

# TRACT MAP

## AN INFORMATIONAL GUIDE



### PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## WHAT IS A TRACT MAP (TM)?

A tract map is one of the processes used to subdivide real property into smaller lots. Typically, the tract map is used to create (5) or more residential, commercial or industrial lots. This type of subdivision is normally associated with full urban improvements, which would include paved streets, curb, gutter sidewalk, fire hydrants, street lights, comprehensive drainage system, water and sewer service, and other infrastructure found in urban areas. There is no statutory limit to the number of lots that can be created by using the tract map process.

Applicants for tract maps are typically "developers" (those who are in the business of developing residential, commercial or industrial properties). A significant investment is involved in gaining approval of, and constructing, a tract. Other less costly and less complex processes are available to individual landowners who wish to subdivide their large parcel into fewer pieces. However, each lot developed must meet the minimum lot size required by the City's Zoning Code, and the land must be capable of supporting the proposed number of lots and the permitted land use.

The first step in subdividing land is to determine if such a proposal is feasible. Contact the City's Planning Department to find the zoning and general plan designation for the site. This will determine if the land can be subdivided, and it will determine the minimum lot size. It may be necessary to obtain a zone change or other discretionary approvals prior to, or concurrent with, a tract map. Upon determining that it is feasible to subdivide the land, the next step is to hire a licensed land surveyor or registered civil engineer. They will work with this Department to ensure that approval of the tentative tract map and recordation of the final tract map complies with all local and state requirements. Please telephone (760) 373-7141, if you have any questions regarding the tract map process.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Once the application is deemed complete and formally accepted, the Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting occurs within approximately thirty (30) days. A public hearing is normally held within fifty (50) calendar days to conditionally approve or deny the map. However, if an environmental study is required, this processing time is lengthened considerably. (Typically, ninety [90] to one hundred and twenty [120] days are added onto the process.) Once a tract map is tentatively approved, processing of the final tract map varies. The tentative approval is granted for 24 months and there are extensions available. It is dependent upon you and your surveyor's or engineer's ability to satisfy the conditions of approval and record the map. Once the tract map is recorded, the property is subdivided; the land division has occurred. It will often take several weeks for the County's official maps and computer data bases to be updated to reflect the new subdivision. It is up to the County to issue assessor parcel numbers to the newly formed lots, prepare and mail out separate tax bills for the new parcels. After this has occurred, a parcel can legally be sold.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for a tract map you need to file an application with the Planning Department and pay a fee. You may visit the Planning Department to pick up the application, have one mailed to you or email your request. Email requests will receive a pdf version that you may print out. A licensed land surveyor or registered civil engineer will submit the application on behalf of the property owner, as State law requires that the parcel map be prepared by a licensed land surveyor or registered civil engineer. Once an application is submitted to the City's Planning Department, it will be reviewed to determine if it is complete. An application package will consist of the following and you must complete or be aware of your obligations to the process:

- Checklist for Conceptual Review, (Development Review Committee DRC or Site Plan).
- Checklist for Tentative Tract or Parcel Map. Be prepared to discuss the status of these items if not included. You cannot final the parcel map without completion of this checklist to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.
- Checklist for Final Tract or Parcel Map. You must be aware of your further obligations to complete the entire process.
- Notice Developer Fees form.
- Application form.
- Applicant's Initial Study.
- Applicant's Environmental Information form.
- Biota Study. (Must be current.)
- Pictures of the site. North, East, South, West.
- Picture of the nearest fire hydrant.
- Will-serve letters from all utility companies.
- Two (2) copies of a preliminary title report (less than thirty [30] days old).
- Ten (10) copies, 11" x 17" in size of the proposed tract map, prepared and stamped by a licensed land surveyor or registered civil engineer.
- One 8 ½" x 11" copy of the proposed tract map. This will be used for publication purposes.
- Hazardous Waste Site Verification Statement.

Application fees due. See Application Fees.

A DRC meeting is scheduled with City staff in accordance with the DRC calendar. The DRC consists of staff from City departments such as,

Engineering, Public Works, Building, Fire, Police and Planning. The Planning Director acts as Chairman of DRC or their Appointed Designee. The purpose of the DRC is to formulate a recommended action for the Planning Commission regarding the parcel. This meeting is also held so the applicant can discuss the recommendations with the DRC. Applicants are strongly encouraged to attend the DRC meeting and resolve all concerns at this level. Additional DRC meetings may be necessary to resolve conditions of approval and to make revisions to the map. Written comments regarding the tract map are received at DRC from the Department Heads. These written comments will be compiled into formal Conditions of Approval and signed by the owner/developer or appointed agent and the DRC Chairman or Appointed Designee.

The Planning Technician will prepare the notice of public hearing. The notice of public hearing is published in the local newspaper of general circulation. The Planning Technician will send letters noticing the public hearing to all property owners within 300 feet, 10 days prior to the public hearing.

Typically a tract map is prepared to subdivide a large parcel of land for a particular project with a particular land use designation required to complete the project. To change a land use designation the owner must have two contiguous lots in order to apply for a zone change. In some instances a general plan amendment is also required, for example if you are changing the use from residential to commercial or industrial. To better understand the zone change and general plan amendment process, brochures and informational guides have been prepared on these topics.

The biota study completed on remote and considerable land size, usually will result in additional more comprehensive land studies required and consultation with Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As a result California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents will be filed such as, a Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Certified Regulatory Program (CRP). However, if these documents are required, due to a zone change or general plan amendment, of which the City is allowed no more than four (4) per year, filed January, April, July, or October, at a cost to you of \$1,000, the map is not sent out for review until the environmental document has been prepared. The City becomes the Lead Agency and prepares the map and CEQA documents such as, the Notice of Preparation and Notice of Availability that is published in the local newspaper of general circulation and notifies affected property owners within 300 feet as required by law, unless it is an EIR or CRP. EIR's and CRP's are prepared by the land owner's Environmental Consulting Firm and given to the Planning Technician for distribution with the Lead Agency's Notice of Completion to be sent to several governmental agencies and utility companies. There is a 30-day or 45-day review period for agencies to respond. An additional 15 copies are sent to the State Clearinghouse. The State Clearinghouse will disperse the additional 15 copies to agencies as they deem appropriate and that have not already been mailed by the Lead Agency. Any comments received during the "review period" are compiled by the Planning Department. A list of recommended

approval and recommended findings will then be prepared to ensure all local and state requirements are satisfied. A public hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible to coincide with the ending of the State review period.

On a predetermined date, action is taken by the Planning Commission to conditionally approve or deny the tract map. If the tract map is denied by the Planning Commission, the owner/applicant may file an appeal within ten (10) days of the denial. The appeal fee to be heard by City Council is \$200.00. At this point, if the tract map is approved, it is considered to be "tentatively approved" for a period of 24 months. Prior to the expiration of the tentative tract map, contact the Planning Department to ask about possible extensions. Conditions of approval must be satisfied before the tract map can record. These conditions will often require: improvements and dedications be made for roads, drainage issues be resolved, fire protection be provided, water and sewer service be supplied, park fees be paid, or other fees be paid or improvements constructed. The tract map process consists of two (2) distinct phases, the "tentative" process and the "final" process. The Planning Department is responsible for processing the tract map from its initial submittal through to the tentative approval. The City Engineer is responsible for processing the tract map from tentative approval through to the recordation of the final parcel map. Once a tract map is tentatively approved, the applicant works with the City Engineer to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of approval.

A final map is approved by the City Council and the City Engineer must notify the City's Planning Technician of the date and time the final map will be heard by City Council. Prior to placement on the City Council agenda, a final map fee of \$400.00 plus \$30.00 per lot must be collected by the Planning Department. Once the final tract map is approved in its final form by the City Engineer and all conditions of approval have been satisfied, the final tract map is then ready to be recorded.

### CEQA REQUIREMENTS/FEES

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that an environmental study be prepared for some types of projects. Rarely are tract maps found to be exempt from CEQA. Tract maps generally require a more extensive environmental review. The environmental study can take the form of a Negative Declaration, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or a Certified Regulatory Program (CRP). Additional technical reports and studies required may include: a biota report, an archaeological survey, a soils report, a geologic hazard report, and a groundwater analysis, traffic study, drainage plan, storm water prevention plan, among other reports and studies. These technical reports and studies will be used to assess the existing physical condition of the property and to determine the impacts the tract map may have on the environment. Technical reports and studies are identified in the application package checklists. Each time a CEQA document is processed by the County Clerk, there is a fee of \$50.00. A Tract Map will require the filing of a Notice of Determination and the fee for the appropriate CEQA document such as, Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, EIR or CRP to the County Clerk. The County Clerk's Office will accept a money order or cashier's check, made payable to the Kern County Clerk's Office. The City's Planning Department will advise you when these fees are needed and will attach your money order or cashier's check to the completed Notice of

Determination and forward it to the County Clerk's Office for recording. Additional CEQA fees may apply that are imposed by State agencies: The filing of Negative or Mitigated Negative Declaration is \$2,010.25, Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is \$2,792.25, a Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) is \$949.50. **Make your money order or cashier's check payable to Kern County Clerk's Office.** The Planning Technician will advise you when the fees are due. **YOUR PROJECT IS NOT COMPLETE UNLESS THESE FEES ARE PAID. ONCE THE PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION, THE APPLICANT MUST BE PREPARED TO SUBMIT THE FEES IMMEDIATELY, THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT HAS NO MORE THAN FIVE (5) DAYS TO RECORD THE NOTICE OF DETERMINATION, THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS. ALL CITY PROJECTS MUST FOLLOW THE SAME PROCEDURE, "CERTIFICATE OF DE MINIMUS" ARE NO LONGER PERMITTED.**

### APPLICATION FEES

- DRC is required: \$750.00.
- Tract Map base cost for filing and processing: \$600.00 plus \$20.00 per lot. (See additional fees as prescribed in the Applicable Development Fees list, under Improvement Plan Checking Costs and Improvement Plan Permit Fee, located in the application package.)
- Final Map fees are paid prior to Final Map approval. The fee is \$400.00 plus \$30.00 per lot.
- Applicants may pay by cash, credit card (VISA, MASTER CARD or DISCOVER) or check made payable to the City of California City.
- Return completed application and fees to the Planning Department.