



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCEDURES FOR PRE-SUBMITTALS OF DISCRETIONARY LAND USE PERMITS

The County has recently begun offering a new service for property owners, businesses and others thinking of applying for a discretionary land use permit. This service consists of a review of project proposals by a technical committee of County staff prior to the preparation and submittal of a formal application to the County. This County staff committee is called the Development Review Committee and consists of representatives from a number of different County agencies involved in the discretionary permit review process. The following is a description of the new Development Review Committee (DRC) and a summary of the procedures guiding its operation.

Goals and Objectives of the DRC

- To ensure that all County Agencies involved in the discretionary development permit process provide Applicants with direction that is clearly communicated, thorough, consistent with previous staff decisions, and timely, on what information (studies, reports, maps, etc.) may be required as part of a discretionary permit application.
- For DRC to provide Applicants with meaningful reviews/ feedback on their discretionary development projects as early as possible in the planning process in order to avoid unanticipated financial costs and time delays during the formal discretionary development application phase.
- To improve the quality of discretionary development application submissions by Applicants, thus helping to expedite the County review and approvals process.
- To provide sufficient guidance to Applicants so that they have the opportunity to improve the overall quality of their projects in so far as it relates to the project's potential impact on the natural and built environments.

Purpose of the DRC

The purpose of the Development Review Committee (DRC) is:

- For County staff that are immediately responsible for reviewing and conditioning discretionary land entitlement (development) permit applications to provide Applicants and their consultants with technical feedback on their development proposals prior to their preparation and submittal of a formal discretionary permit application.

- To provide constructive guidance to the Applicant on how to minimize or avoid potential impacts to the natural and built environments and help prevent a cycle of multiple application submittal packages that are, each in turn, deemed Incomplete.

Discretionary Development Projects that typically may benefit from a DRC review

The DRC will not need to review every potential discretionary development project. For example, relatively simple projects having a specific question or issue that is limited to the Planning Division (e.g. zoning ordinance requirement) do not need to go to the DRC. These matters can be better addressed directly with Planning staff as part of the Division's normal pre-submittal process. However, large, complex projects involving multi-agency issues that raise precedent setting questions, or involve unique or special planning and design aspects, or raise new or previously unevaluated issues are examples of projects that could be reviewed by the DRC. As a guideline, discretionary development projects that typically may benefit from a DRC review include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Unique proposed uses which have never previously been processed at the County of Ventura.
- Five (5) or more dwelling units (construction and subdivision projects).
- Large-scale commercial, industrial, or institutional development projects.
- County of Ventura-initiated projects (capital works, proposed new or amended development-related policies or standards, etc.) requiring a discretionary permit.
- Hillside or coastal developments that, in the opinion of the Permit Coordinator and/or the Case Planner, have unique or special planning and design aspects that warrant a DRC review.
- Development in/adjacent to mapped sensitive biological resources such as wetlands, or areas of concern such as floodplains.
- Uses which generate a significant amount of off-site impacts such as traffic, noise, visual, etc.
- Projects found to be unusual or unique such that they raise new or previously unevaluated issues.
- Projects which require approval from the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors.

DRC Membership

To ensure the DRC functions in a manner which meets the goals, objectives and purpose it is intended to serve, its membership shall be guided by the following:

- Representatives of the DRC will be from the Resource Management Agency, Public Works Agency, Watershed Protection District, and Fire Protection District (as appointed by the Agency/District Directors). In addition, designated alternatives shall be named. See tables below for more detail.
- Members will be mid-level to senior management level staff.
- Members will have delegated authority by their respective Agency Directors to attend DRC meetings on a regularly scheduled basis (time commitment) and to actively participate and provide guidance and, if appropriate, make decisions on behalf of their respective department/ division on DRC matters.
- The DRC will be administratively managed by the Permit Coordinator (i.e., setting Committee agendas, Applicant liaison, compiling meeting directives/responses, etc.).
- Each member of the DRC is expected to actively sit on the Committee for a minimum of two (2) years. This is intended to achieve a greater level of consistency in staff’s direction and decisions to Applicants, particularly for projects having a similar scope and nature.

DRC Administrator	Resource Management Agency	Public Works Agency	Watershed Protection District	Fire Protection District
Permit Coordinator – Winston Wright	Planning	Site Grading Floodplains	Watershed Protection District	Development Review
	Environmental Health	Transportation	Water Resources (NPDES & Groundwater)	

Depending on the proposed scope of the development project, the following additional County departments/ divisions may be invited to participate at the DRC meeting specifically on an ‘as-needed’ basis (i.e., non-regular DRC member):

Building & Safety	Resource Management Agency	Agricultural Commissioner’s Office	County Surveyor’s Office	Public Works Agency	APCD	Other Review Agencies
Building Official (large-scale industrial, commercial, institutional development)	Staff Biologist Cultural Heritage Planner LCA Planner	Planner (agricultural regulations, practices)	Surveyor (property boundary issues)	Integrated Waste Management (reuse, recycling of building materials) Soils/ Geology (landslides, unstable slopes) Water/Sanitation	TBD (air quality regulations and standards)	County Counsel LAFCO Harbor Department Sheriff’s Department

DRC Meeting Schedule

The scheduling of meetings of the DRC will depend largely on the current level of economic activity within Unincorporated Ventura County. In short, meetings will be held as needed. However, when meetings are held, they will take place on a Thursday afternoon in the Hall of Administration so that staff can plan their schedules and full attendance can be ensured to the greatest extent possible.

The DRC is an informal, staff advisory body that provides technical feedback to Applicants and their representatives on required County-established standards, policies, and other regulatory requirements. The DRC meeting is for advisory purposes only and no decisions will be made; therefore, it is not subject to the Brown Act and no agenda will be published or posted prior to the meetings.

DRC Meeting Fee for Pre-Application Submittals

The fee for a pre-submittal DRC review of a proposed project is \$1,800. This is a flat fee that covers the cost of a single DRC meeting with the Applicant and their representatives, and a follow-up letter summarizing the DRC comments and direction. If an Applicant wishes to have the benefit of a second DRC review of the same or similar project, a new fee of \$1,800 would be required for the additional review.

DRC Meeting Review Process

Given that each project is unique and each application must be reviewed based on the project setting, the DRC process should be flexible enough to accommodate some variability. However, in general, the following outlines the basic review process and procedures:

1. Determination to refer to the DRC:
 - 1.1 The Applicant will make an appointment with the Permit Coordinator to discuss the project proposal and to complete the checklist of submittal requirements and the project description questionnaire which is available in the Planning Division's document entitled "*Entitlement, Zone Change, and Subdivision Application Packet*".
 - 1.2 The Permit Coordinator will recommend to the Applicant whether the project should be referred to the DRC for review prior to formal application submittal. If the Applicant believes his/her project should have a DRC review even if the Permit Coordinator does not, the Applicant can request that the project be addressed by the DRC. Regardless of how the project reaches the DRC, the Applicant shall be responsible for paying the \$1,800 fee for this service.

- 1.3 The Applicant will be instructed to provide a basic information package (referred herein as the ‘DRC Package’) that describes the proposed development adequately enough to enable the DRC to understand what development is being proposed, and to determine what reports, plans, and other information needs to be provided should the Applicant later decide to submit a formal discretionary permit application. The Applicant will complete a DRC project review request form (see Appendix ‘A’) with the Permit Coordinator.

The Applicant will be required to provide ten (10) complete DRC packages directly to the Permit Coordinator a minimum of two weeks prior to the scheduled DRC meeting date. Submission of the DRC packages is mandatory in order for the Coordinator to include the Applicant’s project on the next available DRC meeting agenda. The Permit Coordinator will screen the submission to ensure that all of the following information is included in the package:

- Property owner and consultant (single point of contact) contact information.
- Subject property description (Assessors Parcel Number, address).
- As complete a project description as possible (the Applicant should use the project description questionnaire contained in the “*Entitlement, Zone Change, and Subdivision Application Packet*”, as a guide).
- A site plan that illustrates and labels:
 - scale and north arrow.
 - adjacent land uses (e.g., single family dwelling, open space).
 - all existing structures and proposed habitable and non-habitable development, including any site grading.
 - on-site driveways and roads.
 - all utilities, easements, and underground and surface infrastructure on the subject property.
 - all watercourses, wetlands, and other environmental features on and immediately adjacent to the property.
 - proposed tree removal (include species).

2. DRC Review Process:

- 2.1 The Permit Coordinator shall prepare the DRC meeting agenda on a project first-come-first-serve basis. Should the upcoming DRC meeting

agenda already be full, the project will be scheduled for the next available meeting date.

- 2.2 DRC agenda packages will be distributed to the DRC members and the Applicant at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 2.3 At the DRC meeting, the Permit Coordinator shall present the project to the DRC members and shall be responsible for preparing a summary of issues and requirements raised by the DRC at the meeting.
- 2.4 DRC feedback shall focus on defining the project description/scope, identifying project problems and suggesting solutions, identifying information that needs to be submitted as part of the formal discretionary development application, and providing a “heads up” of issues, requirements, and discretionary permit processing timelines.
- 2.5 DRC members shall make every effort to ensure that project submittals are thoroughly reviewed prior to the meeting and to be prepared to provide succinct and meaningful feedback. DRC members will be responsible for providing the Permit Coordinator with a ‘bulleted list’ of project areas of concern/ issues no later than one day prior to the scheduled DRC meeting. The DRC meeting is not the proper venue for the Applicant/ representative and DRC members to debate County policy.
- 2.6 If the DRC decides collectively that the proposal warrants a second pre-application DRC review, that decision will be made at the meeting with the Applicant/representative in attendance.
- 2.7 DRC meeting directives/ responses will be compiled by the Permit Coordinator and provided to the Applicant.

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