

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

ZONING PERMITS

What Is A Zoning Permit?

The Town is divided into different zoning districts. The Zoning Ordinance describes the uses permitted in each district and establishes the standards that uses must meet to be allowed in the districts. The zoning permit procedure is established to ensure that uses specifically proposed to be located in a particular district meet the standards for that district.

Do I Need A Zoning Permit?

The Planning Department will help you determine if you need a zoning permit. A zoning permit endorsement is printed on all building permit forms. A separate zoning permit application is needed only when an existing use or structure is proposed to be changed and no building permit is involved. Examples include the change of a commercial use in an existing shopping center, or an office use in an existing office center.

How Do I Apply and How Much Does It Cost?

Application forms and filing information are available at Town Hall, 765 Portola Road, at the Building Counter. Information required to accompany a zoning permit application includes: 1) hours of operation, 2) number of employees, and 3) floor plan and site plan. In addition, applicants must submit a narrative describing in detail 1) the nature of the business, 2) how the business can serve the "frequently recurring needs" of Portola Valley residents and 3) how the business can address the Town requirement that at least 50% of its business be derived from area residents.

An application requires a filing fee and a deposit for professional services. The filing fee is \$315 and the deposit for services is \$1,000. Application data requirements are also contained in Section 18.62.020 of the Municipal Code.

How Are Zoning Permits Reviewed and Decided?

The Planning Department checks the application and all data to see that all provisions of the Zoning Ordinance are complied with. If architectural and site plan approval is also required for the proposed use, the zoning permit request is referred to the ASCC for review and comment.

If the Planning Department finds that the proposed use complies with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance, the zoning permit will be issued and a written record maintained of the findings. If all of the provisions of the ordinance are not complied with, it will be denied and all reasons set forth in writing.

How Long Does It Take and When Does A Zoning Permit Become Effective?

It usually takes no more than one week for review and approval of an application. Some more complicated applications may take longer, especially if there is a question as to the appropriateness of the proposed use in terms of "serving local needs". The concept of serving local needs is complicated and important and should be reviewed carefully prior to filing a zoning permit application for a new commercial or professional office use.

A zoning permit becomes effective upon approval by the Planning Department.

What Happens if My Request Is Denied?

If the Planning Department denies a zoning permit request, the decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission as described in the next section. In hearing an appeal, the Planning Commission sits as the Board of Adjustment.

Appeals

Any person dissatisfied with the decision of the Planning Department may appeal to the Board of Adjustment. The appeal must be filed with the Planning Department within 15 days of the decision by completing appropriate forms and paying a required filing fee and deposit. The deposit will be used by the Town to prepare a report to the Board of Adjustment on the appeal. Within a reasonable period of time, the Board of Adjustment will hold a fully noticed public hearing and render a decision on the appeal.