

**CHAPTER 4:
PLANNING ENTITLEMENT
PROCESS**

4.1 OBTAINING HELP BEFORE FINALIZING PLANS

4.1.1. Zoning Code and Special Planning Area Ordinances

Prior to formal submission of a request for a planning entitlement, it is strongly recommended that applicants review the [County Zoning Code](#) to determine if the project is consistent with the use tables, development standards and regulations contained in the Zoning Code.

A Zoning Code User Guide is available at

<http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/Zoning%20Code%20Final%20Adopted%20July%2022%202015/Updates%20to%202015%20Zoning%20Code/Amended%20June%202017/Adopted%20User%20Guide%20July%2022%202015%2005bJune%2022%202017%5d.pdf>

This Guide will help you with the following:

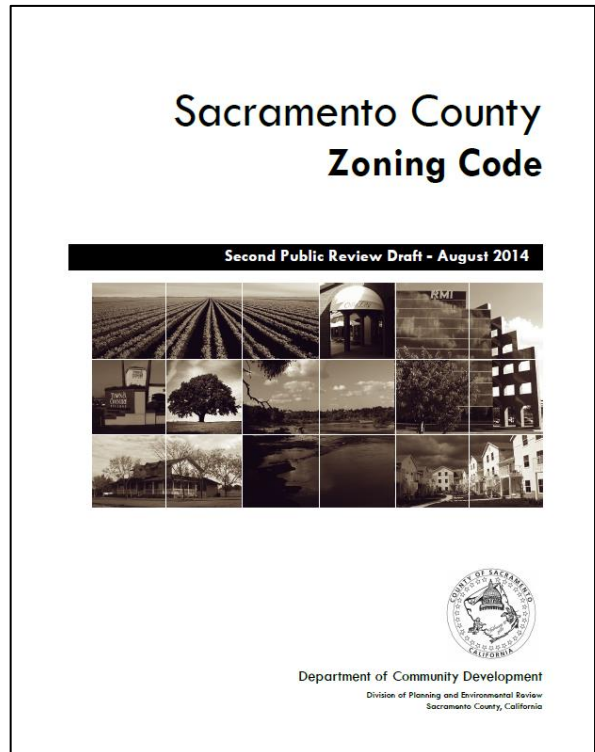
- Find the Zoning Code regulations that are applicable to your property.
- Determine the allowable uses on your property.
- Determine development standards for your project.
- Determine whether your project needs development/permit approvals.
- Information on development/permit approval process.

This Guide also provides examples of the Zoning Code being applied to specific projects.

If your project site is located within one of the Special Planning Areas (SPA) or Neighborhood Planning Areas (NPA) in the Delta, your project will need to be consistent with the relevant SPA or NPA ordinance. Access the relevant SPA or NPA ordinance by using the links below.

- SPA Ordinances – [Courtland](#), [Locke](#), [Lower Andrus Island](#), [Walnut Grove](#)
- NPA Ordinance – [Freeport](#)

If your project is located in the Courtland, Locke or Walnut Grove SPA, please refer to Chapter 5.



The Zoning Code establishes land use zones and standards and regulations for development within those zones within unincorporated Sacramento County.

Website Links to Helpful Information

- [Find the zoning of properties](#)
- [Find your parcel number](#)
- [Status of pending projects](#)
- [Current County General Plan](#)
- [Application Forms](#)
- [County Zoning Code](#)
- [County Design Guidelines](#)
- [Fees](#)

To attain estimates of Planning and Environmental Review (PER) project review costs, please visit the [Planning and Environmental Review Fees webpage](#).

If your project is a new building or a major addition to an existing building, it is highly recommended that you or your architect review [the Countywide Design Guidelines](#) for consistency and compliance.

If the project has the potential to result in major land use ramifications or impacts, it is recommended that you review the [County General Plan](#). The following general plan elements are the most relevant for developing in the Delta.

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Delta Protection

State Agency Review: For projects located in the “Primary Zone” (see pg. 58), applicants are encouraged to contact the [Delta Protection Commission \(DPC\)](#) for the purpose of determining consistency with the Commission’s “Land Use and Resource Management Plan” (LURMP (See Chapter 6). Projects located anywhere in the “legal” Delta (see pg. 69) could be subject to the [Delta Stewardship Council \(DSC\)](#) Delta Plan. Applicants should contact the Council to determine whether the proposal is defined as a “covered action” and subject to their consistency certification (See Chapter 6).

4.1.2. Getting Assistance Before Finalizing Plans

Prior to submitting an application for a project in the Delta, it is strongly recommended that applicants contact the Office of Planning and Environmental Review (PER) to discuss the proposed project. PER planners can assist you in determining exactly what kind of permit is needed, how long it will take to process, and what fees are involved.

For larger and more complicated projects, it is highly recommended that you schedule a Pre-Application Meeting (PAM). Staff from various County departments will provide input and guidance. PAM requests are subject to a fee and can be scheduled at the Downtown Business Assistance Center located at 827 7th Street, Room 102 in downtown Sacramento. There is a [Pre-Application Meeting Form](#).

Options in Getting Help

- Contact Sac Plan for planning information and questions. (Phone 916-874-6221), (Email Sacplan@Saccounty.net)
- Visit the Sacramento County Building Assistance Center
 - Hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 - Address: 827 7th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, Room 102.
 - Call and make an appointment with a planner (916-874-6141)



[Center Location Maps](#)

Before Arriving at the Public Counter or Appointment

Included below are links to information that you can provide to the planners to streamline the meeting.

- [Determine if project is in unincorporated County](#)
- [Determine your Assessor parcel number](#)
- [Find out your zoning](#)
- Write down a short description of what you intend to do with your property. Please include drawings if possible.

Please note that a Planning Review Fee charged per hour will be charged for public information requests that take longer than 15 minutes. See the [Planning Research Application Form](#) for more information, and to make your specific research request.

4.2 PREPARING AND SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

4.2.1. Pre-Submittal Meetings

Pre-submittal review meetings with the Office of Planning and Environmental Review (PER) are not required but are highly recommended for projects within the Delta. Call 916-874-6141 to schedule a meeting with a Senior Planner on the Application Processing Team.

4.2.2. Preparing Your Application

The General Application Form Packet contains the basic application required for all entitlement applications, except for those listed to the above right. The application forms are “writable” pdf documents. They can be completed electronically and saved for inclusion in the required CD in addition to being printed for signatures. Here is the [link](#) to the packet.

[Application instructions and checklist](#) are available to help applicants prepare complete applications.

Supplemental applications are needed for certain projects in addition to the General Application Packet. These can be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/Planning-Applications.aspx>

Examples of application exhibits are also available for applicants. There is an example of a [Rezone Exhibit](#), a [Site Plan](#) and a [Tentative Parcel Map](#).

4.2.3. Submitting Your Application

You will submit your application and appropriate processing and review fees to PER. Submittal options including mailing in your application and check or submitting your plans at the PER counter at the County Building Assistance Center (827 7th Street, Room 102). Please see **Exhibit 4.2** (pg. 39) for planning application workflow.

Miscellaneous Planning and Environmental Forms (No General Planning Application Required)

- [Boundary Line Adjustment](#)
- [Temporary Use Permit](#)
- [Alcoholic Beverage Sales \(ABC/PCN\) Forms and Fees](#)
- [Other Miscellaneous Planning and Environmental Forms](#)

Design Review Application Forms

- [Discretionary Design Review Supplemental Application Form](#) (Requires [General Application Form](#))
 - [Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide](#)
- [Non-Discretionary Design Review Application Form](#) (Does Not Require General Application Form)
 - [Non-Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide](#)
- [Supplemental Application Forms for Various Project Types](#)

Fees

- [Planning Fee Schedule](#)
- [Environmental Review Fees](#)

Submitting Application

By Mail: 827 7th Street, Room 225
Sacramento, CA 95814

In Person: Sacramento County
Building Assistance Center

Address: 827 7th Street,
Sacramento, CA 95814,
Room 102.

Exhibit 4.1

Types of Planning Entitlements

The following is a list of the most common planning entitlements and a description of each entitlement.

- **Boundary Line Adjustment:** A minor adjustment of lot lines between four or less adjoining parcels. This process does not create new parcels.
- **Design Review:** Review of the buildings and landscaping of a project by the Design Review Administrator and Design Review Advisory Committee. The Countywide Design Guidelines are used for this review.
- **Parcel Map:** A request to subdivide an existing parcel(s) into 4 parcels or less.
- **Rezone:** A request to change the zoning of a parcel(s).
- **Subdivision Map:** A request to subdivide an existing parcel(s) into 5 parcels or more.
- **Use Permit:** A permit granted by the County allowing uses not allowed as a matter of right in a zoning district.
- **Variance:** A type of exception which allows the owner to use his or her property in a manner different from that proscribed for the zone in which the property is located.

4.3 INTAKE AND INITIAL REVIEW

4.3.1. Review for Application Completeness (884 Review)

Per State Planning law (Gov't Code section 65943), the County has 30 days to review a submitted application for completeness. If it is deemed that additional information is needed, the applicant must be notified within this 30-day window. Below is sampling of the materials that the Office of Planning and Environmental Review looks for during the initial review of an application:

- Complete entitlement requests.
- Complete application forms.
- Complete exhibits.
- Environmental issues.
- Major planning policy issues.

After the project application is deemed complete, a Project Manager is assigned to your project.

4.3.2. Project Distribution

Most project applications are routed to pertinent County departments and outside agencies for review and comment. Numerous departments/agencies can be involved in commenting and recommending conditions of approval for the project. Which agencies receive your plans depends on what type your project is and where the project is located. Agency comments are sent to the Project Manager and these are organized and assembled for the staff report.

4.3.3. Project Review Committee

The Project Review Committee (PRC) meetings enable reviewing agencies to be together in one room in reviewing a project. The applicant and Project Manager both attend this meeting to provide feedback to the agencies and also receive feedback from the agencies. This is an opportunity for the applicant to find out problems or issues early in the planning entitlement process. PRC meetings are held every first and third Thursdays of the month at 8:30 am. The location of the meeting is at 827 7th Street, DCD Community Room, First Floor, Downtown Sacramento.



Submitting Application

By Mail: 827 7th Street, Room 225
Sacramento, CA 95814

In Person: Sacramento County
Building Assistance Center

Address: 827 7th Street,
Sacramento, CA 95814,
Room 102.

Hours: Monday – Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Some Agencies That May Comment on Your Project

Fire
Sheriff's
Transportation
Regional Transit
Water Resources
SMUD
Regional Sanitation District
Parks and Recreation Districts
Sacramento Housing and
Redevelopment Agency
Sewer
Libraries
Airports
Environmental Management

4.4 APPLICATION PROCESSING AND REVIEW

4.4.1. Project Analysis

The Project Manager will review the project plans for consistency with adopted plans and standards and will work with you to address any inconsistencies. The Project Manager will also identify any planning or environmental issues that may impact your project.

4.4.2. Community Planning Advisory Councils

Community Planning Advisory Councils (CPACs) meetings provide a community-based forum where projects can be presented and discussed prior to the formal hearing process. CPACs review plans and make recommendations based on community input and personal knowledge of the community. The CPACs votes to approve or deny a project and can provide conditions of approval for a project.

The CPAC for the Delta Community is the Delta Citizens Municipal Advisory Council (DCMAC). The DCMAC reviews planning entitlements such as parcel maps, use permits and rezones. Building permit plans that need review in the Courtland, Locke, and Walnut Grove Special Planning Areas are reviewed by local review bodies (See Chapter 5).

DCMAC members are volunteers and nominated by the member of the County Board of Supervisor representing the Delta (District 5). When the DCMAC has projects to review, it meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. The meeting location is the Jean Harvie Community Center - 14273 River Road, Walnut Grove, CA. [Meeting agendas](#) are available at the PER's website.

4.4.3. Design Review

New construction, additions, exterior remodeling of a commercial, office, mixed use, industrial or institutional building, and certain parking lot improvement projects are subject to the County's Design Review process. The Design Review Administrator will review your project for consistency with the County's [Design Guidelines](#).

Adopted Plans and Standards

Zoning Code
General Plan
Specific Plans, Community Plans
Design Guidelines
Neighborhood Planning Areas (NPAs)
Special Planning Areas (SPAs)
Overlay Zones
Improvement Standards



CPAC meetings allow local input on a project.

Design Review Submittal Information

- [Non-Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide](#)
- [Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide](#)
- [Design Review Program Webpage](#)

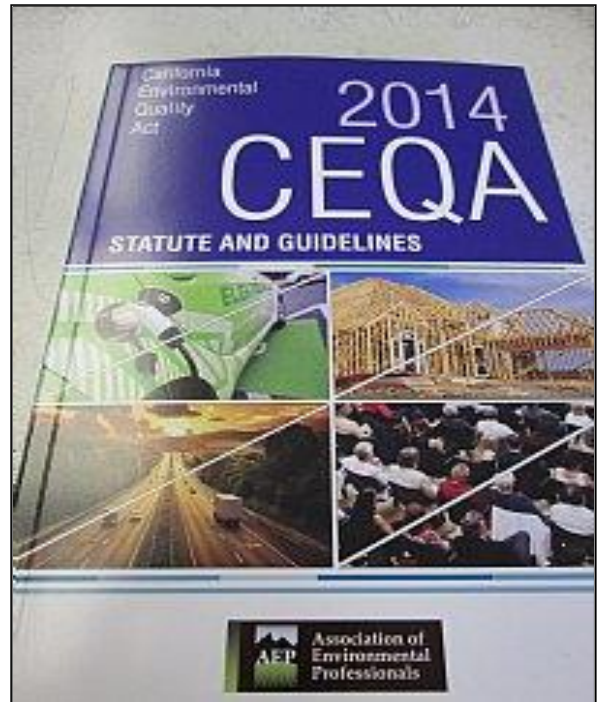
4.4.4. Environmental Analysis

The Office of Planning and Environmental Review prepares environmental documents pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for all discretionary projects within the unincorporated Sacramento County. A discretionary project is one that requires the exercise of judgment or deliberation by a public agency in determining whether the project will be approved, or if a permit will be issued. For example, a request to build a church in the low density residential zone is subject to the approval of a conditional use permit, and therefore defined as a discretionary project. CEQA does not apply to ministerial projects. A ministerial project is one that requires only conformance with a fixed standards or objective measurement and requires little or no personal judgment by a public official as to the wisdom or manner of carrying out the project. Design Review and issuance of a building or grading permit are examples of ministerial projects that do not need environmental review.

Environmental review times vary based on the nature and complexity of the project. In some cases, state and/or federal agencies must jointly prepare and process the project's environmental document.

A [FAQ Sheet](#) has been prepared if you have questions about the environmental review process. Please note while reading the FAQ Sheet that DERA is now part of the Office of Planning and Environmental Review. In addition, there is a [manual](#) on procedures on preparation and processing environmental documents.

One of the most common causes of delay in environmental review is project revision. When a project changes, the impacts change. Substantial revision of environmental analysis already completed is often necessary even with minor physical changes to a project. Document revision is time consuming. Project revision slows document completion and increases costs.



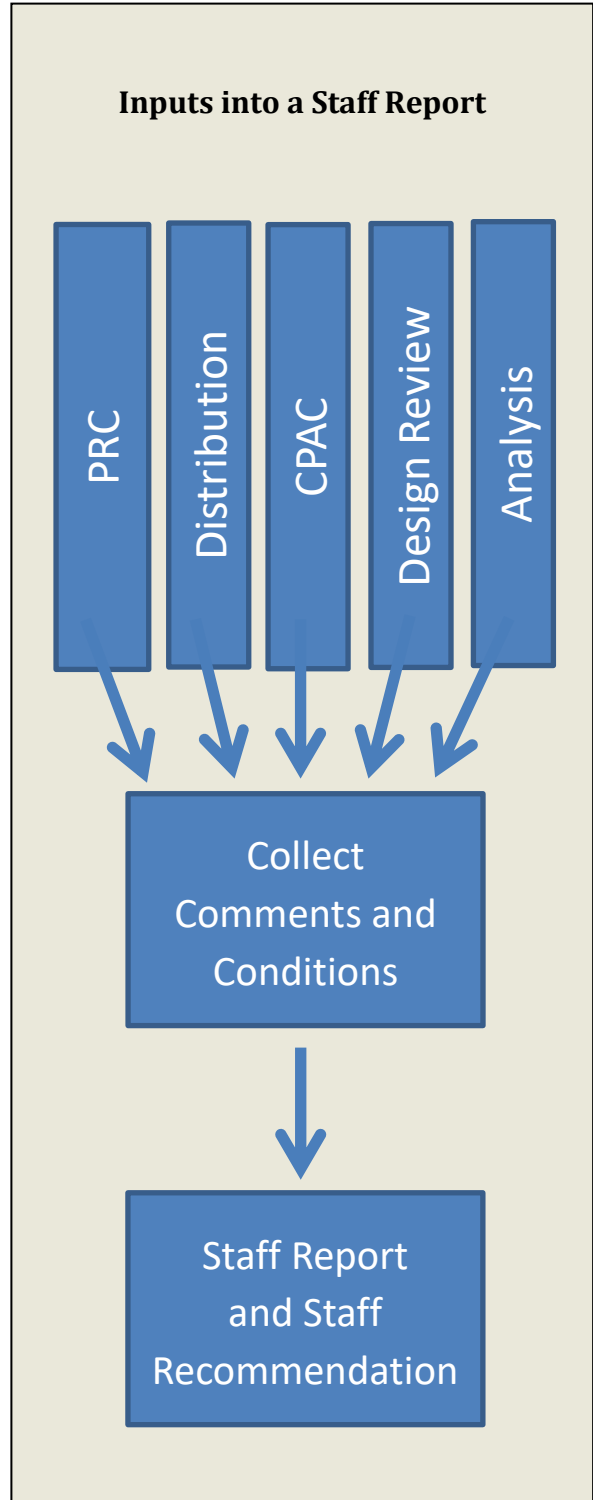
Some Environmental Review Terms

- **Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** A detailed document that describes and analyzes a project's potential significant environmental effects and proposes ways to mitigate or avoid those effects.
- **Exemption:** The project is considered either non-discretionary or is exempt pursuant to a category of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Initial Study:** A preliminary analysis that is used to determine whether an EIR or Negative Declaration must be prepared or to identify significant environmental effects to be analyzed in an EIR.
- **Negative Declaration:** The project was determined to have less than significant impacts upon the environment and/or those impacts can be mitigated to a less than significant level.

4.4.5. Staff Report

For most planning entitlements, the Project Manager will prepare a staff report that will include a project summary, project analysis, findings, and conditions of approval. Staff reports are not prepared for Boundary Line Adjustments and Design Review. While preparing the staff report, the Project Manager relies on input from the commenting departments/agencies. These comments typically morph into the conditions of approval and provide the basis on which to support or oppose the project.

You can keep track of the status of your project on the Office of Planning and Environmental Review's [Projects Viewer](#). Of course, you can also call or email the Project Manager of your project.



4.4.6. Decision Making

The Hearing Body for the project is determined by the entitlement type. Hearing Bodies and Appeal Bodies include the following:

- *Design Review Advisory Committee (DRAC)* evaluates Design Review projects by comparing their design to the appropriate design guidelines and recommending modifications.
- *Zoning Administrator (ZA)* and the Planning Director approve Variances and Minor Use Permits. ZA and Planning Director appeals are heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- *Subdivision Review Committee (SRC)* approves Parcel Maps and Certificates of Compliance. SRC appeals are heard by the County Planning Commission.
- *County Planning Commission (PC)* approves use permits, subdivision maps and others, and makes recommendations to Board of Supervisors (BOS) on complex projects. PC appeals are heard by the BOS.
- *Board of Supervisors (BOS)* is the final authority.

All of the hearing bodies listed above provide agendas for their meetings on their websites. Please see insert to the right. For Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor hearings, agendas are usually posted on the website several days before the hearing.

After the hearing body approves the project, the project applicant can move forward with the project, attaining required permits (building, grading, etc.) and business licenses and commencing project construction or business activity.

Links to Agendas for Hearing Bodies

[Board of Supervisors](#)

[Planning Commission](#)

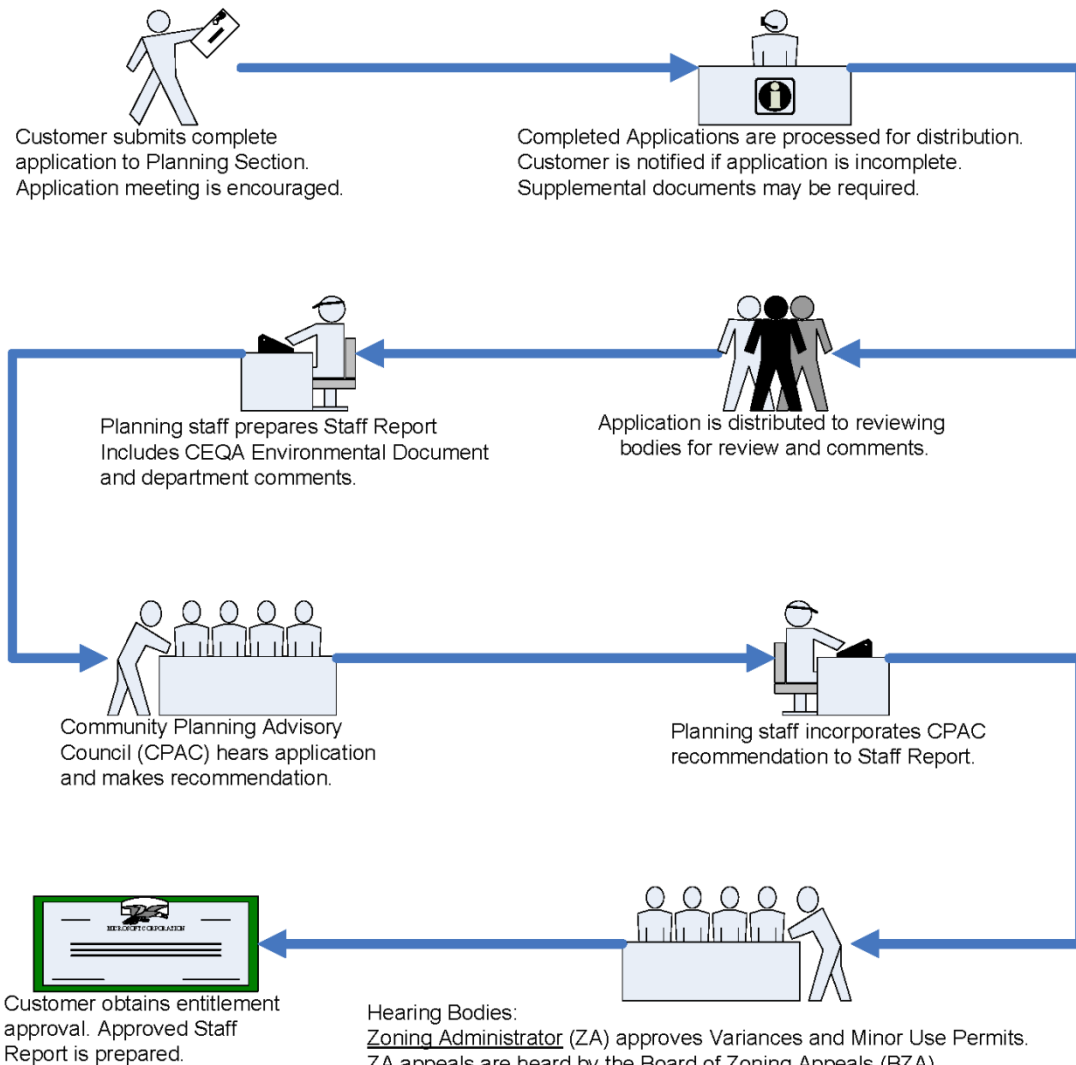
[Zoning Administrator](#)

[Subdivision Review Committee](#)

[Design Review Advisory Committee](#)

Exhibit 4.2

SACRAMENTO COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT Application Processing Workflow



Breaking Ground: Your Guide to Development in Sacramento County. Sacramento County, 2013.

CHAPTER 4 LINKS

4.1	
County Zoning Code	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/Sacramento%20County%20Zoning%20Code.aspx
Zoning Code User Guide	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/Zoning%20Code%20Final%20Adopted%20July%202022%202015/Updates%20to%202015%20Zoning%20Code/Amended%20June%202017/Adopted_User_Guide_July%2022%2c%202015%20%5bJune%2022%2c%202017%5d.pdf
Courtland SPA Ordinance	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/ZoningCodes/SPAs%20NPAs%20and%20Specific%20Plans/Title%20V%20504-500_Courtland%20SPA_Amended2017.pdf
Locke SPA Ordinance	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/ZoningCodes/SPAs%20NPAs%20and%20Specific%20Plans/504-400_Locke%20SPA%20Ordinance%20(Revised%2010-4-16).pdf
Lower Andrus Island SPA Ordinance	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/ZoningCodes/SPAs%20NPAs%20and%20Specific%20Plans/TitleV%20505-10%20Lower%20Andrus%20Island.pdf
Walnut Grove SPA Ordinance	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/ZoningCodes/SPAs%20NPAs%20and%20Specific%20Plans/Title%20V%20504-20_Walnut%20Grove%20SPA_Amended%202017.pdf
Freeport NPA Ordinance	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Documents/ZoningCodes/SPAs%20NPAs%20and%20Specific%20Plans/TitleV%20533-10%20The%20Town%20of%20Freeport.pdf
Find the Zoning of Properties	http://generalmap.gis.saccounty.net/JSViewer/county_portal.html
Find your Parcel Number	http://generalmap.gis.saccounty.net/JSViewer/county_portal.html
Status of Pending Projects	http://www.planningdocuments.saccounty.net/
Current County General Plan	http://www.per.saccounty.net/PlansandProjectsInProgress/Pages/GeneralPlan.aspx
Application Forms	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/Planning-Applications.aspx
County Zoning Code	http://www.per.saccounty.net/LandUseRegulationDocuments/Pages/Sacramento%20County%20Zoning%20Code.aspx
County Design Guidelines	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/DesignReviewProgram.aspx
Fees	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/Planning-and-Environmental-Fees.aspx
Planning and Environmental Review Fees Webpage	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/FormsandFees.aspx
Delta Protection Commission	http://www.delta.ca.gov/contact/
Delta Stewardship Council	http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/contact-us
Before Arriving at the Public Counter or Appointment	
Determine if project is in an unincorporated County	http://generalmap.gis.saccounty.net/JSViewer/county_portal.html

Determine your Assessor Parcel Number	http://assessorparcelviewer.saccounty.net/jsviewer/assessor.html
Find out your Zoning	http://generalmap.gis.saccounty.net/JSViewer/county_portal.html
Pre-Application Meeting Form	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/PAM%20Application%20Form%20MAY%202015.pdf
Planning Research Application Form	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/Pre-Application%20%5bfillable%5d%20Form%20Update%201-31-18.pdf
4.2	
General Application Form Packet	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/General%20Application%20Form%20-%202017%20fillable%20Form.pdf
Application Instructions and Checklist	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/General%20Application%20Instructions%20and%20Checklist.pdf
Supplemental Applications	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/Planning-Applications.aspx
Example Rezone Exhibit	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/examplerezoneexhibit.pdf
Example Site Plan	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/examplesiteplan.pdf
Example Tentative Parcel Map	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/exampletentativeparcelmap.pdf
Boundary Line Adjustment	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/Boundary%20Line%20Adjust%20APPnew2form%209%2017%2013.pdf
Temporary Use Permit	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/TEMPORARY%20USE%20PERMIT_Application%26Instructions_%205-17-2017.pdf
Alcoholic Beverage Sales (ABC/PCN) Forms and Fees	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/Alcoholic-Beverage-Sales-(ABC-and-PCN)-Forms-and-Fees.aspx
Other Miscellaneous Planning and Environmental Forms	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/Planning-Applications.aspx
Discretionary Design Review Supplemental Application Form	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Documents/WebsiteForms/General%20Application_Design%20Review%20Supplemental%202017.pdf
Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/DesignReview/Applicant%20Guide%20Discretionary_%20Update%2011.30.17.pdf
Non-Discretionary Design Review Application Form	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/DesignReview/NonDiscretionary%20Design%20Review%20Application%20Form%209-22-2017.pdf
Non-Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/DesignReview/Applicant%20Guide%20NonDiscretionary_Update%2011.30.17.pdf
Supplemental Application Forms for Various Project Types	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/DesignReviewProgram.aspx
Fees	
Planning Fee Schedule	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/FormsandFees.aspx
Environmental Review Fees	http://www.per.saccounty.net/Pages/MMRPCosts.aspx
4.4	

Design Review Submittal Information	
Non-Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/DesignReview/Applicant%20Guide%20NonDiscretionary_Update%2011.30.17.pdf
Discretionary Design Review Applicant Guide	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/DesignReview/Applicant%20Guide%20Discretionary_%20Update%2011.30.17.pdf
Design Review Program Webpage	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/DesignReviewProgram.aspx
Meeting Agendas	http://www.per.saccounty.net/CPAC/Pages/CPAC-Delta.aspx
County Design Guidelines	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/DesignReviewProgram.aspx
Environmental Review FAQ	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/FAQ_ER.aspx
Environmental Review Manual	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Documents/Procedures%20For%20Env%20Doc.%20Prep%20Final%202009.pdf
Planning Projects Viewer	http://www.planningdocuments.saccounty.net/
Links to Agendas for Hearing Bodies	
Board of Supervisors	http://www.sccob.saccounty.net/Pages/BOSPublicMeetings.aspx
Planning Commission	http://www.sccob.saccounty.net/Pages/CCPCPublicMeetings.aspx
Zoning Administrator	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/ZoningAdministrator.aspx
Subdivision Review Committee	http://www.per.saccounty.net/applicants/Pages/SubdivisionReviewCommittee.aspx
Design Review Committee	http://www.per.saccounty.net/PlansandProjectsInProgress/Pages/DesignReviewDocs.aspx