

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
EARLY PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH POLICY FOR
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
(Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on December 10, 2013
Effective January 10, 2014)**

SECTION 1. Purpose

It is the policy of the County of Santa Clara that early public notification and outreach is provided to the public about development projects in unincorporated Santa Clara County so that the community can be informed and engaged in the land use decision-making process.

This policy details the procedures for early notification and outreach for development projects and establishes requirements for early notification process depending on the development project. This policy applies to development projects that are of significant community interest and where early notification and outreach will enhance awareness of the project, minimize misconceptions, and encourage active collaboration among all interested parties. A “development project” for purposes of this project is any project listed in Section 3 that is processed by the Department of Planning and Development.

This policy is not intended to be in conflict with the County of Santa Clara Ordinance Code or state law.

SECTION 2. Reasons for Adoption of Policy

The adoption of this policy is based on the following:

- (A) When a development project is proposed through a formal application to the County, early communication and public outreach promotes public engagement and improves overall understanding of the development project and County processes and policies.
- (B) Development projects range in complexity and controversy. The County has no policy acknowledging the variety of project types and the level of outreach with community for such projects.
- (C) Other forms of outreach (*e.g.*, signs and information posted to a website) beyond mailed notices of a public hearing are effective in notifying the public of development projects.

- (D) Effective and timely outreach and early engagement of the community can result in development projects that harmonize with the community.

SECTION 3. Types of Projects

The following types of private development projects will follow the early notification and outreach requirements of this policy:

- (A) **Level I** development project is smaller in scale and expected to attract moderate community and neighborhood interest. The following projects are Level I development projects:

- (1) A new single family residence or rebuild of a residence requiring design review under Tier II of the Viewshed Preservation Ordinance in Zoning Ordinance Section 3.20.040 and located in -d1 districts or located in the -h (Historic Preservation combining districts or located in -n1 (Neighborhood Preservation combining district in Los Altos) combining districts.
- (2) A new single family residence located on slopes greater the 30% requiring Building Site Approval with Architecture and Site Approval, per Division C12-350.5 of the County Ordinance Code.
- (3) Use permits not listed in Level II below.
- (4) Minor quarry reclamation plan/amendments.

- (B) **Level II** is a project that is large in size and scope and/or will generate significant community interest. Level II projects include:

- (1) New residence or rebuild of residence that requires design review under Tier III of the Viewshed Preservation Ordinance in section 3.20.040 of the County's Zoning Ordinance.
- (2) New or major modifications to a use permit for the following: a golf course, quarry, timber harvest, and RV parks, and for any use where more than 50 persons would be on-site at one time.
- (3) Five-lot subdivision or larger.
- (4) Major quarry reclamation plan.

SECTION 4. Processes for Early Notification

The following noticing and outreach tools will be used:

- (A) **On-Site Sign:** The owner / applicant will be required to post sign(s) on site(s) within thirty days of land use application(s) submitted to the Planning Office for projects identified as Level I and Level II as indicated in section 3 and consistent with Department of Planning and Development *Public Outreach Sign Guidelines*.
- (B) **Mailing Notice:** Within 30 days of land use application submittal to the Planning Office, mailing notice of the proposed development project will be sent by the Planning Office to properties within 300 feet radius of subject property or a minimum of 24 properties, if there are less than 24 properties within the 300 feet radius for Level I projects¹ and to 1,000 feet radius of the subject property or a minimum of 24 properties, if there are less than 24 properties within the 1,000 feet radius, for Level II projects. The notices will include information about the project such as the description, location and other relevant information about the project.
- (C) **Website:** Within 30 days of submittal of a land use application, information about the project such as the project description, location and other relevant information will be made available on the County Planning Office website by the Department of Planning and Development.
- (D) **Community Meetings:** A Level II project will require a minimum of one community meeting to inform adjacent property owners and other interested parties about the proposed project and receive comments. The community meeting should be held within 45 days of filing the application or at least 30 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Such meetings will be noticed and organized by the Department of Planning and Development, or the applicant in coordination with Department staff.
- (E) **Other Types of Development Projects:** Based on public interest from neighbors or the community, the Director of Department of Planning and Development and / or the Planning Commission may require additional outreach / notification requirements for projects not listed in either Level I or Level II.
- (F) **Mail Noticing for Remote Properties:** For proposed development projects on properties that are remote (e.g. projects on properties that have

¹ Building site approval on slopes exceeding thirty percent will be 500 feet radius in accordance with Division C12-350.5 of the County Ordinance Code.

fewer than six (6) residential properties within 300 feet) and do not have community interest, the Director of the Department of Planning and Development may eliminate the need to require noticing for some or all of the early notification methods as listed under this policy..

SECTION 5. Additional Outreach Tools

The Planning and Development Department may utilize additional outreach tools for noticing designated contacts, community groups and other interest parties, based on the location of the project or other circumstances. These additional outreach tools include:

- (A) **Opt-In Subscription Option:** Web based subscription services for notifying subscribers of proposed development projects based on specified application types, location, or other project characteristics.
- (B) **Community Bulletin Board:** Posting notices on bulletin boards at community gathering places such as post offices, libraries, or retail establishments.