

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT POLICY/ORDINANCE
INTERPRETATION**

Interpretation No.: ES-01 (Electrical Service, Vacant Parcels, vers. 2)

Effective Date: 6/18/04

Originally Issued: Supersedes interpretation "Issuance of Electric Permits" by Linda Niebanck dated 8/18/83

Revised: 6/25/09

Question:

Under what circumstances will the Planning Department issue electric service for vacant parcels or second meters for developed parcels?

**Applicable Ordinance Section(s)
And/or General Plan/LUP Policy(ies)**

13.10.611(c)

INTERPRETATION:

Power for parcels zoned A, CA, AP, TP, or SU (with an Agriculture General Plan designation) is allowed if there is an existing legitimate agricultural use on the property that requires electricity. Maximum amperage allowed is based on the requirements of the agricultural use.

Power for parcels zoned R-1, RM, RA, RR, RB, or SU (with a Residential General Plan designation) is limited to one 125-amp maximum service for well use, as authorized by staff. Power for irrigation systems, lighting systems, electric gates, and similar incidental residential uses (not involving a structure) on a vacant parcel or a second power source for like uses on developed property may be authorized only by the Planning Director. A Declaration of Restrictions is required to be recorded prior to Zoning approval of the Electric Permit application.

Other requests for power may be considered with a Level IV Development Permit Application outside the Coastal Zone or a Level V Development Permit Application inside the Coastal Zone.

Reason:

The A, CA, AP, TP, and SU (with Agricultural General Plan designation) zone districts allow agricultural uses in the absence of a main dwelling as primary uses. Wells and accessory structures are commonly required to facilitate these agricultural uses; therefore, it is appropriate that power be allowed to these structures/well to further utilization of the agricultural resources on the property.

The R-1, RM, RA, RR, RB, and SU (with a Residential General Plan designation) zone districts dictate single-family or multi-family residential uses as the primary uses.

Accordingly, Section 13.10.611(c)2 prohibits electrical service to residential accessory structures in the absence of a main dwelling (without Level IV or Level V approval).

A separate meter for electric service to well pumps on vacant residential parcels is appropriate to facilitate fire suppression or to allow family gardens, a permitted use. Separate electric service for other incidental residential uses, such as electric gates, are often necessary due to the use not being located near the single-family dwelling. The amperage needs for such purposes are minimal. The original Policy Interpretation ES-01 limited the electric service to 60 amps. This electric service amperage is no longer readily marketed; therefore, the allowable maximum amperage that can be requested without discretionary approval is being increased to 125 amps. Requests for greater amperage can be requested with a Level IV or Level V Development Permit Application and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A recorded Declaration of Restrictions outlining the service limitation is appropriately required to allow full disclosure to future purchasers and can be rescinded by the Planning Department when/if a building permit for a dwelling is issued.

Tom Burns, Planning Director

Date