



Infrastructure Fees

The County, along with various agencies, charge fees for the provision of drainage, water and sewer services. The fees are generally established based on regional service areas, and vary according to type and level of service provided by each agency and/or the County. The Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District has established 17 Area Drainage Plans (ADP), with fees ranging from \$131 per unit in the Winchester/North Hemet ADP to \$9,262 in the Day Creek ADP. The average fee is approximately \$5,500 per unit.

There are numerous water and sewer providers in Riverside County, the largest being EMWD, WMWD, and Coachella Valley Water District. Each service provider charges different fee amounts for service, usually as a per unit fee. A complete inventory of fees by individual agency is too extensive to itemize in this document. As an example, however, EMWD, which serves a large proportion of the County's geographic area, charges fees on a sliding scale according to zone for water backup service, a water deposit, a water equity fee, and water meter fees. Sewer services typically entail a sewer equity fee and a sewer connection fee averaging around \$1,200 per unit. Coachella Valley Water District typically assess \$1,500 per single family unit for water service, and \$9,600 for a multi-family unit.

Local Processing and Permit Procedures

A lengthy development review process can add to the cost of an affordable housing project through increased loan carrying charges, potentially increasing the cost per unit and correspondingly reducing profit margins and the incentive to develop affordable housing. Builders and developers frequently cite the cost of holding land during the evaluation and review process as a significant factor to the cost of housing. Holding costs associated with delays in processing have been estimated to add between 1.1% and 1.8% to the cost of a dwelling unit for each month of delay. Historically, the length of time it has taken to process housing and other types of projects in the County has varied according to the number of projects submitted and the amount of staff available to administer the processing tasks, as well as the complexity of the project.

Approval for an individual single family home and other minor tenant improvements can usually be processed within weeks of submittal to the County. Other projects requiring Conditional Use Permits, General Plan Amendments, Specific Plans, Planned Development approvals or other discretionary actions necessitate a higher level of review, resulting in a longer processing timeline, particularly if Environmental Impact Reports are required. Table H-39 provides a list of the average processing times for various procedures from application to Board of Supervisors approval of a project.



**Table H-39
Local Development Processing Time Limits**

Item	Approximate Length of Time From Submittal to Public Hearing
Conditional Use Permit	6 months
Plot Plan	6 months
Specific Plan	12 months
Tentative Tract Map/Parcel Map/Subdivision	6 months
Variance	6 months
Zone Change	6 months
General Plan Amendment	6 months
Environmental Documentation (EIR)	12 months

The minimum time frame from submittal to first hearing for any case with an environmental assessment is two months. This minimum time frame would be achieved if there are no issues associated with the case and no need for submittal or review of additional information. Plot plans with “fast track” status qualifying for a negative declaration could potentially reach Director’s hearing within five weeks. If the case involves an environmental impact report, the minimum time frame to first hearing would be eight months, if one assumes that the screencheck document review process can be accomplished within the two month timeframe previously discussed. However, the optimum processing times are rarely achieved in the current development environment.

The Deputy Planning Director generally advises applicants for projects with a negative declaration to expect a time period of 180 days (up to six months) between the date of submittal to the first public hearing. This translates to an eight to nine month period to reach the public hearing before the Board of Supervisors for those projects requiring Board action. Factors that may result in a longer time period to first hearing include requirements for additional environmental information or re-design, which may result in a project undergoing several changes (often in the form of amended maps) before consideration at hearing.

A total of 12-15 months is allowed for projects involving a General Plan Amendment. Such projects may reach their first public hearing within six months, but are only tentatively approved at their Board hearings, with final adoptions through resolution cycles which may occur three to six months following the tentative Board action. A time period of one year from submittal to public hearing is typical for projects requiring a specific plan or certification of an Environmental Impact Report. These time frames do not include the actual preparation of the specific plan or EIR documents prior to submission to the County, which may add between 18 to 24 months to the approval process.

As an example in order to determine a representative picture of “time from submittal to first hearing”, a sample using a collection of tract maps in the Eastvale area, submitted prior to February 2000 were analyzed. These tract maps were not filed concurrently with a specific plan, although some required concurrent filing of a General Plan Amendment. In a sample size of 41 tract



maps, time to first hearing ranged from 97 days to 477 days, with an average of 244 days.

Non-Governmental Constraints

Environmental Constraints

Throughout the County, physical environmental constraints exist that hamper housing development. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require that new development proposals be reviewed for potential impacts on or from the environment. The Planning Department and other County agencies have the responsibility to enforce County policies, CEQA, NEPA, and ordinances regulating development on flood plains, areas of potential seismic hazard, areas of excessive slope, conservation areas, areas with inappropriate conditions for septic tanks, and other environmental issues. Large portions of the County have one or more of these constraints. These problems usually reduce the density allowed and bring into play mitigation measures and other necessary requirements which add to the cost of the project. The County Planning Department has developed an environmental data base with an extensive mapping system as part of the Comprehensive General Plan to facilitate a timely identification of environmental hazards and resources.

The environmental review process on the one hand can provide useful information for the jurisdiction about impacts on local environments and needed mitigation measures, as well as useful construction and market information for builders, buyers, lenders, and others. On the other hand, the process may also be viewed as an expensive, complex, and time consuming burden.

The environmental review process facilitates housing by:

- Directing housing development to locate away from environmental hazards and resources and ensuring a reasonable level of public safety from environmental hazards through mitigation;
- Ensuring that adequate public facilities such as sewer, water, and roads will be available; and
- Ensuring that adequate public services such as schools, fire protection, police, and health services will be available.

The environmental review process add to housing development costs in the following ways (not all projects require all these costs):

- Environmental Assessment fees (with initial case submittal);
- Environmental Impact Report review fees;
- Consultants costs for preparing preliminary studies;
- Consultants costs for preparing EIR or other technical studies, if required;
- Increasing permit processing time, thereby increasing the total interest costs on borrowed money, property taxes, and other holding costs; and
- Costs of mitigation of potential environmental impacts.

The rapid increase in housing prices throughout the 1980s and 90s cannot be attributed solely to environmental regulation; however, there is evidence that this necessary process has played a significant role in delaying housing projects and increasing finished lot costs.