



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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SB 9 PROJECT APPLICATION GUIDE

What is Senate Bill 9 (SB 9)?

In 2021, Governor Newsom signed into law [Senate Bill 9 \(SB 9\)](#) to further address California's housing shortage. SB 9 is in effect starting January 1, 2022. This law establishes a streamlined process to develop two primary dwelling units on one eligible single-family zoned parcel, and to split one eligible single-family zoned parcel into two separate parcels of approximately equal size. SB 9 also provides more flexible property setbacks and parking standards and extends subdivision approval expirations for eligible parcels.

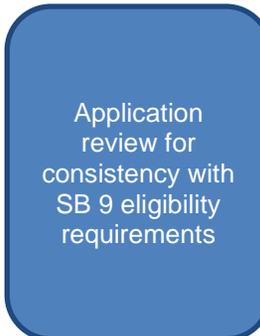
What is the SB 9 Project Application Process?

In Santa Cruz County, usually special approval from the Planning Department (called "discretionary approval") is required before an applicant may submit an application for a subdivision or for construction of two primary dwellings on one single family zoned parcel. Eligible SB 9 applications are streamlined because they do not require discretionary approval and are only subject to objective planning standards, except that coastal development permits may still be required for parcels located in the coastal zone. The SB 9 application process includes the following steps:

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



A pre-application consultation with County Planning staff is strongly recommended prior to submittal to determine if your project is eligible for the SB 9 application process. Once submitted, the County will review the [SB 9 Project Application](#) and associated materials for consistency with the eligibility criteria required by state law (see page 2). If eligible, the County will review the coastal development permit, building permit, and/or land division application to determine if it meets the County's objective standards for approval.

What are Objective Standards?

Objective standards are standards that involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official. These standards can be found in the County Code and General Plan/Local Coastal Program. For example, a building height limit of two stories is an objective standard. In comparison, a requirement that a building must blend appropriately with the neighborhood character is a subjective standard.

IS MY PROJECT ELIGIBLE FOR THE SB 9 APPLICATION PROCESS?

See the [Santa Cruz County GISWeb](#) for parcel information to determine if your project meets the eligibility criteria:

Single-Family Zone within Urban Area

The parcel must be zoned for single-family residential use, which includes the following zone districts: R-1, RA, RB, and RR. The parcel must also be **wholly within** a Census-designated urban area. (*GISWeb Legend: Zoning; Jurisdictional, Elections, Census*)

Not Within Protected Resource Areas

The project site cannot be in a conservation area or hazardous waste site, and cannot contain protected species habitat, prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, wetlands, floodways, or conservation easements. Projects in high or very high fire hazard severity zones, earthquake fault zones, or flood plains must mitigate those hazards. (*GISWeb Legend: Biotic and Water Resources; Hazards and Geophysical; Land Use*)

Consistent with Objective Standards

The project must be consistent with objective zoning, subdivision, and design review standards. (*See List of Objective Standards.*)

Demolition Restrictions

The project cannot involve demolition of affordable housing, rental housing, or a historic structure, and no more than 25% of exterior structural walls can be demolished if the site has had rental housing units in the last three years.

Long Term Rental Requirement

If the project creates a rental unit, it must be a long term rental (>30 days).

No Previous SB 9 Subdivisions

Parcels are not eligible for the SB 9 streamlined subdivision process if they were created by an SB 9 urban lot split. Applicants are also required to occupy one of the lots as their primary residence for a minimum of three years.

These are general guidelines. Please refer to [Gov. Code §65852.21](#) and [§66411.7](#) and review the [SB 9 Project Application](#) for detailed eligibility information.