



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division
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Discretionary Permit Process

Discretionary Permits

Discretionary permits require:

- Approval from a decision-making authority (Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Director)
- Environmental review for potential impacts
- A public hearing

Public hearings allow the applicant and all interested parties to present their testimony and position on the requested use. Such permits can be approved, denied, or approved with conditions, and the decision can be appealed (10 days following date and decision).

Permit adjustments don't require a public hearing. For more information about: any individual type of discretionary permit; the materials and information required for application submittal; processing time, filing fees, etc., please review on-line materials at www.ventura.org/planning or call 805-654-2488.

Ministerial Permits

Ministerial permits are granted if a project meets all established standards set forth in the County Non-Coastal or Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

Conversely, such permits are automatically denied if all statutes cannot be met. No public hearing is required for ministerial permits.

A Zoning Clearance for a second dwelling unit is an example of a ministerial permit.

Permits Involving Discretionary Decisions

The following types of applications are subject to discretionary decisions:

- General Plan Amendments
- Ordinance Amendments
- Zone Changes
- Variances
- Conditional Use Permits
- Planned Development Permits
- Tract Maps
- Parcel Maps
- Parcel Map Waivers (some exceptions)
- Conditional Certificates of Compliance
- Modifications to above Entitlements
- Appeals
- Revocations of Land Use Permits
- Permit Adjustments

Other Agencies Reviewing Discretionary Permits

Planning staff will distribute your application to other County agencies (Public Works, Watershed Protection District, Environmental Health, APCD, Fire Department, Sheriff, General Services, etc.) and may request input from neighboring cities, LAFCO, special districts, Local Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs) and homeowners associations. It is requested that you contact these agencies prior to submitting your application to obtain their requirements and/or comments.

How Long Will it Take to Process a Discretionary Permit?

Once an application has been determined to be complete, State law requires that a decision be made within either 6 months or 1 year depending on the type of environmental document prepared for the project.

In Ventura County, most discretionary permits take 5-8 months to process from the date the application is deemed complete.

Coastal Permits

Coastal permits generally follow the typical path as other discretionary applications. However, for some applications prior to becoming final, County decisions are sent to the California Coastal Commission for their review and required appeal period.

The Discretionary Permit Process

