



City of Willows Planning Department

An Applicant's Guide to Procedures for **USE PERMITS**

PURPOSE

In each zoning classification of the City's zoning ordinance, various uses are listed as permitted. Each zoning classification also lists various "conditional uses" which may be permitted subject to the granting of a use permit in each case. The purpose of the use permit is to allow for special consideration of certain specified uses which may or may not be compatible with an area depending on the specifics of the particular case. Since a zoning ordinance cannot be drafted to deal equitably with every circumstance, the use permit process is designed to provide sufficient flexibility to determine whether a specific land use on a certain site will be compatible with the surroundings and the General Plan designation.

PROCESS

Step 1- Pre-application Discussion with Staff

It is recommended that the applicant review the proposal with planning staff prior to the submission of the formal application. This will allow the staff to advise the applicant on conformity with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, possible environmental concerns, zoning requirements, and specific traffic siting, landscaping and building-design criteria. The applicant should provide preliminary sketch plans and a project description. A large or complex project may necessitate follow-up discussion. Usually, this first step is the most important step and helps a project move faster through the process.

Step 2- Filing of Application

The applicant shall submit a completed application, an accurately drawn reproducible site plan, filing fee, and other required supplemental information to the Willows Planning Department, 201 N. Lassen Street, Willows, CA 95988. A staff planner will review the material to make sure all the required information is provided. The application must be signed by the property owner.

Step 3-Environmental Review-

Following review by the planner, the application will be evaluated for completeness. The application should embody any changes that were recommended by the planner and agreed upon by the applicant so the project is accurately described. Once the application is deemed accurate and complete, an Initial Study will be prepared by Staff if need be. The purpose of the Initial Study is to identify any significant environmental impacts of the project which have not been mitigated by the design of the project or which cannot be mitigated by modifications. Based on the findings of the Initial Study, staff will prepare either a negative declaration or authorize the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) or refer the environmental determination to the Planning Commission. Some projects are exempt from the environmental review (and would go directly to Step 4); however, such a project must meet the criteria set forth in State Law. In any case, from the date when the application is deemed complete, an environmental review process takes a maximum of 20 or 30 days for a categorical exemption (depending on whether state or federal agencies are involved), 105 days for a negative declaration, and one year for an EIR.

Step 4- Permit Hearing before Planning Commission

The Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing and may hold additionally hearings thereon as it may deem to be necessary. Notice of a public hearing for a Use Permit shall be provided at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the public hearing to the newspaper and property owners within 400 feet of the subject property. Use Permits may be approved subject to certain conditions, or denied. Any action of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council. Without appeal, Use Permits are effective in ten days from the approval date. Any use permit granted in accordance with the Code of the City of Willows shall automatically be revoked if not used within one year from the date of approval unless an extension is requested per the code.

ESTIMATED TIME REQUIREMENTS

The actual time for the processing of a Use Permit will vary depending on the complexity and magnitude of the proposal and the type of associated Environmental document, but generally requests require 30-45 days to process. This period begins only after the application is accepted by the City as "complete." Without a complete and accurate application, an application can not be processed. No building permits can be obtained until after the ten-day appeal period.

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Planning Application form completed and signed by applicant(s) and all property owners **.
2. Environmental Information form completed and signed
3. Supplemental information if required.
4. Application fee- (Refer to Fee Schedule). (*See Planner regarding PTA Deposit*)
5. A detailed reproducible site plan drawn to scale and a written description of the use eliminates many possibilities for delay. The following information should be provided on your site plan:

North Arrow

Property Lines

Building Location(s)-Proposed & Existing

Dimensions

Landscaped Areas

Easements and Adjoining Streets

Topography if more than 5% slope

Location and Type of Signage

Parking & Loading and Maneuvering Areas

Walkways

Required Street Dedications

Trash Enclosure (s) and Locations

Outdoor Storage (if applicable)

All Mature Trees

Significant Natural Features

Utilities

** If a corporation is the property owner, a resolution from the corporation authorizing the application shall be submitted.