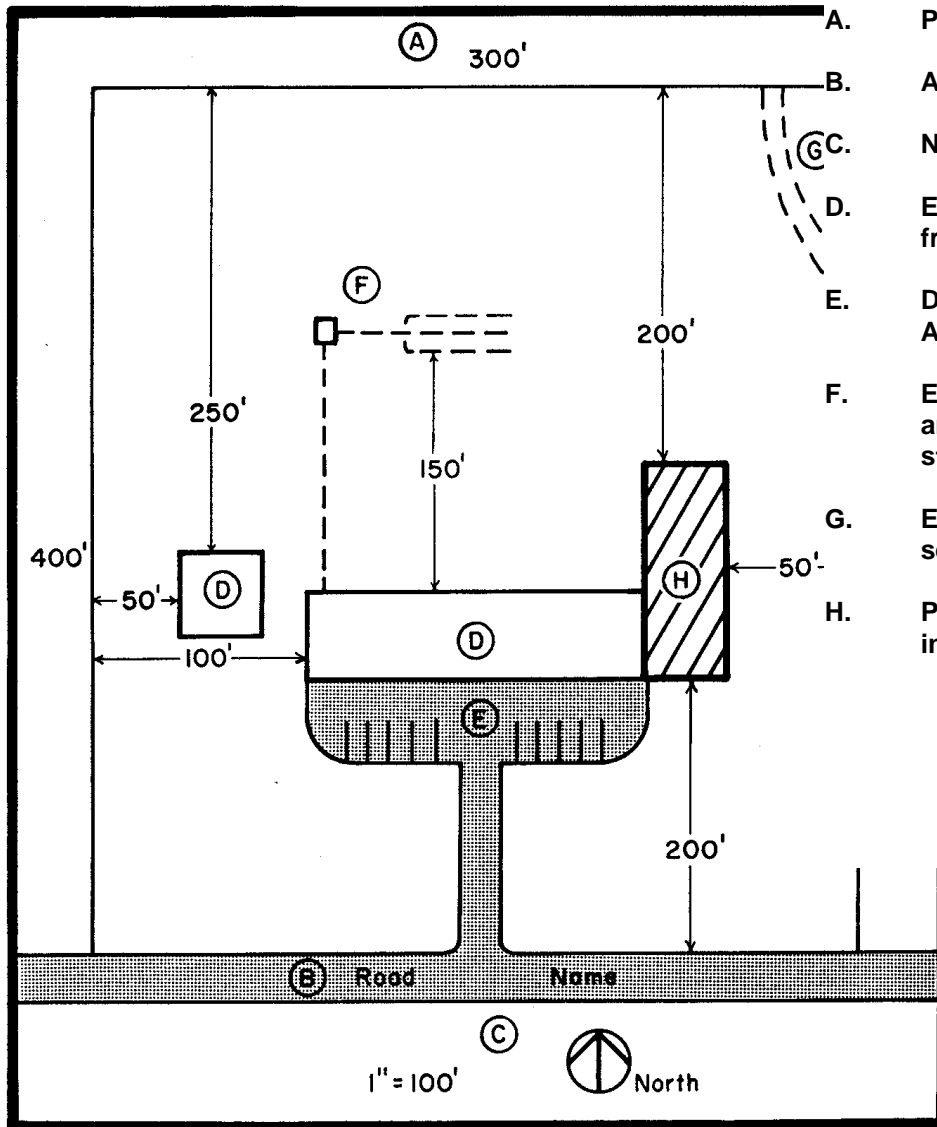
International Conference of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) www.iapmo.org
(publishes the IAPMO Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes)

State of California Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) www.hcd.ca.gov/codes
(Manufactured Housing regulations)

State of California Division of State Architect (DSA) www.dsa.ca.gov
(Regulates architects and engineers, California Building Code)

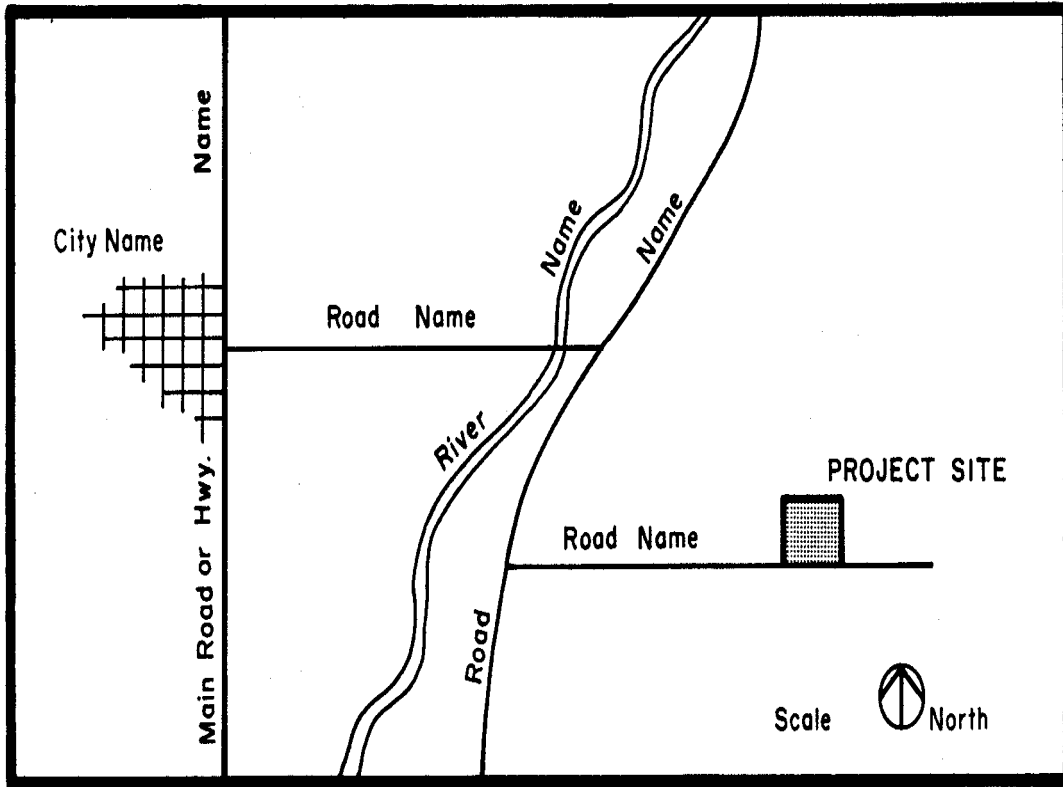
California State Fire Marshal www.fire.ca.gov/office_sfm.html

Sample Plot Plan

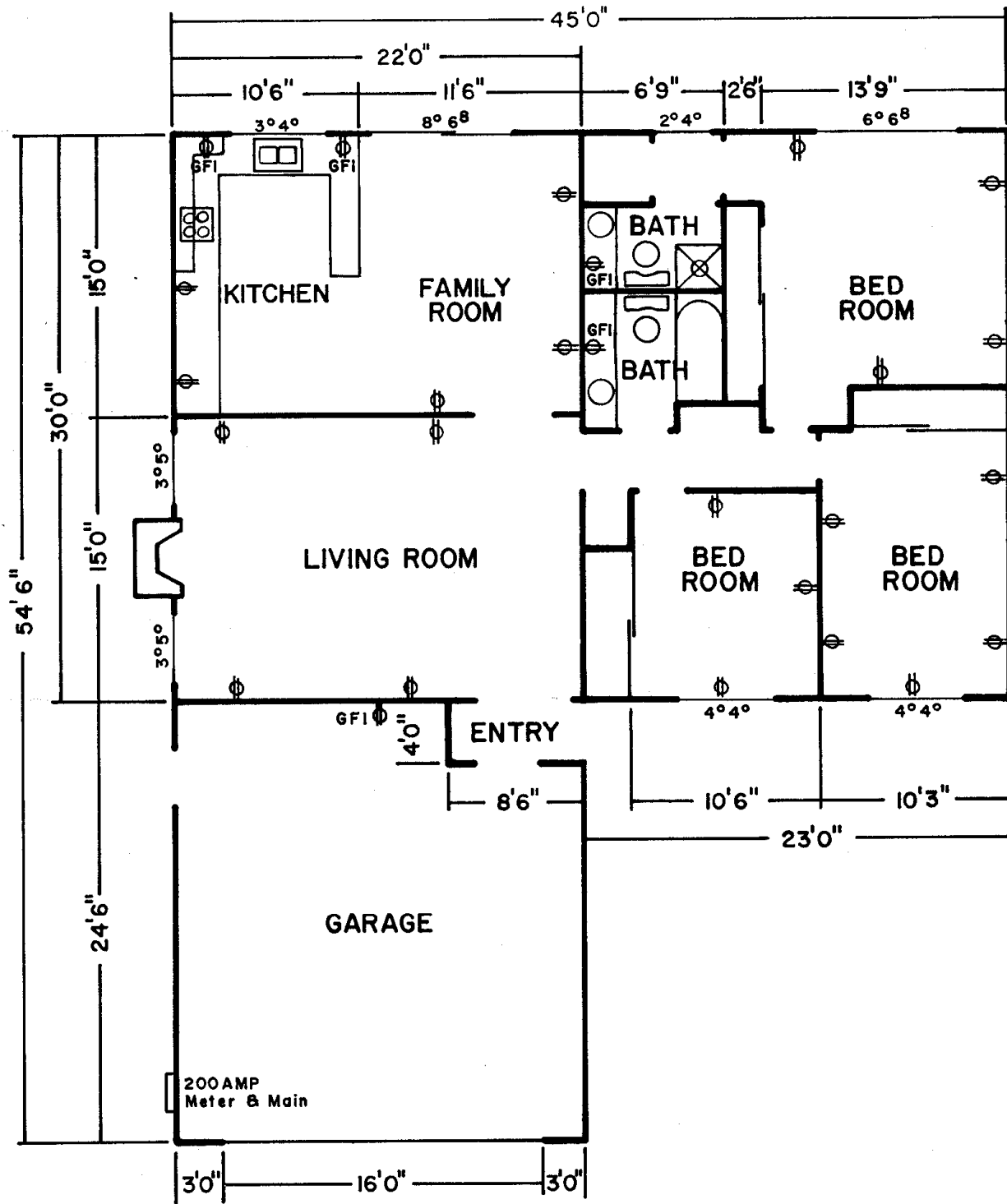


- A. Parcel Shape and Dimensions.
- B. Adjacent Streets.
- C. North Arrow and Scale.
- D. Existing Buildings including distance from property lines.
- E. Driveways, Parking and Loading Areas.
- F. Existing and proposed septic system and wells including distances from structures.
- G. Easements and Utility lines (power, sewer, water, etc.).
- H. Proposed structure or addition including distance from property lines.

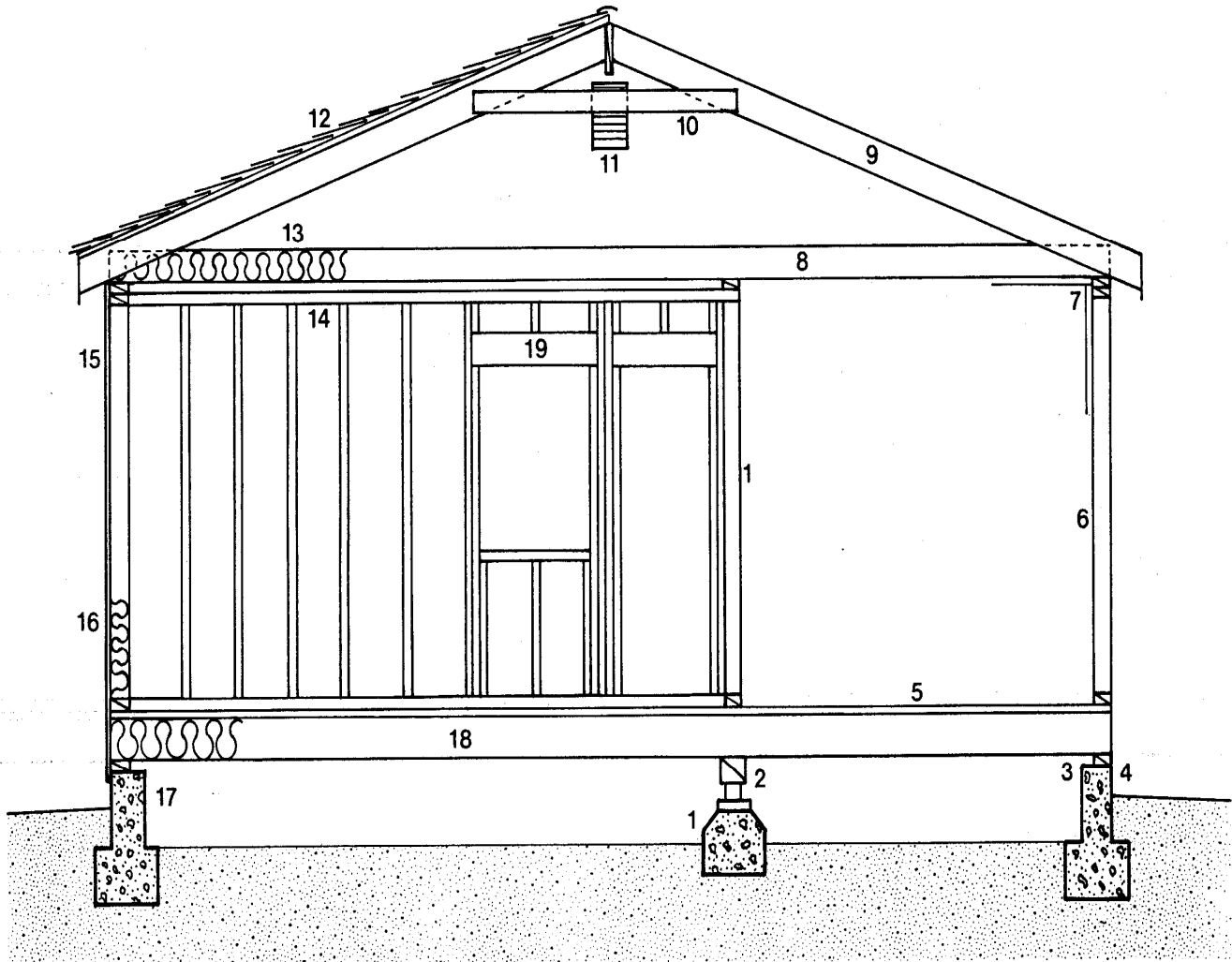
Sample Location Map



Sample Floor Plan



Typical Cross Section Detail



The wall section should show/describe, as a minimum, the following items:

1. Location of bearing walls and sizes of supports.
2. Size and spacing of girders and beams used for supports.
3. Underfloor ventilation and underfloor access.
4. Earth to wood separation: minimum six inches.
5. Floor sheathing size and panel index number.
6. Size and spacing of studs.
7. Wall and ceiling covering.
8. Size and spacing of ceiling joists.
9. Size and spacing of roof members. (If using manufactured trusses, provide two detail sheets from suppliers.)
10. Rafter ties: size, spacing and minimum 48" on center.
11. Attic ventilation.
12. Roof sheathing: size, panel index, type of covering, felt weight and roof slope.
13. Insulation: type, location, and "R" factor.
14. Top Plates.
15. Exterior wall covering and sheathing: type, size and vapor barrier.
16. Shear bracing: type, location and size.
17. Earth to wood clearances: 18" minimum to joists, 12" minimum to girders/beams.
18. Floor joists: size and spacing.
19. Header size.

Provide all dimensions. Include the grade and species of all framing lumber and materials. If project is a room addition, provide detail sheet for point of attachment.

BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS

Typical Process for a Single Family Dwelling

