

FARM LABOR HOUSING GUIDELINES



County of San Mateo
Planning and Building Department
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

COUNTY OF **SAN MATEO**



FARM LABOR HOUSING

Agriculture in San Mateo County has a rich and diverse history that includes the cultivation and sale of indoor and outdoor floral and nursery crops; vegetables; fruit and nut crops; livestock and apiary products; and field crops, among others. Farm laborers have historically been and continue to be an integral part of San Mateo County's agricultural community and its success.

The County has prioritized and placed an emphasis on supporting agriculture and the agricultural community through adoption of land use regulations preserving and encouraging agriculture, community agricultural workshops, continued participation in the California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act, and adoption of a revised Farm Labor Housing policy that eliminated Planning and Building Department fees, removed redundant requirements, and extended permit renewal time frames.

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide an outline of permit requirements, time frames, and contact information in order to assist landowners considering farm labor housing development.



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DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Farm Laborer: A farm laborer is a person who derives more than 20 hours per week average employment from on- or off-site agricultural operations within San Mateo County and earns at least half their income from agriculturally-related work.

Farm Labor Housing (FLH): Housing units that can only be occupied by farm laborers and their immediate family members.

Farm Labor Housing Unit: A self-contained unit with a sanitary toilet, shower, lavatory facilities, heating and electrical, and a kitchen that shall include a refrigerator, sink, and stove. Housing shall be maintained to meet basic California Housing and Health Code requirements.

Farm Labor Housing Permit Validity: A specific FLH permit is required to build farm labor housing. FLH permits are renewable permits and must be renewed prior to their expiration.

- FLH permits for 4 or fewer laborers are valid for 3 to 5 years (upon recommendation of the Agricultural Advisory Committee).
- For 5 or more laborers FLH permits are valid for 10 years.

Coastal Zone (California Coastal Act): The Coastal Zone is the land and water area of the State of California from the Oregon border to the border of the Republic of Mexico extending seaward to the state's outer limit of jurisdiction, including all offshore islands, and extending inland generally 1,000 yards from the mean high tide line of the sea. In significant coast estuarine, habitat, and recreational areas it extends inland to the first major ridgeline paralleling the sea or five miles from the mean high tide line of the sea, whichever is less, and in developed urban areas the zone generally extends inland less than 1,000 yards ([California Coastal Act](#)). San Mateo County has further defined the Coastal Zone and regulates development and activities in this area through the County's Local Coastal Program ([LCP](#)).

Coastal Development Permit (CDP): A land use permit that is required for development in the County's Coastal Zone in conformance with the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP). The County's LCP implements the California Coastal Act. Development in the Coastal Zone requires either a CDP or a Coastal Development Exemption (CDX). Authority to issue permits or exemptions are granted to the County through its adopted Local Coastal Program although the California Coastal Commission (CCC) retains the right to appeal certain permits. The CCC also retains original permit jurisdiction over certain specified lands (tidelands and public trust lands).

Planned Agricultural District (PAD), Resource Management (RM), Resource Management-CZ (RM-CZ): Land use zoning districts which preserve and foster existing and potential agricultural operations ([Zoning Regulations](#) Section 6350); and fulfill the requirements for Open Space and Conservation Elements of the County's General Plan ([Zoning Regulations](#): RM Section 6310; RM-CZ Section 6900).

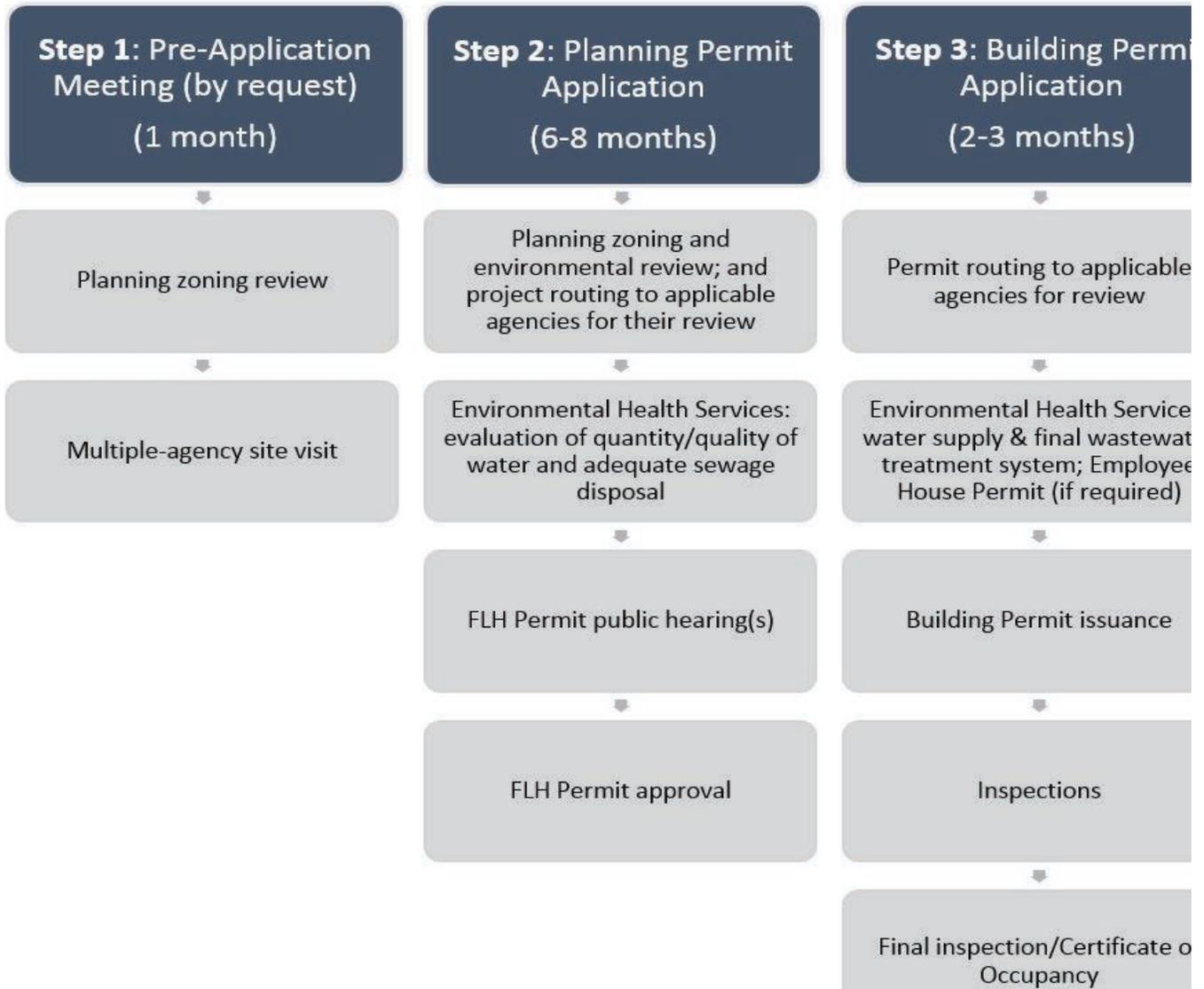
FARM LABOR HOUSING ELIGIBILITY

You may be eligible to develop your land for farm labor housing if your parcel is located in one of the following zoning districts:

- Planned Agricultural District/Coastal Development (PAD/CD);
- Resource Management District-Coastal Zone/Coastal Development (RM-CZ/CD);
- Resource Management District (RM)

FLH housing units require a domestic water source and wastewater system. FLH units and utilities may only be approved on a legal parcel. The Planning Department will review your parcel for legality and, if necessary, process the applicable legalization permits as part of your proposal.

FLH proposals typically follow these steps:



Review consists of, at minimum, zoning, building code, water supply/onsite wastewater treatment systems, seismic/soil stability, drainage and grading, and fire safety/access.

The following departments may review your project:

Planning, Building (including Geotechnical Section), Environmental Health Services, Public Works, the applicable Fire Authority, and the Agricultural Commissioner.

PERMIT STEPS AND PROCESSING DETAILS | PLANNING

Step 1 | Pre-Application Meeting: Before formal Planning Permit application submittal, a Pre-Application meeting may be requested by the landowner to aid in assessing the feasibility of farm labor housing development on their property. These meetings typically include an in person meeting at the planning counter and may include a site visit by the following agencies: Planning, Building, Environmental Health Services, Public Works, Fire Authority, and the Agricultural Ombudsman. The purpose of the meeting is to help the landowner understand permit requirements, processing times, and constraints of the property in considering FLH development. Because developing FLH is often more complicated than other types of development, a Pre-Application Meeting is often advisable. To schedule a Pre-Application Meeting, please contact the Planning Department at 650/363-1825.

Step 2 | Planning Permit - Application Requirements: Planning Department Farm Labor Housing Permit Applications include submittal of the following:

- 1 copy each:
 - [Planning Permit Application Form and Checklist](#)
 - [Application for Farm Labor Housing](#)
 - [Coastal Development Permit Application](#), if required
 - [Planned Agricultural District Permit Application](#), if required
 - [Use Permit](#), if required
 - [Grading Permit Application](#), if required
 - [Environmental Information Disclosure Form](#)
 - [C3 C6 Development Review Checklist](#) (stormwater)
 - Owner's Concurrence (authorization letter or owner's signature on application forms)
 - Proof of Ownership (copy of deed or tax bill)
 - Well pump test and water quality results, if applicable, or water system will-serve letter

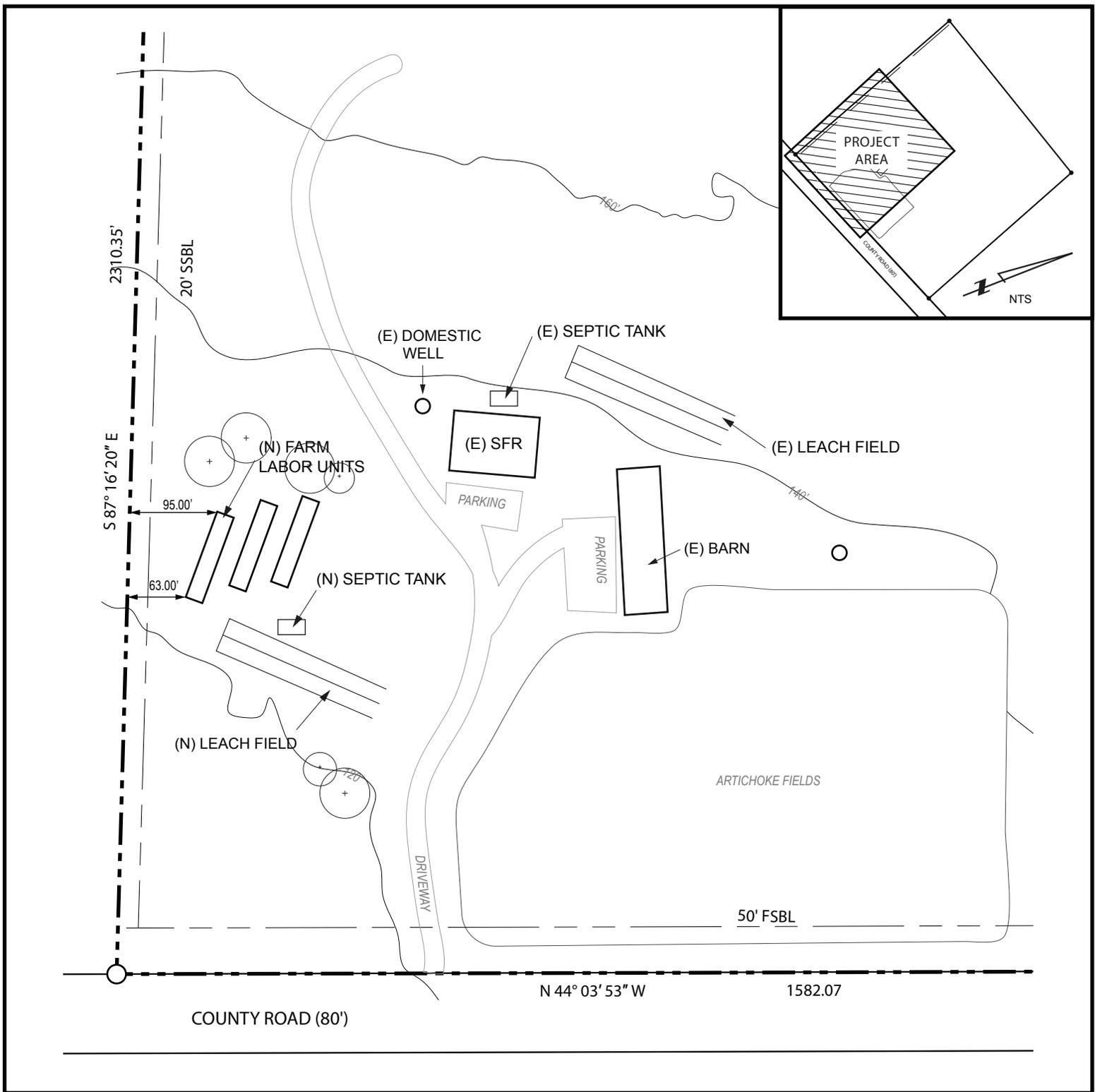
- 5 copies full size (24"x 36") / 1 copy of a plan reduction (11"x 17"):
 - A scaled site plan depicting elements such as: parcel boundaries; easements, all existing and proposed structures including access, driveways, water lines, storage tanks, septic tanks and leach fields; location and type of existing agriculture
 - Dimensioned/scaled FLH unit floor plans, elevations, and sections drawings.
 - Boundary survey, if required
 - Utility Plan, including conceptual on-site wastewater treatment system design based on completed soil percolation testing (plotted on grading and drainage base)
 - Grading and Drainage Plan
 - Erosion Control Plan ([Requirements for Erosion and Sediment Control](#))
 - Driveway/Access Plan and Road Profile
 - Topographic Survey, if required

- Fees: Planning Department and Environmental Health Services fees are waived by Board of Supervisors resolution; other department fees may apply.

Did you know that the Planning and Building Department has office hours in Half Moon Bay?

[San Mateo County Planning and Building Coastside Office](#)

Hours 8:00 am - 4:30 pm., alternating Fridays | 785 Main Street, Suite C, Half Moon Bay



PROJECT SITE
 12345 COUNTY ROAD
 ANYWHERE, CA 94000

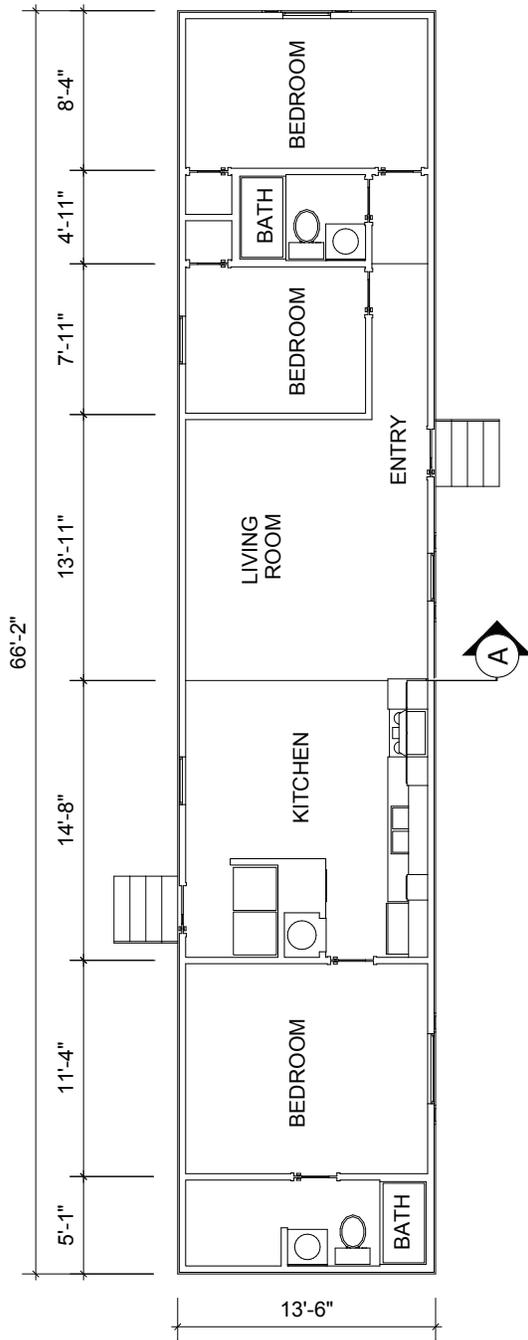
APN
 100-010-001

LEGEND AND NOTES
 FSBL FRONT SETBACK LINE
 SSBL SIDE SETBACK LINE
 RSBL REAR SETBACK LINE

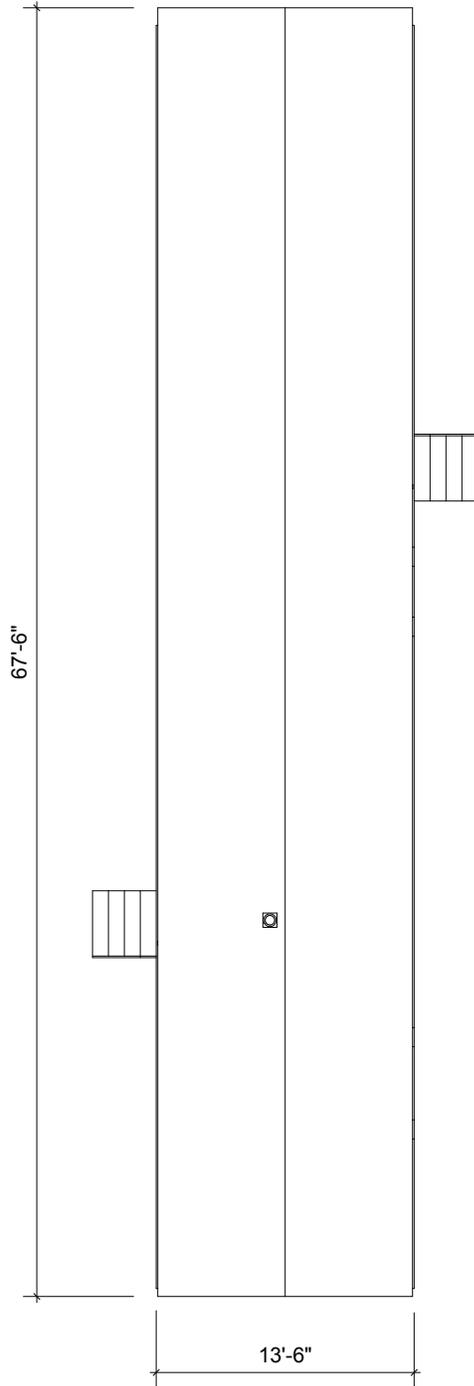
0' 100' 400'
 (IN FEET)

SCALE: 1" = 100'

SAMPLE SITE PLAN

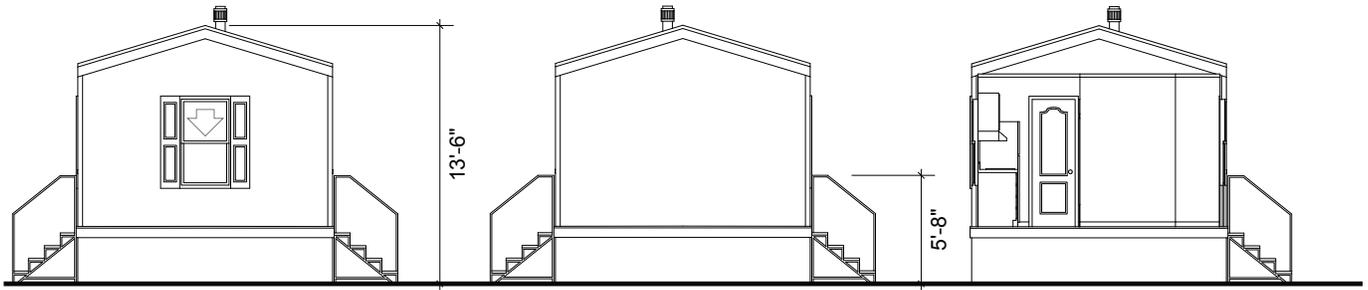


FLOOR PLAN
Scale: 1" = 10'



ROOF PLAN
Scale: 1" = 10'

SAMPLE FLOOR PLAN/ROOF PLAN



EAST ELEVATION

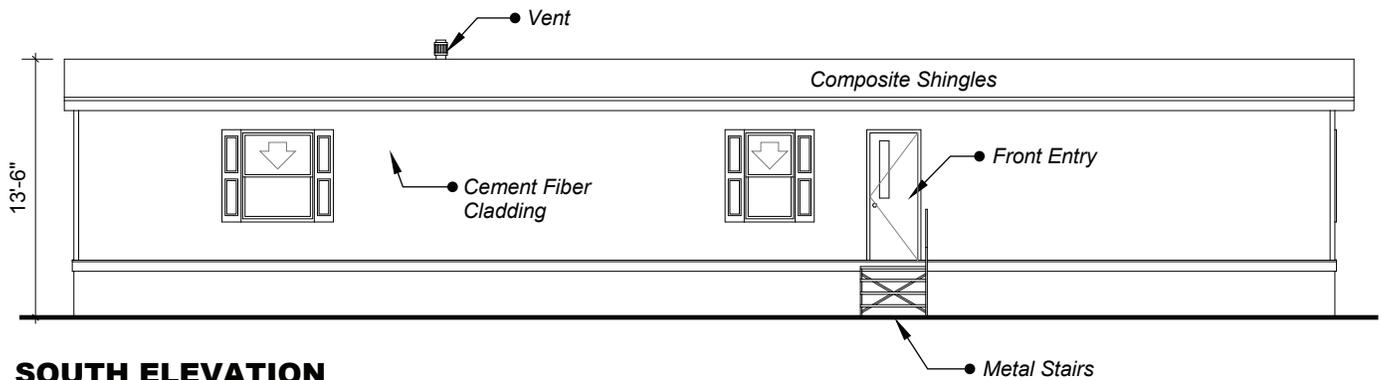
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WEST ELEVATION

Scale: 1" = 10'

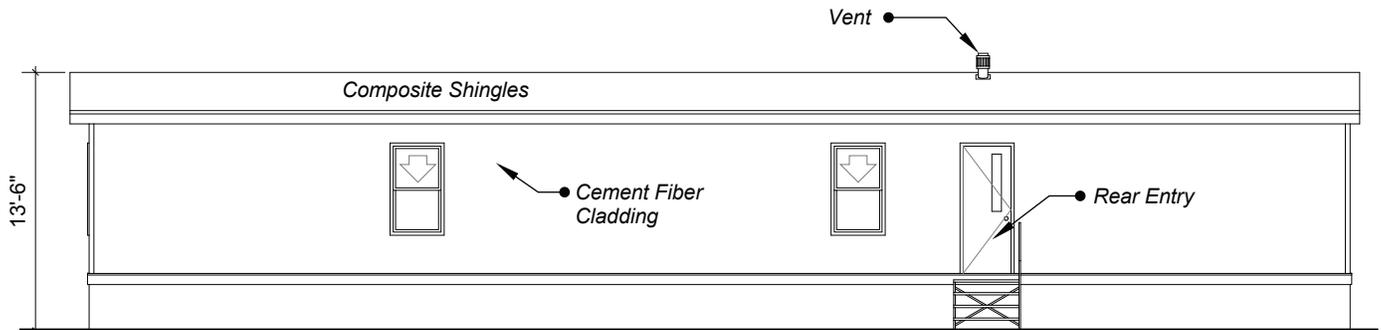
SECTION-A

Scale: 1" = 10'



SOUTH ELEVATION

Scale: 1" = 10'

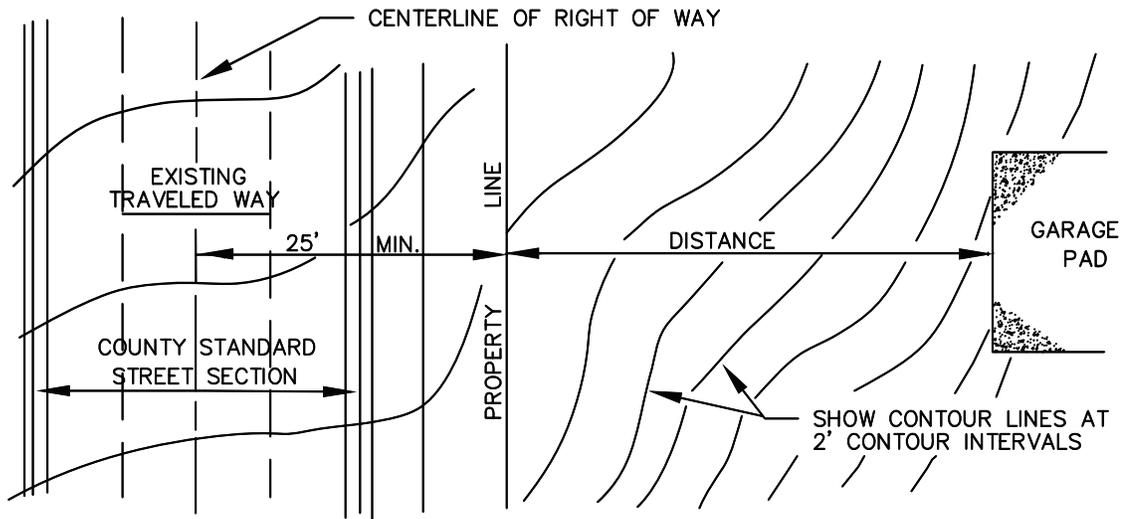


NORTH ELEVATION

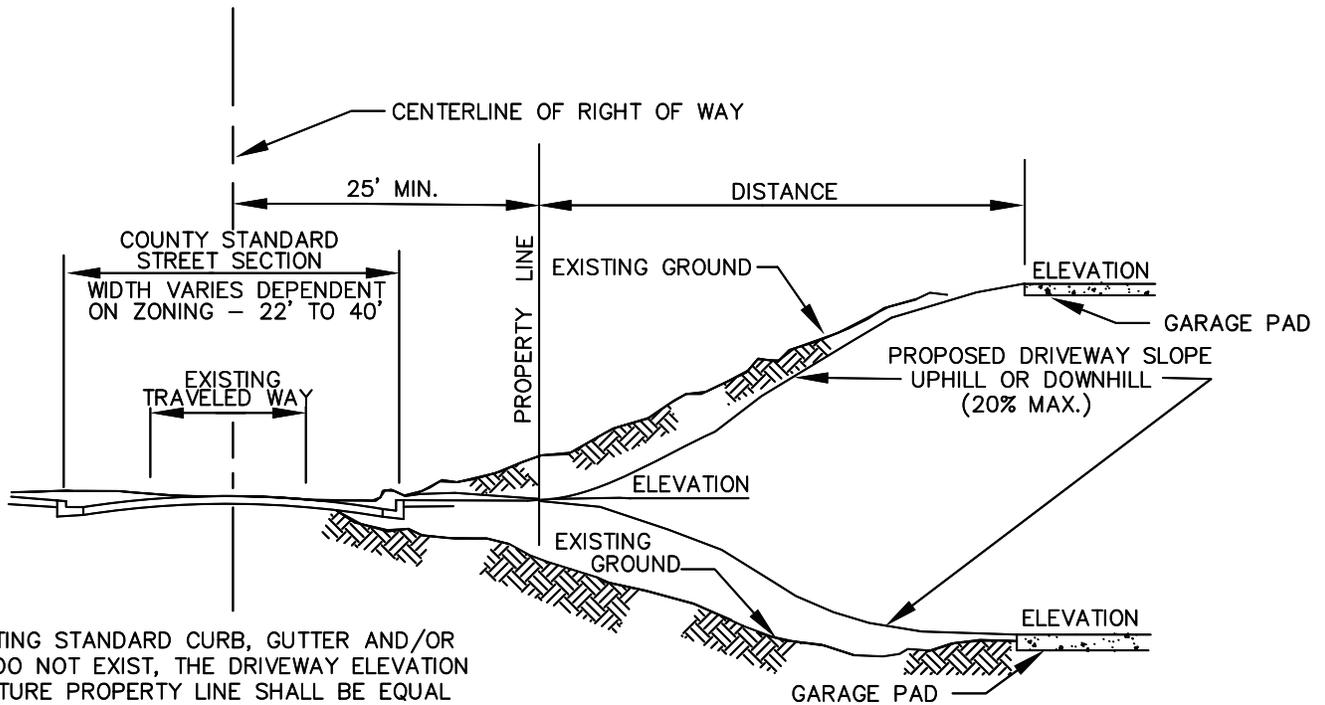
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SAMPLE ELEVATIONS & SECTION

SAN MATEO COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF
PUBLIC WORKS



DRIVEWAY PLAN VIEW



NOTE:

WHEN EXISTING STANDARD CURB, GUTTER AND/OR SIDEWALK DO NOT EXIST, THE DRIVEWAY ELEVATION AT THE FUTURE PROPERTY LINE SHALL BE EQUAL TO THE EXISTING CENTERLINE ELEVATION UNLESS FUTURE STREET GRADES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY THE COUNTY.

DRIVEWAY PROFILE VIEW

SAMPLE DRIVEWAY PROFILE

PERMIT STEPS AND PROCESSING DETAILS | PLANNING

Step 2 | Planning Permit - *Processing Your Permit*: Once your permit application has been received, the Planning Department, will review your proposal for zoning compliance and route your plans to the applicable agencies (Building, Environmental Health Services, Public Works, Fire Authority, and Agricultural Commissioner). Within 30 calendar days of application submittal, agencies may request additional information, approve your proposal as submitted, or may conditionally approve. If an agency grants conditional approval, the fulfillment of the conditions (Conditions of Approval) will then be required as part of the building permit application later in the process.

Environmental Health Services (EHS) Review

Water Supply: In review of the Planning Application, EHS must evaluate your project for adequate and appropriate water supply. If the project is supplied by a permitted Water System, EHS will require confirmation of adequate quantity and quality from the Water System regulator. If you will be relying on an existing domestic supply well, EHS may require a pump test and water quality testing of the well. If you will rely on a NEW domestic supply well or conversion of an existing well from irrigation to domestic use, the well must be drilled and tested for quantity and quality, under permit from EHS. However, assuming your project is within the Coastal Zone and subject to the LCP, permitting and drilling of a new well or conversion of an existing well can only be initiated AFTER the Planning Application has been approved, as the Planning Permit will constitute the CDP required for the well drilling permit.

- [Water Well Application Form and Checklist](#)
- Fees: [Environmental Health Service Fees \(Land Use\)](#) or (650) 372-6200

Sewage Disposal: In review of the Planning Application, EHS must evaluate your project for adequate sewage disposal capacity. Unless your project will be served by a sanitary sewer system, you will be required to install or connect to an appropriately sized onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS; septic system). In that case, your planning application must include a conceptual OWTS design based on soil percolation tests permitted through EHS. If this has not already been completed, you will be notified of this requirement within the 30-day review period. You may perform the percolation testing while your FLH Planning permit is being processed by the Planning Department.

- [Septic Application Form and Checklist](#)
- Fees: [Environmental Health Service Fees \(Land Use\)](#) or (650) 372-6200

After all reviewing agencies have approved or conditionally approved your proposal, the Planning Department will prepare and process any required environmental documents to ensure your project complies with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In some instances, projects may be exempt from CEQA. This determination depends on your project scope and location of development (e.g., sensitive habitats, hazards, scenic highways, cumulative impacts, etc.). If your project is not exempt, the Planning Department will prepare an environmental document (may take 2 months). Once this is completed, the Planning Department will then prepare staff report(s) and schedule your project for the required public hearing(s).

PERMIT STEPS AND PROCESSING DETAILS | PLANNING

Noticing and Hearings: Since your project may require multiple public hearings, the Planning Department will prepare staff reports and mail the required public hearing notice prior to each scheduled public hearing date. The first public hearing will be before the Agricultural Advisory Committee for a recommendation on your project (approve or deny). Following their recommendation, the Planning Department will prepare the next staff report and schedule your project for the next public hearing before the Planning Commission (if your project requires a Planned Agricultural District Permit) or the Zoning Hearing Officer (if your project requires a Use Permit). The permit decision (approve, deny) will be made by the Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Officer. Following the public hearing, you will receive by mail a letter of the decision within 10 days of the decision.

Appeals: FLH permits are appealable permits and, therefore, the permit decision by the Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Officer to approve or deny the project may be appealed to the next decision maker (the hierarchy is Zoning Hearing Officer → Planning Commission → Board of Supervisors → California Coastal Commission (for appeals)). Appeals must be filed on or before the tenth working day following the decision. If your project is appealed, the Planning Department must prepare another staff report and schedule the subsequent hearing. Once your project is approved and all appeals resolved, you may then submit an application for the required building permit.

PERMIT STEPS AND PROCESSING DETAILS | BUILDING

Step 3 | Building Permit - *Application Requirements:* Once you have received your Planning permit decision letter, review it for any conditions of approval that must be included in your building permit application and plans. The building permit application includes the following:

- Informational Document: [Building Plan Requirements](#)
- [Building Permit Application Form](#)
- Development plans as outlined in the [Building Plan Requirements](#) and including a complete on-site wastewater treatment system design, if applicable
- [C3 C6 Development Review Checklist](#) (stormwater)
- Fees: Building Department fees are waived; other department fees may be required.

**Did you know that you can track the status of your permit application online?
Visit the [Online Permit Center](#) to track your Planning and Building permits as they are reviewed.**

Step 3 | Building Permit - Processing Your Permit: Once your application is submitted to the Building Department, Building will route your plans to the applicable agencies for review (Building plan check, Planning, Environmental Health Services, Public Works, and Fire Authority). Within 30 calendar days, agencies may request additional information, require redesign, or may approve your plans as it relates to their agency requirements. All revised plans or documents requested by these agencies must be submitted to the Building Department for routing.

Once all agencies have approved your plans and all applicable fees have been paid, your building permit may then be issued.

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Carbon Monoxide/Smoke Detectors. Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are recommended for all units, and may be required for your project.

Employee Housing Permit. If proposing housing for 5 or more farm laborers, during building permit processing, you must apply for an Employee Housing Permit with Environmental Health Services.

Erosion and Sediment Control and/or Tree Protection. You may be required to install erosion and sediment control and/or tree protection prior to beginning construction particularly if you are building during the wet season (October 1 - April 30). If this is the case, the Building Department will issue the erosion control/tree protection plan prior to issuing the building permit for construction. Once the erosion/tree measures are in place and pass Building Department inspection, you will then be issued the building permit and may begin construction.

Floodplain Development. Check [FEMA's flood maps](#) to determine if your proposed project is or may be in a floodplain. If your proposed project is in a floodplain, development will be very challenging, and may be impossible.

Mobilehomes. If modification of a mobilehome is proposed as part of a FLH project, the permitting agency is the [California Department of Housing and Community Development](#). If an addition to or relocation of a mobilehome is being proposed, the County of San Mateo Planning and Building Department is the permitting agency.

Recreational Vehicles/Trailers. Recreational vehicles and trailers may not be used for FLH.

Sprinklers. New modular State-certified units are not required to be sprinklered. A conversion of existing housing to FLH, if it does not increase the number of dwelling units, may not need to be sprinklered. All others must be sprinklered.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

FLH Permit Validity and Permit Renewal

- FLH permits for 4 or fewer laborers are valid for 3 to 5 years (upon recommendation of the Agricultural Advisory Committee).
- FLH permits for 5 or more laborers are valid for 10 years.
- FLH permits with EHS must be renewed annually.

Six months prior to the expiration date of your FLH permit, you must submit for renewal. It is the responsibility of the landowner to submit for renewal although the Planning Department will send you a reminder in the mail. The documents described in *Step 2 | Planning Permit Application*, above, are required for renewal.

Amending your FLH Permit(s)

If you propose to enlarge or significantly alter your FLH operation or unit(s), you will be required to notify the Planning and Building Department prior to the modifications. Prepare a proposed scope of work for the Department to review (this may include a written document and/or plans). Based on the information you provide, the Department will determine if your proposal is a minor or major FLH permit amendment. Minor permit amendments may be considered by the Community Development Director without a public hearing. Major permit amendments will require additional document submittal (documents outlined in *Step 2 | Planning Permit Application*) and may require review by the Agricultural Advisory Committee and Planning Commission at a public hearing(s). Permit amendments may also require additional review and permits from other agencies (e.g., Fire Authority, Public Works, Building Department, EHS).

Terminating your Permit(s)

It is the responsibility of the landowner to notify the Planning Department when terminating the FLH use/structures. The landowner will need to submit a plan, as described in *Step 2 | Planning Permit Application*, identifying the owner's intent to either remove the FLH units and associated infrastructure or otherwise convert such improvements as allowed under the zoning district for the property. Building Department and Environmental Health Services review and permits will be required.

Multiple Unit Plan (Master Plan)

Your FLH permit may include one unit or multiple units. If you are proposing multiple units, you may apply for a FLH permit for the approval of the multiple units to be constructed in phases. Application requirements for this option are the same as for single units, however, plans must indicate which units and infrastructure will be constructed during each phase. Phased construction may require the issuance of multiple other agency permits (e.g., Building permits). You must keep your FLH permit valid and renewed to take advantage of the phased approach.

Other Concurrent Development

If you are applying for Planning permits for other related development on your property in addition to a FLH permit, Planning will process the related development permit and the separate FLH permit concurrently. Since the FLH permit must be renewed, it will be processed under a separate permit number.

RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTS

San Mateo County Agriculture Update Newsletter

<http://www.sanmateorcd.org/project/ag-ombudsman/>

Planning Department Information and Application Forms

Farm Labor Housing Policy

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/farm-labor-housing-policy>

Farm Labor Housing Guidelines

<https://planning.smcgov.org/farm-labor-housing-permit>

Planning Permit Application Form and Checklist

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/planning-permit-application-form>

Application for Farm Labor Housing

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/farm-labor-housing-application>

Coastal Development Permit Form

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/coastal-development-permit-application-companion-page>

Planned Agricultural District Form

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/planned-agricultural-district-permit-application-companion-page>

Use Permit Form

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/application-use-permit-0>

Grading Permit Application

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/grading-permit-application-companion-page>

Environmental Information Disclosure Form

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/environmental-information-disclosure-form>

C3 C6 Development Review Checklist (Stormwater)

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/c3-and-c6-development-review-checklist>

San Mateo County Zoning Regulations

<https://planning.smcgov.org/zoning-regulations>

Erosion and Sediment Control

<https://planning.smcgov.org/erosion-and-sediment-control>

San Mateo County Local Coastal Program

<https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/local-coastal-program>

Environmental Health Information and Application Forms

Wells and OWTS Information and Applications

<https://www.smchealth.org/landuse>

Water Well Application and Septic Application Forms and Checklists

<https://www.smchealth.org/landuse>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA Map Service Center

<https://msc.fema.gov/portal/>

Agency	Responsibility	Address	Email	Telephone	Website
Agricultural Ombudsman	Landowner/County coordination		adria@sanmateorcd.org (Adria Arko)	(650) 712-7765 x105	www.smcagombudsman.com
San Mateo County Planning Department	Zoning permits	455 County Center, 2nd Fl. Redwood City, CA 94063	plngbldg@smcgov.org (General Query)	(650) 363-1825	planning.smcgov.org
San Mateo County Planning Satellite Office (HMB)	Agricultural Zoning Information	785 Main Street, Suite C Half Moon Bay, CA 94019			
San Mateo County Building Department	Building permits	455 County Center, 2nd Fl. Redwood City, CA 94063	plngbldg@smcgov.org (General Query)	(650) 599-7311	planning.smcgov.org
San Mateo County Environmental Health Division	Wells and septic systems	2000 Alameda de las Pulgas San Mateo, CA 94403	Wells and septic: egdiaz@smcgov.org (Edgardo Diaz) Employee Housing Permit: hgodinez@smcgov.org (Helen Godinez)	(650) 372-6200	https://www.smchealth.org/water-protection-land-use
San Mateo County Building Department Drainage Section	Grading and drainage	555 County Center, 5th Fl., Redwood City, CA 94063	drainage@smcgov.org (Melody Eldridge)		https://planning.smcgov.org/documents/surface-water-drainage-review
San Mateo County Fire (CalFire)	Fire access, hydrants, sprinklers, etc.	455 Counter Center, 2nd, Fl. Redwood City, CA 94063	smcfdfiremarshal@fire.ca.gov (Fire Chief)	(650) 363-1841	http://www.cfsfire.org/
California Water Service (Bear Gulch)	Water lines, flow rates, connections (within district)	3525 Alameda de las Pulgas Suite A Menlo Park, CA 94025	infoBG@calwater.com (Services)	(650) 561-9709	https://www.calwater.com/
Coastside Fire Protection District	Fire access, hydrants, sprinklers, etc.	1191 Main Street, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019	gary.silva@fire.ca.gov (Gary Silva, Fire Marshal)	(650) 726-5213	https://www.coastsidefire.org/office-of-the-fire-marshal
Coastside County Water District	Water lines, flow rates, connections (within district)	766 Main Street Half Moon Bay, CA 94019	customerservice@coastsidewater.org (Services)	(650) 726-4405	http://www.coastsidewater.org/
California Coastal Commission (North Central Coast District)	General State Coastal Act information	455 Market Street, Suite 300 San Francisco, CA 94105	NorthCentralCoast@coastal.ca.gov (Coastal Program Analyst)	(415) 904-5200	https://www.coastal.ca.gov/