

Planning and Building Departments' Relationship to Illegal Building

Synopsis

Planning and Building Departments affect the growth of an area by the enforcement of zoning and building regulations. Planning and building regulations that are too complex and difficult to understand may deter people from building. In some cases, people may build illegally as they perceive it too difficult to deal with these government agencies. This illegal growth may pose safety hazards to occupants and neighbors, as well as affecting the community as a whole. Revenue is also lost as these structures are not assessed and people do not pay their share of taxes on these illegal structures.

Background

Planning Departments within the county have been the subject of many Grand Jury investigations.¹ Political candidates have promised to reform the County Planning Department.² Some candidates have entered politics because of problems they have had with planning and building departments.³ Former planning department employees have started consulting businesses to guide people through the complex permitting processes.⁴

Cities and counties get their legal basis to create land use and building regulations through police powers established by common law, the courts and the California Constitution. The purpose of these regulations is to allow a city or county to “protect the public health, safety and welfare of its residents.”⁵

In order to be “built to code,” permits are required before a building or structure is “erected, constructed, enlarged, altered, repaired, moved, improved, removed, converted or enlarged.”⁶ Building departments accept applications and plans. They review these documents for compliance with building codes. Other departments and agencies review them for compliance with their own codes (zoning, fire, environmental health, etc.).⁷ Some people say that planning and building departments provide conflicting information and take too long to issue permits.⁸ Some planning officials say that some residents build illegally because of the high costs for plans, architects, engineers, permit fees, taxes and the like.

¹ Grand Jury reports 2000-2001, 2002-2003.

² Jondi Gumz, “5th District hopefuls speak out at forum,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, 15 February 2004, p. A-19.

³ Brian Seals, “Out-of-towners seek local support for state Senate run,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, 14 February 2004, p. A-14.

⁴ Santa Cruz Sentinel, 1 February 2004.

⁵ Curtin's California Land Use and Planning Law, 2003.

⁶ 1997 Unified Building Code, section 106.1.

⁷ 1997 Unified Building Code.

⁸ Santa Cruz Sentinel, 25 June 2002.

Scope

This report looks at the reasons people build illegal units, do work without permits and contribute to illegal growth. It recommends measures that legislative bodies and planning and building departments can take to encourage people to get permits and to encourage legal growth.

Sources

The Grand Jury:

- Interviewed city and county staff.
- Toured the County Planning Department.
- Investigated citizen complaints.
- Surveyed the five building departments in the county.

Reviewed:

- Previous Grand Jury Reports.
- 2003 Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project Report.
- Local news articles.
- Minutes, agendas, correspondence and reports from Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors meetings.
- Jurisdiction Web sites.
- Sections of jurisdiction reports, such as the draft of the Santa Cruz County Housing Element.

Why Permits Are Required

Permits are required before doing any construction work.⁹

People have died in fires in illegally built units. Fires and carbon monoxide poisoning can result from improperly vented stoves and appliances.¹⁰

The Building Code requires smoke detectors. Lack of smoke detection may contribute to fire related deaths.¹¹

Factors Contributing to Housing Needs

There were 99,744 housing units in Santa Cruz County in 2002.¹²

⁹ 1997 Uniform Building Code 106.1.

¹⁰ Marina Malikoff, "Illegal units worry fire officials," [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 2 December, 2000, p. 1.

¹¹ 1997 Uniform Building Code; Cathy Redfern, "Woman dies in fire..." [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 2003.

¹² <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06087.html>.

The median sales price of homes in Santa Cruz County is continually rising. The median sales price of a new home in 2001 was \$527,000.¹³ In March of 2004 median price of a single-family home reached \$603,125.¹⁴

Per capita personal income dropped from \$37,866 in 2000 to \$36,865 in 2001. The median family income has risen from \$69,000 in 2002, to \$74,600 in 2003.¹⁵

The 2000 U.S. Census reported that 29,383 of the county's 247,530 people were at the poverty level in Santa Cruz County.¹⁶

The 2003 Santa Cruz Community Assessment Project reported the amount of money that survey respondents said they spent on housing for 2003.

	Caucasians	Latinos	All respondents
Spent over 50% of income on housing	41%	77%	51%
Spent over 75% of income on housing	13%	38%	21%

Table 1. Amount of take-home income spent on housing, 2003, Santa Cruz County, broken down by race.

Source: 2003 Santa Cruz County Assessment Project.

The figures were also given regionally.

	North County	South County	San Lorenzo Valley
Spent over 75% of income on housing	18%	26%	13%

Table 2. Amount of take-home income spent on housing, Santa Cruz County, 2003, broken down by region.

Source: 2003 Santa Cruz County Assessment Project.

¹³ Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project 2003, p. 39.

¹⁴ Santa Cruz Sentinel, 9 April 2004

¹⁵ Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project 2003, p. 35.

¹⁶ Santa Cruz Community Assessment Project 2003, p. 48, source U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary file 3, http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/products/CAP9_Economy2%20.pdf.

Governmental Factors Contributing to Illegal Growth

The high cost of housing is perceived as a reason that people leave the area for more affordable housing elsewhere.¹⁷

The county has increased the number of planned housing units from 2,621 to 3,441 units (by 2007), and has increased density from 17 to 25 units per acre in some areas in order to get its housing plan approved and certified by the state. Santa Cruz County has not complied with the state requirement to have a certified housing plan for over ten years.¹⁸ A resident has used the argument that the county cannot enforce zoning codes because it does not have a certified housing plan.¹⁹

People perceive that complying with zoning and building codes in the county is difficult because it is expensive and complex and because they get conflicting information from planners and inspectors. Some people believe there has been a large amount of illegal building in the county because of the high cost and excessive complexity of acquiring permits.²⁰

The county has relaxed some regulations for second units, which resulted in the number of applications increasing from 25 in a typical year to 48 in a six-month period.²¹

Some people believe Santa Cruz County has a housing shortage and that houses are not affordable. They say that causes people to leave the area in search of affordable housing.²²

County residents have complained of several issues:

- Long waiting periods to acquire permits (in some cases years).
- Constantly changing rules.
- Increasing costs and fees.
- Staff changes.
- Lack of accountability.²³

The City of Santa Cruz received similar criticism that its Planning Department continually changes the rules. Critics say the department's philosophy is "just say no."²⁴

¹⁷ [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 7 March 2004.

¹⁸ [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 23 March 2004.

¹⁹ [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 1 February 2004.

²⁰ [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 3 February 2004.

²¹ [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 1 February 2004.

²² [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), "Getting legal...", September 1, 2004, "Residents plead...", November 7, 2001.

²³ Santa Cruz County Supervisors Almquist and Wormhoudt, letter to Board of Supervisors, dated 19 June 2002 presented on the 25 June 2002 agenda of the Board of Supervisors regular meeting.

Jeanene Harlick, "Third District supervisor candidates face off in Bonny Doon," [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 10 January 2002.

Heather Boerner, "Supervisors want shorter, cheaper planning process," [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 25 June 2002.

²⁴ Heather Boerner, "Getting legal: Tiny garage becomes part of a neighborhood," [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 1 September 2002.

Other residents have described staff as helpful, fair, prompt, professional and said they were treated “humanely.”²⁵

Some residents say there is political influence involved with the permit process.²⁶ A 2003 Grand Jury report described pressure on the planning staff from elected officials.²⁷

Possible Solutions

In June 2002, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors proposed recommendations to improve the permit and planning process, such as making applicants aware of their rights during the process. The Planning Department implemented a few of the recommendations. It did not implement others, citing the following reasons:

- The complexity of the established process.
- Legal requirements.
- State mandates, such as environmental regulations.²⁸

Streamlining processes have been used in San Jose area planning departments. Some jurisdictions have used a Total Quality Management (TQM)²⁹ approach to reduce steps and shorten the time it takes to process permits. These jurisdictions have taken a regional approach to code adoption and processes, as well as Internet technical advantages.³⁰

Field Investigation and Interviews

The Grand Jury interviewed government officials and conducted surveys relating to building permits and code enforcement. The results are summarized in the following chart.

²⁵ Jeff Talmadge, “Planning...,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, 6 August 2002. “Contractor thanks planning department,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, Letter to the Editor, 5 February 2001.

²⁶ Pat Dugan, “Clean up permit process,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, Letter to the editor, 26 March 2001.

²⁷ 2003 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury report.

²⁸ Santa Cruz Sentinel, 25 June 2002. Also in Board of Supervisors Minutes 25 June 2002, 1 October 2002, 10 December 2002, 11 February 2003, 25 February 2003, and from letter dated 25 June 2002, <http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/bds/Govstream/archive/ArchiveIndex.asp>.

²⁹ Total Quality Management is a management theory put forth by Dr. W. Edwards Demming. This theory stresses teamwork, research, employee training and education, innovation and continuous improvement. The theory has proven to be very successful in foreign nations such as Japan. It has also been widely adopted by American companies. (Recommended reading: Mary Walton, The Demming Management Method, 1985, and Daniel Hunt, Quality in America, 1992). These ideas are also being adapted to government (See Al Gore, Report of National Performance Reviews; Businesslike Government, 1996; Common Sense Government Works Better and Costs Less, 1995; Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer Driven Strategy, 1997).

³⁰ <http://www.jointventure.org/initiatives/smartpermit/index.html>, “Valley Permits Streamlined,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, 22 March 2001.

Findings

1.

JURISDICTION and population	Capitola 10,150	Santa Cruz 55,600	Scotts Valley 11,650	Watsonville 47,600	Santa Cruz County (unincorporated) 134,700
Number of building permits issued last fiscal year	359	1,593	373	1,176	3,794
Number of residential permits	269	1,250 (est.)	307	981	Does not track in this manner.
Number of commercial permits	90	343 (est.)	66	195	Does not track in this manner.
Average number of days from permit application until issuance	7	121	21	16.1	Does not track in this manner.
Average number of days for commercial permits	45	102	45	20.5	Does not track in this manner.
Fee to be paid * before issuance of a building permit for a 1,500 sq. ft. house	\$19,252	\$16,155	\$42,045	\$29,837	\$25,998 (2,500 sq.ft. house, doesn't include water, discretionary planning, soils/ geologic fees)
Illegal units and garage conversions discovered last fiscal year.	2	92	4	259	320 (estimated)
Number of staff in Building Dept.	2	6	2.25	9	22
Estimated # of illegal units	100+	1,000 to 5,000	20-30	8,000	Would not estimate. ("A lot")

Table 3. Survey of planning departments in Santa Cruz County, 2004.

Source: Santa Cruz County Grand Jury 2003-2004 Survey.

* See Appendix for detailed table

Reported from Jurisdictions

They were also asked what factors they believe contribute to people not getting permits. The answers to that question and the findings of what jurisdictions believe about themselves are listed below.

City of Santa Cruz

2. The city said it is diligent in performing plan checking.
3. The city said that many factors contribute to the average time from application to issuance of permits.
4. Specialized plan checks and engineering plan checking are outsourced.
5. The city cited several reasons for problems and delays:
 - Applicants do not provide adequate plans.
 - They do not pick up and correct plans in a timely manner.
 - They do not pick up approved permits when they are ready.

These situations affected the city's average number of days to issue permits.

6. City officials said they stress interpersonal service and receive compliments for good service.
7. Decision-making is decentralized.
8. The City Council has a hands-off approach and lets staff do their jobs.
9. Code enforcement is more reactive, unless a violation presents itself to them.
10. Staff said permits are not obtained because:
 - People are not informed one is needed.
 - Other professionals say that permits are not needed.
 - They are not affordable.
 - People have no desire to obtain them.
 - A project may not qualify for a permit to be built.
11. The city has made it less restrictive and easier to build accessory dwelling units (Granny units).³¹

³¹ Heather Boerner, "Granny-unit amendment could affect thousands in Santa Cruz," [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#), 30 July 2002.

Scotts Valley

12. This city returned calls on the same day and delivered information to the Grand Jury within six days.
13. Staff is reactive to code violation complaints.
14. Staff said permits are not obtained because:
 - The cost and difficulty in obtaining them.
 - Environmental regulations, such as those enforced by State Fish and Game concerning endangered species like the Mt. Hermon June Beetle.

Capitola

15. This city reports that its city councils have always stressed good customer service.
16. The city is primarily built out, so certain violations like weed abatement are not an issue.
17. This city said it is very efficient in issuing permits.

Watsonville

18. This city says it is very customer-oriented.
19. It issues “over the counter” permits for non-complicated residential and commercial additions ranging in size from 500 square feet up to 1,200 square feet, in 20 to 30 minutes. Staff does this with counter reviews on Mondays and Wednesdays.
20. It is proactive in code enforcement. All of its inspectors issue stop work notices if they see work without permits. They issue citations for illegal garage conversions.
21. It has a continuous improvement philosophy of “What can we do to make it better?”

County of Santa Cruz

22. The county said it is enforcing complex regulations.
23. Conditions inherent to the unincorporated areas of the county such as sloping sites, geologic hazards and proximity to riparian corridors (like streams) make it more difficult to compare with a flat city lot. These factors lead to difficulties with people providing adequate plans and addressing these factors.

24. The county does not track permits by residential or commercial, but uses other categories. The average time range from application for a permit until issuance is shown in Table 3.

Type	Number of days
Minor residential remodels and additions less than 500 sq. ft.	24
Major residential additions greater than 500 sq. ft. and commercial additions	38
Single family dwellings	49
Commercial tenant improvements	35
Large commercial and multi-unit residential projects	70

Table 4. Average length of time between permit application and issuance, County of Santa Cruz

Source: 2003-2004 Santa Cruz County Grand Jury Survey

25. County officials gave several reasons that permits are not obtained:

- Costs (plans, engineering, permit fees, impact fees, fire sprinklers, tax reassessment).
- Without fines and penalties, the financial incentive may outweigh any risks.
- Some projects are built illegally because they would not qualify for permits.
- There is a tradition of owner-built projects without permits, especially in rural areas.

26. County code enforcement is complaint driven (reactive).

Miscellaneous Findings

These findings represent individual views from various jurisdictions. They are listed separately to protect the confidentiality of agencies interviewed.

27. Disability accessibility is required by law on new permits, but is not enforced by many jurisdictions.

28. Some officials said that more regulations slow growth.

29. Some officials said that people do not like regulatory agencies.

30. Staff said it performs in a professional manner.
31. Loss of businesses are an issue in the City and County of Santa Cruz as companies move to areas where labor and housing are cheaper.
32. Some officials said the county takes too long to issue permits.
33. Some officials said that planning and building employees leave the county's jurisdiction to work elsewhere because the county does not provide good customer service.
34. It was reported that there is not enough staff, regular or specialized, to address permit applications in a timely manner, especially during times of increased permit activity. Some projects “fall through the cracks.”
35. Some staff from different jurisdictions cooperate to solve problems, but some do not. There has been no regional approach to solutions, as has occurred with jurisdictions in the San Jose area.
36. Santa Cruz County is an expensive place to live compared to median home prices in most other areas.
37. A comparison of some jobs indicates that Santa Cruz County pays less than other jurisdictions and the private sector:

Planner (mid-level, September 2002)

• Santa Cruz County	\$53,184
• City of Santa Cruz	\$59,964
• Private sector	\$83,200
• San Mateo County	\$58,998
• Santa Clara County	\$62,007
• Monterey County	\$59,112 ³²

38. Twenty-seven cities and two counties in the San Jose area use a Total Quality Management approach by adopting uniform building codes and forms to improve the permit process.³³
39. Citizens have organized to have more control over the planning process.³⁴

³² “County pay at heart of threat: Salary reveals workers often labor for less...”

<http://www.santacruzsentinel.com/archive/2002/September/13/local/stories/0211local.htm>

³³ Greg Larsen, “Smart Growth in Silicon Valley,” The New Democrat,

http://www.ndol.org/ndol_ci.cfm?kaid=116&subid=154&contentid=1275 1-March 1999.

³⁴ Jondi Gumz, “County’s authority to ‘redtag’ challenged,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 1 February 2004, p A-19

³⁵ Santa Cruz County Web site.

40. Currently, there are no politically independent advocates or citizen boards available that are specific to planning and building issues and complaints (except for the Civil Grand Jury, which can only make recommendations in a report). Legislators appoint current Planning Commissions. Legislators appoint Building and Fire Boards of review, only address code interpretation, and seldom if ever meet.³⁵
41. Jurisdictions do not track performance in such a way that they can use it to compare themselves to other jurisdictions. They do not belong to performance comparison organizations, such as The International City/County Management Association (ICMA).
42. The County Planning Department reviews zoning sections of the County Code. It presented the Board of Supervisors with suggested changes to the County Code to:
 - Make it clearer.
 - Give clearer definitions.
 - Correct grammatical and spelling errors.
43. The County Board of Supervisors has made previous attempts to improve the permit process.
44. The Assessor's Office is usually notified after a permit for a structure is obtained, but not when it is discovered by a Code Enforcement action. An illegal structure can exist for years, and then be demolished when found out, but without incurring any tax liability.
45. All California counties must produce Housing Elements. A Housing Element is a plan that discusses how the county will accommodate its fair share of growth. The fair share of growth is set by the state. The county has not had a state-certified Housing Element for 10 years. Its current proposed Housing Element is undergoing corrections and clarifications requested by the State of California.

Conclusions

1. The permitting processes are often too slow, too complex and too costly. Making the system simpler, cheaper and faster could encourage more people to comply. Amnesty programs could help. More people in compliance would mean more people are paying taxes and revenues would increase.
2. Some officials and staff have tried, and continue to try to improve the system.
3. A Total Quality Management approach could benefit all jurisdictions.
4. Citizens would like more influence over how the Planning and Building

Departments operate.

5. If Planning and Building Departments notified the Assessor's Office of illegal construction as soon as it is discovered, the Assessor might be able to determine a value for taxes.
6. Processing may get bogged down in some specialized areas of review. A qualified independent review board could help by confirming or refining staff determinations.
7. Applicants need an independent advocate, not politically tied to a legislative body, and an independent review board, with the authority to make staff act with due diligence and to hear complaints and appeals.
8. Some jurisdictions do not have enough employees, regular or specialized, to perform their duties expediently.
9. There is no regional approach to permitting, such as that which has been successful in the San Jose area.
10. Jurisdictions have varied departmental performance measures.
11. Scotts Valley responded promptly, professionally and courteously. It had the shortest response time of all the jurisdictions investigated.
12. Capitola had a quick turn around time for residential reviews.
13. Watsonville provides over the counter plan reviews, a friendly customer service orientation and pro-business attitude.
14. The City of Santa Cruz stresses interpersonal service and provides service-oriented training to staff.
15. Some county staff return phone calls promptly and have a professional courteous manner.
16. Customer service was also influenced by city councils that stressed its importance, and by councils that did not interfere with staff operations and decisions.
17. People do not like planning and building departments because of their regulatory functions. In spite of public perceptions, in most cases staff operates in a professional manner.
18. County planning's attempt to simplify the County Code is a good step toward improving the system.

19. After more than a decade, the county is close to achieving a state certified Housing Element.
20. County Planning has lost staff because they can make more money elsewhere and it is so expensive to live here.
21. The City of Santa Cruz has taken a positive step toward helping people and housing, by making it less restrictive and less expensive to build Accessory Dwelling Units (Granny units).
22. Owners and tenants of illegal units enjoy all of the benefits of a tax-paid infrastructure, such as parks, schools, law enforcement and libraries, but do not pay their share of taxes. Taxpayers provide the money for benefits that everyone enjoys.

Recommendations

1. All jurisdictions should commit themselves to making the permitting processes faster, easier and cheaper. Legislative bodies should consider amnesty programs, reduction in fees, reducing restrictions and streamlining permit processes in order to encourage people to build legally and to legalize existing illegal structures.
2. The legislative bodies of the cities and county, and the management of their respective Planning and Building Departments should consider policies of Total Quality Management (TQM) to promote teamwork of employees and the public, and continuous improvement of the system. Training and education of employees should emphasize customer service.
3. The legislative bodies of the cities and county should appoint public boards to review current ordinances and department procedures in order to make recommendations for improvement. The boards should be composed of individuals with a variety of interests throughout the county, to provide fair and balanced assessments and recommendations for improvement and implementation. Examples might include:
 - One member from a real estate group.
 - One member from an environmental group.
 - One member from a builders group.
 - One member from a public housing group.
4. The Board of Supervisors should appoint a qualified board of appeal and review for geologic approval, so the county geologist's decisions may be reviewed.
5. The legislative bodies should appoint an ombudsman to act as an advocate for the public, and a review board to hear complaints and render authoritative decisions concerning planning and building issues.

6. Planning and Building Departments should notify the County Assessor's Office when illegal units and structures are discovered, so they may be assessed.
7. During times of excessive permit activity which result in delays and overburdens staff, jurisdictions should allow applicants to use an approved private sector specialist, such as an engineer or geologist, to perform plan checking in order to expedite the permit process.
8. All of the jurisdictions in the county should take a regional approach to creating regional standards for applications, permitting, inspections, etc. as has been accomplished in San Jose area jurisdictions. This could streamline processes and provide uniformity and fairness.
9. Uniform departmental performance measures should be established and maintained so a jurisdiction can set goals and gauge how well it is doing.
10. The county should continually improve its processes.
11. The county should take measures to retain good, hardworking staff.
12. The Board of Supervisors should be commended for trying to make the county planning processes better.
13. The City Councils of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley and Watsonville should be commended for conveying the importance of customer service to city staff, and allowing staff to make decisions without interference.
14. The staff of all jurisdictions should be commended for providing professional services to customers who may dislike them because of the regulatory nature of their jobs.
15. The County Planning Department should be commended for trying to correct typographical errors, better define terms and make things clearer in the County Code. They should continue to do this, heeding the input of the public.
16. The County Planning Department staff should be commended for its hard work on the Santa Cruz County Housing Element.
17. The City of Santa Cruz should be commended for making the regulations for Accessory Dwelling Units (Granny units) less restrictive.
18. People who do the hard work of getting permits to make their communities safe and legal, thereby preserving the value of their neighborhoods and paying their share of taxes resulting from getting permits, should be commended.

Responses Required

Entity	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within
Capitola City Council	1, 15 - 17, 27 - 32, 34 - 41	1 - 3, 5 - 9, 13, 14	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz City Council	1 - 11, 27 - 32, 34 - 41	1 - 3, 5 - 9, 13, 14, 17	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors	1, 22 - 45	1 - 4, 6 - 16	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Scotts Valley City Council	1, 12 - 14, 27 - 32, 34 - 41	1 - 3, 5 - 9, 14	90 days (September 30, 2004)
Watsonville City Council	1, 18 - 21, 27 - 32, 34 - 41	1 - 3, 5 - 9, 13	90 days (September 30, 2004)

APPENDIX

A. Comparison of Various Building Permit Fees

By Jurisdiction

B. Code Enforcement Survey

Jurisdiction

C. Building Department Survey

D. Code Enforcement Survey

Comparison of Various Building Permit Fees By Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Capitola	Santa Cruz	Scotts Valley	Watsonville	County of Santa Cruz
Building Plan Check	2,061	893	864	788	---
Planning Plan Check	634	761	167	250	246
Building Permit	3,171	1,375	(est.)250 0	1,900	5,796
Fire	---	248	225	75	750
Parks and Rec.	---	4,500	6,297	2,001	3,000
Water	5,856	3,356	16,702	2,820	not incl. ³⁶
Sewer fee	4,500	1,200	5,425	1,343	3,000
Traffic Impact	0	0	3,546	1,820	4,350
School fee	3,000	2,340	4,650	5,700	5,125
Affordable Housing	---	---	---	10,270	---
Discretionary Planning	---	---	---	---	not incl. ³⁷
Soil/Geologic fees	---	---	---	---	not incl. ³⁸
Other fees	30	1,482	1,669	2,871	3,731
TOTAL	\$ 19,252	\$16,155	\$ 42,045	\$ 29,838	\$ 25,998

³⁶ Fees vary by Water District. Some examples: San Lorenzo Valley Water - \$6,466. Soquel Creek Water - \$8,900. Lompico Water - \$13,500, plus infrastructure development costs (meter and piping cost by builder paid contractor).

³⁷ This fee is only required in approximately 10% of cases and may range from \$2,500-\$5,000 based on actual cost of staff time. (Source: Santa Cruz County staff)

³⁸ The soil/ geo fee is based on where the lot is located. If a lot is flat and in an area with no soil problems or geologic hazards, there may not be any fee required. For a lot in mountainous terrain, there may be fees to review required geologic hazard and soils reports. Some examples of these fees are: Minor Geologic Hazard Site Review - \$1,139. Soil Report Review \$811. Geologic Report Review, flat fee of \$1,190 plus \$130+ per hour for an engineer's review. (Source: Santa Cruz County staff)

**Code Enforcement Survey
Jurisdiction**

1. How many cases were opened in the last fiscal year?
2. How many cases were closed in the last fiscal year?
3. How many open cases are there currently?
4. How many illegal dwelling or garage conversions were there in the last fiscal year?
5. How many work without permit cases were there in the last fiscal year?
6. What is the average length of time to start an investigation once the complaint is first received?
7. What is the average length of time to get compliance once a complaint is first received?
8. How many Code Enforcement staff are there?
9. What type of complaints does Code Enforcement handle?
10. How many illegal units do you suspect are in the community?
11. What percentage do you think you find?
12. Why do you think people do not get permits?

Code Enforcement Survey

1. Were you aware that you may have been committing a violation?
Yes No Wasn't sure

2. How do you think your violation was found out?
Neighbor Building Inspector Code Enforcement Officer Other

3. How were you told to correct the violation?
Verbally Correction Notice By phone By Mail In person

4. Did the person dealing with you act in a professional manner?
Yes No Sometimes

5. Did you receive a citation and fine?
Yes No

6. Did you think the citation was fair?
Yes No

7. Do you think the law was fair?
Yes No

8. Why didn't you get a permit? (maybe more than one answer)
Too hard to deal with the Building Dept. Planning Dept. Other
Depts. _____
Didn't think it would be allowed Didn't want my taxes to go up
Thought the fees were too high Don't like dealing with government
It would take too long Didn't think they would let me do what I want
Other _____

9. How would you describe the customer service from the departments you had to deal with?
Great Very good Good Not so good Poor/ bad

10. Would you have gotten a permit if the governing agencies:
Were easier to deal with Had better customer service
Let you build what you wanted Had lower fees Didn't raise your taxes
Taxes were lower

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Parks and Rec.	---	4,500	6,297	2,001	3,000
Water	5,856	3,356	16,702	2,820	not incl. ³⁶
Sewer fee	4,500	1,200	5,425	1,343	3,000
Traffic Impact	0	0	3,546	1,820	4,350
School fee	3,000	2,340	4,650	5,700	5,125
Affordable Housing	---	---	---	10,270	---
Discretionary Planning	---	---	---	---	not incl. ³⁷
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Other fees	30	1,482	1,669	2,871	3,731
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³⁶ Fees vary by Water District. Some examples: San Lorenzo Valley Water - \$6,466. Soquel Creek Water - \$8,900. Lompico Water - \$13,500, plus infrastructure development costs (meter and piping cost by builder paid contractor).

³⁷ This fee is only required in approximately 10% of cases and may range from \$2,500-\$5,000 based on actual cost of staff time. (Source: Santa Cruz County staff)

³⁸ The soil/ geo fee is based on where the lot is located. If a lot is flat and in an area with no soil problems or geologic hazards, there may not be any fee required. For a lot in mountainous terrain, there may be fees to review required geologic hazard and soils reports. Some examples of these fees are: Minor Geologic Hazard Site Review - \$1,139. Soil Report Review \$811. Geologic Report Review, flat fee of \$1,190 plus \$130+ per hour for an engineer's review. (Source: Santa Cruz County staff)