



# Hillside Development Information and Checklist

**HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT PERMITS.** Some sloped properties in Arcata are subject to hillside development standards, which were adopted to preserve environmental and scenic resources, and protect existing and new structures from hazards such as unstable slopes and soils.

The standards apply to any proposed development on hillside lands mapped on the General Plan Hazards Map (see [Figure PS-a](#)). Development and grading on slopes greater than 15% in the Residential – Very Low (RVL) zoning district may be allowed with Hillside Development Permit approval.

The review ensures that a project will minimize visual, scenic and environmental impacts by encouraging retention of natural features and vegetation. It also recognizes that as slopes increase, so does potential environmental degradation, including slope failure and increased storm water runoff. The process encourages appropriate road construction and grading in hillside areas, and encourages structure design to maintain the visual character of hillsides.

**The Process.** After submission of an Application and Deposit, a Planner reviews the request against requirements of the Land Use Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Referrals are made to Engineering and Environmental Services Departments, as well as other internal and external agencies. This permit may be approved by the Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission, depending on the approval authority described in the Land Use Code. Discuss your project with a Planner to determine the approval authority. This permit process requires a public hearing.

**CHECKLIST.** (Submit electronic copies of plans. Provide three hard copies of large scale plans. Electronic copies of all documents are helpful.)

- Application Form and Deposit
- Project Description
- Site Plan clearly drawn on one sheet, containing required information (see [Site Plan Checklist](#))
- Topographic Map covering the entire site and areas on surrounding parcels within 50 feet of the site boundary, with contour intervals of two feet, including the following information:
  - The building site
  - Slopes less than or equal to 10%
  - Slopes greater than 10% and less than or equal to 15%
  - Slopes greater than 15% and less than or equal to 20%
  - Slopes greater than 20% and less than or equal to 25%
  - Slopes greater than 25%
- Preliminary Geotechnical Report that identifies and proposes mitigation measures for any soils or geologic problems that may affect site stability or structural integrity (please note that a Final Geotechnical Report may also be required)
- Site Constraints Analysis prepared by a qualified professional for properties which potentially have sensitive environmental resources, such as endangered plants and animals or a wildlife corridor. Check with a Planner if necessary. The report must include proposed mitigation measures.
- For projects not exempt from CEQA, submit a CEQA checklist (check with a Planner if you have questions)
- Additional information and supporting documentation as necessary to assist with permit processing (review [Chapter 9.52.070\(E\)](#) of the Arcata Land Use Code to ensure application materials meet the findings)

Technical studies (1 hard copy and 1 electronic copy) may be required including a cultural/historic resource report, geologic/soils report, wetland delineation, noise study, transportation study, solar access, etc.

For more information on Hillside Development, see [Chapter 9.52](#) of the Arcata Land Use Code. If you have questions, speak with a Planner by calling #707-822-5955.