



Major Subdivision – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Major Subdivision?

A Major Subdivision is a process of dividing land into five (5) or more parcels in which a tentative and final map approval is required, prior to the sale, lease, or finance of the new parcels. Major Subdivision applications are reviewed for compatibility with the environment, surrounding community and consistency with applicable regulations such as zoning, [County Road Improvement Standards and Land Development Requirements](#), [Subdivision regulations](#), (Chapter 26 of County Code), infrastructure requirements by the local Fire District, water supply or sewage disposal agencies, and General Plan policies. Subdivision applications may be accompanied by Rezone Petition, General Plan amendments, or Policy Plan Overlay application.

I am considering subdividing my property. Where do I begin?

Submit a Pre-Application proposal. The Pre-Application process is beneficial to obtain early feedback on your proposal. It is an opportunity to meet with multiple Departments to review preliminary or conceptual designs. Comments are informational only, based upon the material provided, and are not binding. Pre-application meetings are not public hearings and no formal action is taken. Proposals that require rezoning, General Plan amendment, or Policy Plan Overlay must begin with the **pre-application conference**.

I submitted my subdivision application. What is the process?

Step 1 – Completeness. Staff will perform an initial review of your project once a complete application is filed with the Planning Services Division. Refer to the [Subdivision Submittal Requirements Checklist](#) for a comprehensive range of information and documents necessary to file a complete application. Within 30 days of filing you will be notified if your application is deemed complete or whether additional information is necessary for evaluation and processing. If an application is deemed incomplete, you will receive a letter detailing the additional information necessary to continue processing.

Step 2 - Environmental review: Major Subdivisions are subject to the discretion of a hearing body and therefore, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. CEQA requires the County to evaluate a development proposal to determine whether or not a project has the potential to generate significant effects on the environment. Biological, air quality, noise, and traffic are examples of environmental resources that may be analyzed. The Planning Services Division will determine the appropriate level of environmental review for your project. Reference the Planning Services Division [Environmental Review brochure](#) for additional information regarding the CEQA process.

Supplemental application fees may be required depending on the level of environmental review required for your project. In addition, staff may request that the applicant provide professionally prepared site-specific studies such as a biological assessment, acoustical analysis, traffic study, or wetland delineation report to assist in the preparation of the environmental document. The cost of special studies is not included in the Planning Services fee schedule and is the obligation of the applicant.

Step 3 - Public hearing: Two noticed public hearings are required; one by the Planning Commission who forwards a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for the final decision. A **staff report** which includes recommendations and conditions of approval will be provided to the applicant prior to the public hearing. A public hearing notice will be published in the local newspaper and property owners within 300 feet of the subject

property will receive the notice and invited to comment. Given the rural nature of the County, the noticing may be expanded to one-half (1/2) mile of the subject property.

How long does the process take?

Processing times for a Major Subdivision could take approximately 6-8 months once an **application is deemed complete**. Applicants can assist in the efficient review and expedited processing times by ensuring your application submittal documents are accurate and complete, and by quickly responding to staff requests for any additional information. Processing times can vary depending on the completeness of the application, the complexity of the project, level of environmental review, and compatibility with the neighborhood. If a Major Subdivision is accompanied by a Rezone Petition, General Plan amendment, or Policy Plan Overlay application, processing times take longer.

My application was tentatively approved. What are the next steps?

The Planning Services Division will issue the **Letter of Approval** which includes adopted conditions of approval. Tentative Map approval is valid for two (2) years. Compliance with the adopted conditions of approval and environmental measures within this timeframe is required to proceed to the final map recordation phase. This could involve the installation of infrastructure, the dedication of right-of-way, or compliance with environmental mitigation measures.

How do I submit an application package?

Prior to applying, consult with a planner to discuss your specific situation. To submit the application, you must set up an appointment to review the application for completeness. Reference the [Planning Application Submittal Guide](#) for specific details regarding contact information, office hours, and application filing.

This application packet includes:

- Subdivision - Submittal Requirements Checklist**
- Subdivision - Application**
- Project Description**
- Environmental Evaluation Questionnaire**
- Application Processing Agreement**