



# GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY

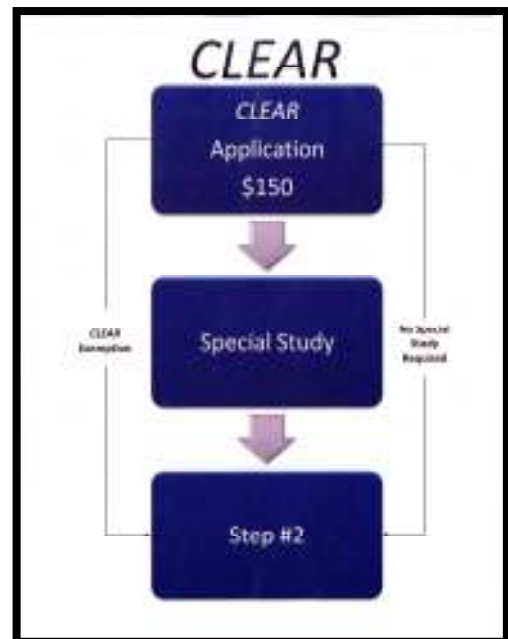
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The Grays Harbor County Planning Division provides a wide array of services to the community. To assist the coordination of one service, Critical Area Ordinance (CAO) review, the Planning Division staff developed the *Comprehensive Land-Use and Environmental Application Review (CLEAR)*.

**What is CLEAR?** *CLEAR* is a comprehensive planning review designed to provide a development roadmap and generally the first step in the application process. *CLEAR* was born out of administering the Grays Harbor County Critical Area Ordinance. The *CLEAR* integrates the zoning review with the environmental review, including the Critical Area Ordinance review. *CLEAR* ties these processes together, streamlining the planning process.

*CLEAR* is also used as a metaphor. Once an applicant finishes *CLEAR*, they are clear to proceed with their development proposal.

**Why is a Development Proposal Subject to CLEAR?** Washington State (RCW 36.70A.060) requires Grays Harbor County to review nearly all permit applications to the adopted Critical Areas Ordinance, Title 18. Currently, a building permit customer is unaware of the extent of critical areas located on their property until the second to last step of the permit process. The *CLEAR* process rearranges the permit step order and enables the applicant to be informed of those critical areas prior to applying for a development permit. In other words, with *CLEAR*, applicants know what critical areas exist on their property and if needed, complete all required studies and mitigation prior to submitting a development application.



### Here's How CLEAR Works:

- The *CLEAR* is a stand alone process. Every *CLEAR* receives a case number to track in the county file system. The applicant is required to include their corresponding *CLEAR* with their development proposal for consistency.

- A Grays Harbor County planner will review a completed *CLEAR* application, site plan, Critical Areas Ordinance Checklist together with supporting information, and then visit the site to make an accurate determination of impacts. Based on the *CLEAR* review, the development proposal may require additional critical areas delineation by a qualified specialist or may proceed through the regular County development process, i.e., building permit, septic installation, etc.
- The *CLEAR* begins with a review of the proposal for compliance with local environmental and land-use control regulations, Grays Harbor County Codes Title 17 & 18. Unless exempt, the project must pass the *CLEAR* process prior to submitting application for the intended project.
- If a customer decides not to go forward with their proposal, the *CLEAR* provides an easy way to exit the process, because the applicant hasn't yet applied for a Grays Harbor County development permit.
- The Planning Division will determine if a proposal is *CLEAR* or Not *CLEAR*. If a proposal is *CLEAR*, the applicant has met all the requirements of Grays Harbor County Code 17 and 18, as they relate to the intended project. The applicant may then proceed to the actual permit application.
- A Not *CLEAR* status means the proposal requires further review to be rendered *CLEAR*. This step requires review time and coordination by the planners with the applicant or the applicant's representative to assure the required provisions of the Grays Harbor County Code are satisfied. A sliding fee scale has been developed for the review of special studies associated with the Not *CLEAR* proposals.
- A *CLEAR* is good for two years from the date of approval.

Some may perceive this process as more cumbersome than the current. The Planning staff believes that unforeseen circumstances create project delays. By introducing the *CLEAR*, citizens receive a thorough evaluation and identification of the two major land use provisions at the formative stage of their development application. The distinct process of the *CLEAR* will undercut those delays because Grays Harbor County working with the applicant will determine the *CLEAR* path to development.

For more information on *CLEAR* or Land-Use Planning, please contact the Grays Harbor County Planning Division at (360) 249-5579 or email [pd@co.grays-harbor.wa.us](mailto:pd@co.grays-harbor.wa.us).