

Renewable Energy Project Regulations

1. Zoning for Renewable Energy Facilities:

Renewable Energy Facilities that convert solar energy or wind energy to electricity on a utility scale meet the definition of Electric Generating Plant in the Los Angeles County Zoning Ordinance.

The Zoning Ordinance allows an Electric Generating Plant, with an approved **Site Plan Review**, in the following zoning classifications:

- M-1.5 (Restricted Heavy Manufacturing Zone)
- M-2 (Heavy Manufacturing Zone)
- M-3 (Unclassified Zone)
- M-4 (Unlimited Manufacturing Zone)

In addition, the Zoning Ordinance allows an Electric Generating Plant in the following zoning classifications, subject to the approval of a **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)**:

- A-2 (Heavy Agricultural Zone)
- C-H (Commercial Highway Zone)
- C-1 (Restricted Business Zone)
- C-2 (Neighborhood Business Zone)
- C-3 (Unlimited Commercial Zone)
- C-M (Commercial Manufacturing Zone)
- C-R (Commercial Recreation Zone)
- D-2 (Desert Mountain Zone)
- M-1 (Light Manufacturing Zone)
- M-2.5 (Aircraft, Heavy Industrial Zone)
- R-R (Resort and Recreation Zone)
- W (Watershed Zone)

A Zone Change would be required to allow an Electric Generating Plant in any zone not listed above, along with any other associated entitlements.

2. Renewable Energy Project Approval Process:

a. **Site Plans.** A Site Plan is an administrative zoning review and generally takes 6 to 8 weeks for initial review, with total time for completion dependent upon corrections needed. To apply for a Site Plan, the applicant shall:

- File an application for a Site Plan Review.
- Include a request for a yard modification if any proposed fence height exceeds development standards.
- File an application for a Certificate of Compliance (C of C) if legal creation of the property is required.

- b. **Conditional Use Permits (CUPs).** A CUP is a zoning permit that requires a public hearing before a Hearing Officer or the Regional Planning Commission (RPC). This process generally takes between 12 and 18 months. The overall purpose of a CUP is to evaluate a proposed land use for compatibility with surrounding uses, and set appropriate conditions to ensure compatibility. If a CUP is required, the applicant must:
- File an application for CUP.
 - File an application for a C of C if legal creation of the property is required.
 - File an application for environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- i. **SEATAC.** If any portion of the subject property is located within a Significant Ecological Area (SEA), in addition to the above requirements for a CUP the applicant must also present the project to the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) prior to the public hearing: [Link to SEATAC information](#), including SEA boundary information. Use [DRP public mapping program](#) GIS-NET to determine if a parcel is located within an SEA.

All applications, forms, and checklists can be found at [this link](#). Please call the Zoning Permits North Section at (213) 974-6443 for further information about applications. To schedule an appointment to submit an application, please call (213) 974-6438.

3. Renewable Energy Project Development Guidelines:

DRP is currently drafting development standards specific to renewable energy facilities. Meanwhile, the following are specific areas of review related to renewable energy projects:

Required for Processing

- Technical studies: All renewable energy projects must prepare appropriate studies addressing technical engineering issues, which may include grading, drainage, etc.
 - Grading: Any site preparation, including grading and disc and roll activities, must be analyzed in the environmental document, and clearly depicted on site plans.
 - Drainage: The impacts of the proposed construction on any existing natural drainage paths must be analyzed in the environmental document.
 - Water: Any water used for the project, including water used for construction, must be analyzed in the environmental document.

Conditions of Approval

- Grid connections: Connection to energy substations and generation-tie lines are included in the overall project, including the environmental document.
- Undergrounding of transmission lines: ALL transmission lines are recommended to be underground. Exceptions include where it has been determined to be infeasible

- by other requirements (e.g. Southern California Edison connection requirements, limitations with crossing under the Aqueduct).
- Decommissioning: Decommissioning plans are required by the conditions of approval for all Electric Generating Plants.
 - Fence height: Renewable Energy Projects sometimes include yard modifications to allow fences over the height allowed in Title 22. This allows the projects to meet federal standards for this type of project.

4. Additional Guidelines and Information:

California Department of Fish and Game

- [Interim Process for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan \(DRECP\) Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- [Interim Mitigation Strategy, As Required by SB X8 34](#)
- [Best Management Practices and Guidance Manual, Desert Renewable Energy Projects](#)

Bureau of Land Management

- [Proposed rule for Right-of-Way for renewable energy projects](#)
- [Interim final rule for Right-of-Way for renewable energy projects](#)