

PLANNING CLEARANCES

As part of Napa County's Building permit process, the Planning Division of Planning, Building and Environmental Services reviews building permit applications for compliance with the Napa County Zoning Ordinance. The Division will examine a project according to the following project-related areas:

- ◆ Zoning
- ◆ Allowed Use
- ◆ Height
- ◆ Setbacks
- ◆ Use Permits
- ◆ Viewshed
- ◆ Environmental Sensitivity
- ◆ Previous Permits
- ◆ Lot Legality
- ◆ Lot Accessibility
- ◆ Conservation Regulations



ZONING DISTRICT

All properties within the unincorporated area have a specific zoning district designation. In addition to the specific zoning district regulations, projects are subject to the general zoning regulations set forth in Chapter 18.104. If a project is located within an airport area, additional regulations will apply. An overflight easement will be required for those projects located within the Napa County Airport area.



ALLOWED USE

Based on the zoning district regulations applicable to your property, a determination will be made as to whether the proposed project involves an allowed use or if an additional permit is needed. Check the specific zoning district regulations affecting your parcel, prior to submitting building plans to ensure your proposal complies.



HEIGHT

Projects are required to comply with Section 18.104.120 of the zoning ordinance entitled Maximum Building Height. Thirty-five foot height limits apply to most types of structures. Cupolas and similar architectural features, chimneys, mechanical features and similar appurtenances attached to a structure are allowed an extra 15 feet provided the space created is not habitable. Structural heights are measured according to the California Building Code Section 209.9 (1995 Ed.)



SETBACKS

Table 18.104.010 summarizes minimum yard setbacks for each zoning designation. Yard setbacks are generally measured from the property line. Section 18.104.260, 270 and 280 identifies architectural features and structures which may encroach into certain yard setbacks.

Section 18.112 defines road setbacks for state, county and private roads. Road setbacks are measured from the centerline of the road right-of-way abutting the property and at times extend across property boundaries. In such cases, yard setbacks are measured from the outer perimeter of the road setback.

Section 18.108.025 identifies setback requirements for intermittent and perennial streams. Stream setbacks are determined according to the slope of the area as measured from the top of the bank to the edge of the graded area.



USE PERMITS

If the proposed use requires a use permit or a site plan approval based on the specific zoning regulations, you will be informed of the appropriate permit application procedure.



ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY

The Planning Division will inform you if the project location is within an area potentially containing historical features or geologic hazards such as landslides or seismic activity. You will be then responsible for contracting an appropriate professional to conduct a study to determine the extent of the environmental sensitivity.



BUILDING AND PLANNING RECORDS

Building and planning records for the project location are reviewed to determine the completeness and consistency of the building permit application plot plan and detect any outstanding violations and non-conformities.



LOT LEGALITY

The lot must be determined legal before any use or improvement is permitted.



LOT ACCESSIBILITY

Building clearance plot plans must show existing or proposed legal access both from the property line to the project site and from the public road to the parcel.



CONSERVATION REGULATIONS

In September 2004, Napa County implemented Stormwater Management standards, which replaced structural erosion control plans. The stormwater standards are applied to all non-agricultural projects. The Stormwater program is administered by the Public Works Division (see Public Works brochure). While erosion control plans are no longer required for structural projects, the Conservation Regulations remain applicable. Verification of the slope of the terrain adjacent to a creek bank for projects to be located near a stream will be required. If a project is located on slopes 30% or greater, a use permit exception will be required. For slopes 50% or greater, a variance will be required. (see Conservation Regulations Chapter 18.108) Topographic information must be included on your plans to verify compliance with the Conservation Regulations.



VIEWSHED

Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 18.106) provides for a Viewshed Protection Program to protect the scenic quality of the County for both visitors as well as for its residents. If your project can be viewed from certain designated roads (scenic roadway or other such roads that are identified by ordinance) and is located on slopes greater than 15% or on a major/minor ridgeline or on benches/shelves as defined by Section 18.106.020, you will need to obtain a viewshed permit. A copy of the viewshed manual is available for your use. You may wish to consult with the Planning Division prior to developing construction plans.



PLANNING DIVISION REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS:

In order to ensure a smooth and timely review of your application with the Planning Division, include the following information and materials with your building permit application:

- To-scale plot plan showing all existing and proposed structures, wells, water tanks, septic systems, driveways, public road access and property lines;
- Topographic information (1"=20') for all graded or disturbed areas;
- Elevation drawings for all proposed structures;
- Floor plans indicating existing and proposed uses for each room; and
- For determination of required creek setback, certification by appropriate professional (civil engineer, architect, surveyor, etc.) or other suitable evidence indicating the slope from top of bank back to edge of graded area and designation of the appropriate setback.

For further information, contact the Planning Division weekdays at (707) 253-4417.

This brochure is a summary of the applicable regulations. In case of any conflict or need for interpretation, provisions of the Napa County Code prevail.