

How to Apply for Design Review on the Bayside of San Mateo County

Which properties are covered by Design Review regulations?



There are five design review districts in the County. Design review districts within the Bayside are Emerald Lake Hills, Palomar Park, Devonshire and the commercial area along Middlefield Road in North Fair Oaks. On the Coastsides are the Mid-Coast District, which includes portions of El Granada and Moss Beach, and the Rural Service Centers, which include portions of San Gregorio and Pescadero. You can obtain a map at the Development Review Center that shows these districts.

On the Bayside, design review is administered by the Design Review Committee. On the Coastsides, design review is administered by the Planning staff.

If your property is located in any of these districts, you may need design review. This handout covers requirements for the Bayside districts only.

What is the easiest way to determine whether my property is in a design review district?

Check your property's zoning. If it includes the letters "DR" (for example, "RH/DR" or "C-1/NFO/DR"), then the property is in a design review district.

How do I start the design review process?



There are three levels of review for Bayside districts. As the first step, meet informally with a staff member at the DRC counter to determine the level that applies to you.

What are the three levels?

- ✓ **Level 1:**
Very minor projects, such as adding a new skylight or reroofing. If your project is within this category, the counter staff can authorize you to apply for a building permit without your having to apply for design review or pay a design review fee.
- ✓ **Level 2:**
Minor projects, such as infill additions (unless it is a commercial addition visible from the road in a C-1/NFO or C-2/NFO district) or decks over 24 inches in height, which do not conflict with design review requirements. If your project is within this category, you can apply for a formal exemption from the full design review process. The County's Design Review Administrator will review your application for exemption. Normally, the formal exemption process takes about 3 weeks.
- ✓ **Level 3:**
Major projects, such as a new single-family home, commercial building (along Middlefield Road in North Fair Oaks) or additions to a home or commercial building. These projects must have a full-scale review by the Design Review Committee.

What is involved in a full-scale design review?



Before applying for design review, you and your project designer must have a pre-application meeting with the Design Review Administrator.

The purpose of this meeting is provide you and your designer with guidance about the regulations and design standards of the design review ordinance, and to answer any questions you may have about the design review process.

Next, submit an application, accompanied by the following:

- ✓ An Environmental Information Form
- ✓ Proof of property ownership
- ✓ If you do not own the property, evidence that the owner agrees with your application
- ✓ Location map
- ✓ Site plan
- ✓ Building elevations
- ✓ Landscape plans, if your application proposes landscaping
- ✓ A written explanation demonstrating that the project conforms to the area's design review standards and guidelines
- ✓ Floor plans
- ✓ Fees

See the design review application form for additional information and materials required.

Who will determine whether my project is approved?



A public hearing will be held by your district's Design Review Committee, which is made up of one resident from your community and two licensed architects who are San Mateo County residents. If your project requires other permits normally decided by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, then that same board will make a final decision on your design review application. The decision is normally made in four to six months.

Can I appeal the Committee's decision?



You can appeal the Committee's decision to the Planning Commission and the Commission's decision to the Board of Supervisors.

What fees must I pay?



You must pay a flat fee for an exemption (level 2) or a committee review (level 3), plus any required environmental review fees.

What's the next step in this process?

Read the pamphlet *General Procedures When You Apply for a Planning or Building Permit*. This pamphlet explains the general procedures for applying for a permit, paying fees, calling for inspections, and other related matters. Then you should also review the following documents, which contain other information that you may need:

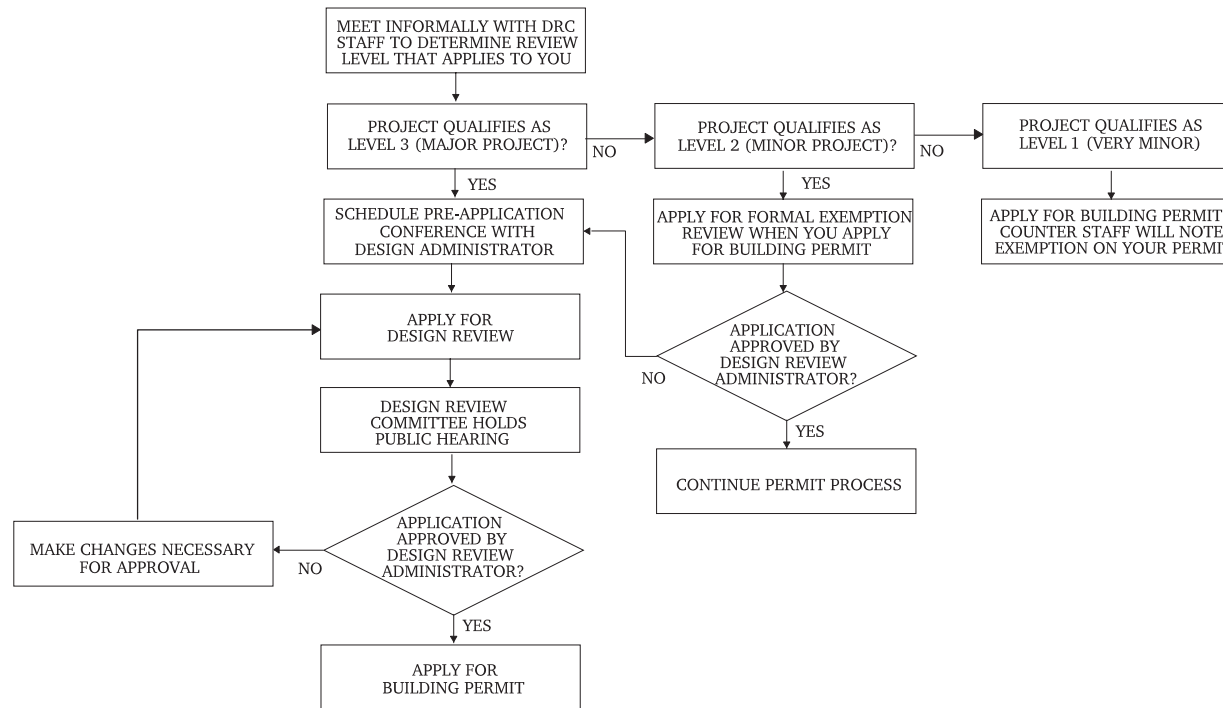
How Environmental Assessment May Affect Your Project

How to Appeal a Decision

After you have become familiar with these documents, schedule an informal meeting with DRC staff for guidelines and answers to any questions that you may have.

If you are new to San Mateo County, you may also wish to make an appointment to meet with staff as part of the County's Early Assistance Meeting Program. Early assistance meetings are designed to acquaint owner/ builders, contractors, architects, and other professionals who are new to the area or are unfamiliar with our permit system, with the different agencies involved, and the various costs and requirements. There is no charge for the meeting, which you can schedule by calling (650) 363-4161.

Permit Process to Apply for Design Review on the Bayside of San Mateo County



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