

Cypress

Environmental and Land Use Planning

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~ Cypress Services

The various services of Cypress Environmental and Land Use Planning are discussed on the "Services" page of my website. I can help you with both large and small projects. Please call me if you have any questions.

~ Subdivision Approvals Extended Statewide

The California Legislature passed a bill, AB 116, in July that provides an automatic 24-month extension for all subdivision maps approved after January 1, 2000. Governor Jerry Brown signed the bill on July 11. The bill is

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Cypress
Environmental and
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Mission Statement:

*Creating project
solutions for you while
enhancing the
environment.*

designated as an "urgency" measure due to the recent recessionary economy and therefore took effect immediately. AB 116 applies to any subdivision approved on or before January 1, 2000 that had not expired by last July. More information is provided [here](#).



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Cypress is certified as a sustainable practices business by the Monterey Bay Area Green Business Council.

Cypress has been member of the Santa Cruz Construction Guild since 2010.



Cypress Helps Mobile Home Owners Gain Ownership of their Mobile Home Park Through Planning Assistance to the City of Capitola



Bucolic Capitola-by-the-Sea is known for its dramatic coastal views, Victorian style homes and its beach-casual village downtown. Perched on a coastal terrace in this town of 10,000, is a 73-space mobile park long neglected by the park's owner. While residents enjoy wonderful views of the Monterey Bay from park, most of the Surf and Sand Mobile Home Park lacks the attractiveness of most of Capitola's residential areas. "On the verge of deterioration" is how one resident described the condition of the park. Yet, Surf and Sand is located just 200 feet from the coastline, has the City's largest park across the street and provides more affordable housing than most neighborhoods in town. Surf and Sand includes both residents who

rent and who own their mobile homes. But the latter group of residents don't own the land that their homes sit on. All land in the 4.5 acre park is owned and managed by absentee landlord Surf and Sand, LLC. Residents have complained for years that their landlord has not adequately maintained interior streets, utility lines and other infrastructure. This situation can breed a lack of pride in residents' own homes, leading to cycle where homes are also not maintained. *This is all about to change.*

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Cypress was hired this past spring to analyze a proposal to convert Surf and Sand to an owner occupied park. It seems Surf and Sand, LLC was ready to get out of the landlord business and a majority of the residents were ready to purchase the spaces their homes sat on. Mobile Home Park conversions require a Subdivision Permit to subdivide each space into an individual lot and to create a homeowners' association to manage the common-owned lots, such as the interior streets. Since the park is within the Coastal Zone, approval of a Coastal Zone Permit was also required. The State Subdivision Map Act includes special regulations for mobile home park conversions. *The Act protects renters and others unable to purchase newly created lots by requiring the current owner to offer each tenant the option to either purchase their newly subdivided lot or continue renting.*



On August 8 the Capitola City Council approved both the Subdivision and the Coastal Zone Permit based on the report and presentation prepared by Cypress owner, Kim Tschantz. As a condition of the approval, Surf and Sand, LLC is currently upgrading utilities and drainage lines before transferring lots to willing buyers. In the next few months, all prerequisites for subdividing the park will be met and complete home ownership will be realized for the first time in this affordable neighborhood near the coastline.

California Environmental Quality Act Revised by State Law Makers



Signed into law 40 years ago by Ronald Reagan, the California Environmental Quality Act -CEQA- was designed to both solve environmental impacts of projects and to give Californians a voice in the process so they could weigh in when a project threatened the health of their community. That voice has prevented the dumping of millions of gallons of sewage into San Francisco Bay, protected California's ancient redwood trees and generally resulted in the approval of better projects. However, as discussed this in my [Spring 2013 newsletter](#), many believe the public participation aspect of CEQA has been abused by allowing a flurry of specious law suits to stop projects that opponents just don't like. This was going to be the big year in Sacramento to resolve this issue and to also create a wholesale reform on CEQA—some pro-environmental, but most pro-development.

2013 started out with 28 CEQA-related bills. In the end, a single compromise bill, SB 743, was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor in last month. The new bill does not totally revise CEQA as
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many of the previous 28 bills would have done. Rather, only a moderate revision occurred. Most notable is the special interest legislation to speed approval and construction of a new arena for the Sacramento Kings basketball team as a way to keep the team in Sacramento rather than moving to Seattle. Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and SB 743 author Darrell Steinberg are seen below congratulating each other on the passage of SB 743.

However, the new bill also provides ways to promote urban infill projects and urban mass transit. New development in transit zones would be harder to stop by law suits and would get a streamlined environmental review process. The new legislation revises CEQA in the following ways:



- Aesthetics and parking issues are exempted from environmental analysis for residential and mixed-use developments on urban infill sites located within ½ mile of *TPAs* - the new CEQA buzz word, meaning *transit priority areas*. TPAs are major transit stops and major bus corridors. Urban infill sites are previously developed urban areas or vacant lots surrounded on at least 3 sides with urban uses.
- The method to assess and resolve traffic impacts will be changed. The new method will be based on total vehicle miles traveled rather than intersection congestion. Solutions to traffic impacts will now be able to be mitigated by enhancing other forms of transportation such as rail lines and bikeways; not just by building wider roads or installing more traffic signals as had previously been done. Previously, CEQA had relied totally on the Level of Service (LOS) method – a car-centric transportation planning metric that basically puts the movement of cars over everything else.
- Residential and mixed-used projects within TPAs will be exempted from CEQA litigation if a previous Environmental Impact Report has already been completed and the project doesn't deviate from the local specific plan.

The new bill includes several compromises. For example, SB 743's predecessor bill would have totally eliminated the use of Level of Service (LOS). In the end, LOS will only be eliminated within TPAs. Has CEQA been worthwhile? [CEQAWorks](#) provides a description of some notable CEQA successes. You be the judge.

How Traffic "Rounders" Revitalized One Small City

This video shows an incredible success story from Great Britain to calm traffic and encourage pedestrian access - with no traffic lights, no curbs, no major signs or anything else, but common sense prevailing. The result is a more pedestrian-friendly and economically revitalized downtown. You can view it all on [this video](#). Notice how "rounders" differ from "roundabouts". If they can do it Britain, why not here?

Please visit [my website](#) to better understand our various land use planning and environmental planning services that can help you and your project.

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