

# PLANNING PERMIT PROCESS OVERVIEW

PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT

## APPLICATION

An **APPLICATION** starts with preparation and assembly by the applicant of core documents for their project proposal. Different projects and permits each have their own unique requirements. Customers are encouraged to utilize the Application Assistance or Project Facilitation services for help creating a complete application. Core application documents can include the application form, plot plan, grant deed, title report, or hazardous waste statement. Other studies and forms may also be required. A Planner reviews the plot plan, checks records, and conducts preliminary research to determine what application core documents are required. When an application is submitted, a fee payment is collected and forms are signed. Once an application is received, the department has 30 days to determine if the application is “complete” for processing. If deficiencies are identified the department notifies the applicant and the 30 day window of application review starts over once the requested information is submitted.

## PROCESSING

**PROCESSING** an application begins once an application is deemed “complete.” A project description is drafted by a Planner and a Project Transmittal document is created. The most significant part of the processing phase is called referrals. The referrals process involves consultation with other local, state and federal agencies concerning the project. Referral agencies receive the Project Transmittal and respond with comments and recommendations which can include requests for additional studies and reports. Some studies must be done by certified professionals at added expense to the applicant. Even though an application may be deemed complete for processing, additional documentation, studies or reports may be required by referral agencies as part of the processing step. Once all necessary information is obtained, application processing concludes with a draft staff report and, if required, a draft environmental document.

## DECISION

For most projects, the **DECISION** step starts with the mailing of public notices. Newspaper publication is required for permits brought before the Planning Commission. Neighbors and the public have a due process right to inspect the project record and provide comment to the decision-maker. For certain project types, the Director may waive holding a public hearing and allow a decision to be reached administratively without an appearance before the Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, or Board of Supervisors. The public may request a decision on an administrative project be made at a public hearing by the Planning Commission. Decisions on other project types, or cases which are challenging or controversial, must be made by the Planning Commission. Projects before the Zoning Administrator that receive significant public input are sometimes reassigned to the Planning Commission. With very limited exception, most decisions are appealable within the County structure. Within the Coastal Zone, additional appeal processes to the Coastal Commission may be included. A decision is not final until all appeals periods are complete.

## IMPLEMENTATION

**IMPLEMENTATION** is the final phase of the process and involves the completion by the applicant of permit conditions. Permit conditions are often required by law but sometimes are added by the decision-maker to address concerns raised during the public hearing. A permit and its entitlements often may not vest until all conditions have been satisfied. Conditions may include actions such as the recording of maps or legal documents and the obtaining of permits from other agencies. Other conditions may require monitoring or the payment of additional fees. Conditions must be met within certain timeframes that vary depending on the type of permit. If more time is needed to satisfy conditions, applicants may request an extension.



Current Planning Division

3015 H Street Eureka CA 95501 · 707.445.7541 · [www.co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/](http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/)