

Frequently Asked Questions

- Application deadlines/submittals

The Town does not have set submittal dates for Council review. Upon receipt of an application the Town has 30 days to review the application and notify the applicant if the application is complete for processing and Council review. Most applications are routed to the Marin Municipal Water District, Ross Valley Sanitary District and Ross Valley Fire Department (create hyperlinks) for review and comment during this period. If an application is rejected as incomplete, the Town will identify the deficiencies and how they can be remedied. The resubmittal of the application begins a new 30-day review period. Once complete, the Town will proceed with scheduling the item for Council review, including review under the [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\)](#).

After a project is determined complete, the [State Permit Streamlining Act](#) includes time limit provisions for taking action on a project after the environmental determination is made. When an Environmental Impact Report is certified for a project, the Town shall approve or deny the project within 180 days from date of certification. When a project is found to be exempt from CEQA or a negative declaration is adopted for a project, the Town shall approve or deny the project within 60 days from the date of the CEQA determination or adoption ([California Government Code Section §65950](#) and [Public Resources Code §21151.5](#)).

- Approval expirations

Approved applications expire two years after their initial approval date. One additional year may be requested in writing prior to the expiration date. There is a fee for an extension.

- Consent agenda items

If a project does not require a public hearing (only a public meeting), staff will place an item on the consent agenda if the following criteria are met:

- ✓ Staff supports application
- ✓ All neighbor acknowledgments have been received and no neighbor objections are anticipated
- ✓ Staff is unaware of any controversy related to the item
- ✓ Staff does not expect an objection by the applicant to proposed conditions

- Cutting or removing trees

Many tree removals or alterations require prior approval of a tree permit. An application form and payment of a fee is required. See [Chapter 12.24](#) of the Ross Municipal Code and the [Tree Removal Fact Sheet](#).

- Fences, Gates, & Walls

Fences, gates and walls above four feet in height in a yard adjacent to a street require design review approval, even if they are outside of the required yard setback. Side and

rear yard fences may be up to 6 feet tall. Side and rear yard fences up to 7 feet tall may be permitted by staff with a Minor Exception [link to code section – but I do not have a form for this yet]. Any fences over seven feet in height require prior approval of a height variance from the Town Council.

- Home occupation permit to run a business out of a house
A home occupation permit is necessary to run a business out of a residence. An annual business license may be obtained from the Building Department after approval of the home occupation permit
- Lighting regulations
Lighting is regulated. Exterior landscaping lighting by any means is not permitted if it creates glare or annoyance for adjacent property owners. Lighting expressly designed to light exterior walls or fences visible from adjacent properties or public right-of-ways is prohibited. Lighting generated by outdoor use of television, video or other electronic devices shall not be permitted if it creates glare or annoyance for adjacent property owners. (Ross Municipal Code [Section 18.40.190](#)).
- Setback requirements
With certain exceptions, setbacks, or “required yard areas,” must be unobstructed. On-grade patios, air conditioning units, play structures, pool equipment, spas, and other development must meet setback requirements. All residential properties have a 25 foot front yard setback. Side and rear yard setbacks range from 15 to 70 feet, depending on the zoning district and slope of the site. The required setback may be obtained from Planning.
- Story poles requirement
Story poles connected by ribbon are required to indicate changes to ridgelines, building corners, and exterior walls along with proposed fencing adjacent to a right-of-way. Story poles must be in place 10 days prior to the hearing date. A plan detailing the story pole locations and elevations is required. The Planning Department may request surveyor certification of story pole location and height. If required story poles are not installed on time, the Town may continue the item to a later meeting. Story poles shall be removed within two weeks of a final Council project decision
- Submitting project comments
Written comments received by the Planning Department by 5:00 p.m. the Thursday (7 days) prior to the Town Council meeting will be included in the Council agenda packet. Other written comments should be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the Council meeting so the Council has time to review the comments

Written comments may be mailed to the Town Council at P.O. Box 320, Ross, CA 94957 or emailed to Elise Semonian at esemonian@townofross.org with copy to the Town

Clerk at llopez@townofross.org or hand-delivered to 31 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Ross.

- Zoning Code and development requirements
Reference the [Ross Municipal Code Title 18 Zoning](#).