



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 the link for 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 is 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 per 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 percent
- Slopes greater than 10 percent and less than or equal to 15 percent
- Slopes greater than 15 percent and less than or equal to 20 percent
- Slopes greater than 20 percent and less than or equal to 25 percent
- Slopes greater than 25 percent

Preliminary geotechnical report that identifies and proposes mitigation measures for any soils or geologic problems that may affect site stability or structural integrity (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 (see a planner if you have questions).

Additional information and supporting documentation as necessary to assist with permit processing (review LUC § 9.52.070(E) – Hillside Development to ensure application materials support code findings)

A review by the Cultural Resource Review from North Coastal Information Center (NCIC) may be required. If so, you will be notified, and payment requested for the review.

For complete information go to www.cityofarcata.org and find the link for the Land Use Code. Section § 9.52 describes regulations regarding Hillside Development. If you have questions, speak with Planning Staff at the number below.

City of Arcata · Community Development Department

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