CDA DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SYSTEM · SET 2 · PROJECT INTAKE & ACQUISITION

Entitled-Land Acquisition Diligence Checklist & Approval-Record Audit Sheet

An operational audit worksheet for verifying what an existing California land-use approval actually covers, which exhibits are missing, whether map life and vested rights still hold, and what post-closing obligations attach.

Control field	Specification
Artifact version	1.0
Sources reviewed	2026-11-25
Paired CDA Insight	/insights/acquiring-entitled-land-approval-record
Primary statutory anchors	Gov. Code, §§ 66452.6 (incl. SB 1169 eff. Jan. 1, 2027), 66463.5, 66498.1, 66499.37, 66001 (incl. SB 1036), 66007, 66020; Pub. Resources Code, §§ 21166, 21167; Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 11010–11018.12

Core Acquisition Rule — Do not rely on a broker memorandum, seller summary, or isolated resolution cover page. Establish the complete operative record — including every incorporated exhibit, amendment, extension, CEQA notice, and recorded obligation — and classify each item as Verified, Assumed, Missing, or Assigned to a responsible professional.

1. Transaction Control & Reliance Posture

Define the purchase decision, contingency expiration, and minimum evidentiary reliance required before hard money commits.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Project / Site Name & APNs	
Jurisdiction(s) & Special Districts	
Acquisition Decision & Contingency Date	
Sponsor Underwritten Program (Units / SF / Uses / Phases)	
Seller-Represented Entitlement Summary (Source & Date)	
Diligence Lead & Assigned Counsel / Civil / Title Reviewers	

2. Operative Approval Instruments & Missing-Exhibit Audit

Verify every discretionary and ministerial approval relied upon, confirming that every incorporated plan set and exhibit is actually in the file.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
General Plan / Specific Plan / Zoning & Overlay Instruments	Verify adopted ordinance/resolution numbers and effective dates.
Use Permits, Site Development Permits & Design Review Approvals	Confirm action dates, findings, and whether any appeals remain open.
Incorporated Plans & Stamped Exhibits (Exhibits A, B, C...)	Treat any referenced exhibit absent from the data room as Missing evidence.
Conditions of Approval & Adopted Findings	Compare full condition set against underwritten hard/soft cost and schedule.
Subsequent Modifications, Substantial Conformance Letters & Amendments	Verify whether later actions superseded earlier conditions or plan sheets.
Challenge-Window Verification (Gov. Code, § 66499.37 / Pub. Resources Code, § 21167)	Confirm with counsel whether the 90-day Map Act and 30/35/180-day CEQA periods have run without litigation.

3. Tentative Map, Vesting Map & SB 1169 Horizon Audit

Establish actual map life separately for tentative tract maps (§ 66452.6) and tentative parcel maps (§ 66463.5). Verify expiration dates directly with the local agency and counsel.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Map Type & Number (Tentative Tract / Vesting Tentative / Tentative Parcel)	
Original Approval / Conditional Approval Date	
Pre-2027 Baseline vs. SB 1169 Applicability (Gov. Code, § 66452.6)	Note: SB 1169 (Stats. 2026, ch. 423, eff. Jan. 1, 2027) sets a 48-month initial term and up to 36 months by local ordinance for tentative tract maps not expired on Dec. 31, 2026. Parcel maps (§ 66463.5) remain at 24 mo. + up to 12 mo. local.
Prior Discretionary Extensions Used (6-Year Statutory Cap)	Verify dates and written approval resolutions for each prior extension.
Phased Off-Site Improvement Extensions (§ 66452.6(a)(1)-(2))	Confirm whether mandatory off-site improvements exceed the SAB-adjusted statutory threshold and whether phased final maps are authorized.
Development Agreement Coterminous Life / Moratoria / Litigation Stays	Confirm written agency stay approvals (§ 66452.6(c)) or DA expiration dates.
Vesting Tentative Map Ordinance Freeze & Transferability (§ 66498.1)	Confirm whether sponsor's intended product materially departs from the vested plan.

4. CEQA Environmental Record & Post-Approval Change Exposure

Confirm what environmental document supports the approvals and whether sponsor plan refinements could trigger review under Pub. Resources Code § 21166 and CEQA Guidelines §§ 15162/15164.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Operative CEQA Document (EIR / MND / ND / Addendum / Exemption)	Record SCH number, certification/adoption date, and CEQAnet filing.
NOD / NOE Filing & Posting Receipts	Verify County Clerk and State Clearinghouse filing dates for limitations tracking.
Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program (MMRP)	Inventory ongoing biological, cultural, traffic, noise, air, or habitat obligations.
Baseline Currency & Study Expiration	Flag biological, traffic, hydrology, or cultural surveys that require refresh before permits.
Sponsor Plan Delta vs. Approved Project Description	Route any change in unit count, density, grading, access, or phasing to CEQA specialist and counsel.

5. Access, Utilities, Off-Site Improvements & Fee / Exaction Exposure

Test whether physical delivery, utility capacity, off-site rights-of-way, and impact fees match underwriting.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Legal Access & Recorded Easements / Dedications	Verify recorded instruments via title and licensed surveyor; flag unrecorded drafts.
Water, Sewer, Storm Drain & Dry Utility Will-Serve / Capacity Letters	Confirm expiration dates, off-site upsizing, and connection/capacity charges.
Off-Site Improvement & Acquisition Dependencies (Gov. Code, § 66462.5)	Identify third-party right-of-way consents or agency acquisition steps.
Impact Fees, CFDs / Mello-Roos & Reimbursement Agreements	Inventory all city, county, school, park, and utility charges; verify SB 1036 demolition/change-of-use offsets (eff. Jan. 1, 2027) and § 66007 deferral rules.
Development Agreement / Affordable Housing / Inclusionary Obligations	Check assignment consents, annual-review compliance status (§ 65865.1), and recorded covenants.

6. DRE Public-Report & Common-Interest Transfer Readiness (If Applicable)

Identify open DRE files, governing-document posture, and bulk-transfer material-change triggers.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Existing DRE File Number & Report Status (None / Pink / Conditional / White)	
Bulk Acquisition Material-Change Trigger (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 11012; 10 CCR § 2800(a))	Transfer or option of 5+ subdivision interests triggers mandatory DRE material-change notification if a file/report is open.
Recorded or Draft CC&Rs, Condo Plan, HOA Formation & Budgets	Verify conformity with 10 CCR §§ 2792.8–2792.28 and 2025–2027 Davis-Stirling rules.

Audit Item / Verification Question	Record Status, Source Citation & Assigned Reviewer
Subdivision Bonds, Subsidies & Unclosed Prior-Phase Obligations	Confirm seller indemnification, bond substitution, and turnover liabilities with counsel.

7. Open Issues, Deal-Term Consequences & Specialist Routing Register

Translate every missing exhibit, discrepancy, or unconfirmed status into a priced/scheduled closing condition, contingency extension request, or specialist assignment.

ID	Open Discrepancy / Missing Evidence	Status	Deal / Schedule Impact	Assigned Owner & Due Date

Professional Role Boundary — CDA coordinates strategy, information, workstreams, responsibilities, dependencies, decision records, and implementation within an agreed advisory scope. Public agencies retain public decision-making authority. Attorneys, engineers, surveyors, architects, environmental professionals, reserve specialists, accountants, escrow professionals, title professionals, and other qualified specialists retain responsibility for their professional work.

Informational Scope Notice — These working records organize project information, responsibilities, and follow-through. They are general informational templates, not legal advice for any reader's facts, and using them creates no attorney-client or other professional relationship. They do not establish legal compliance, vested rights, CEQA adequacy, subdivision validity, DRE authorization, entitlement validity, agency approval, or commercial feasibility.