



City of Santa Fe Springs

INFORMATION ON PROCEDURES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PURPOSE

State law requires all agencies to perform environmental review of development projects and certain other actions to determine if they may have a significant effect on the environment. The California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) states: **"If any of the effects of a project may have a substantial adverse impact on the environment, regardless of whether the overall effect of the project is adverse or beneficial, then an environmental impact report must be prepared."**

The City has adopted local guidelines to implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which sets forth the criteria and processes that are followed in the environmental review of development projects or other actions by the City which falls under this Act.

CEQA gives specific information on what projects or activities are exempt, and criteria for determining whether a development project should receive a Negative Declaration (having no significant impact on the environment) or have an Environmental Impact Report prepared.

PROCESS

Step 1 - Project Consideration

Early in the consideration of a potential project, the applicant should determine what the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance call for in the area and for the particular site under consideration. At this point, It is appropriate for the applicant to explore project alternatives which would minimize impacts on the environment, conform to all use regulations, and still satisfy the objectives of the applicant.

Step 2 – Submission of an environmental assessment form (Initial Study Part I)

The applicant will submit the environmental assessment form to the Community Development Department. The information on this form is used by staff to assist in making a determination of whether the project will require the preparation of an EIR.

The assessment form must be accompanied by the required discretionary action application (rezoning, design review, etc.) plus necessary application documents, data and deposits.

The applicant will be required to pay a fee for processing the environmental documentation and submit the appropriate California Department of Fish and Game Review fees required by Government Code.

The information provided should be as complete and thorough as the project dictates.

Step 3 – Preparation of Initial Study Report (Initial Study Part II)

The environmental assessment form is reviewed by Planning staff, and a report called an Initial Study is completed. The Initial Study outlines all the anticipated environmental impacts of the project and serves as the basis for making the determination of the need for an EIR. Based upon the Initial Study, the Community Development Director will make one of the following three findings:

1. The project is exempt,
2. The project has "No Significant Impact" and, therefore, a "Negative Declaration" would be in order, or
3. The project will have, or may have a significant impact on the environment and, therefore, requires the preparation of an EIR.

Step 4 - Environmental Review

If it is determined that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment, a Negative Declaration is prepared. After preparation of the Negative Declaration, a public notice stating that a Negative Declaration has been prepared is posted at City Hall and in the Marin Scope.

Any citizen may comment on the adequacy of the environmental evaluation and Negative Declaration for a 20-30 day period. Time frame will depend on whether or not the Initial Study was sent to the State Clearinghouse. All comments will be made a part of the record and forwarded to the appropriate hearing body.

Environmental impacts may be identified in the Initial Study Report, but those impacts may be corrected to a less than significant level through appropriate mitigations and conditions. If mitigations are required, a Mitigated Negative Declaration will be prepared.

Step 5 – Preparation of Draft EIR

If it is determined that an EIR is required, a "Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIR" is prepared and posted on the site and at City Hall.

A Draft EIR is first prepared. The time for this step averages three months and is primarily dependent on the scope and complexity of the proposed project and its impacts. The

City will prepare the EIR with its own staff or by contract with a consulting firm. A fee will be charged in either case to cover the actual cost incurred in preparing the report.

Step 6 - Review of Draft EIR

The Community Development Department will distribute copies of the Draft EIR to those individuals and agencies on the designated review list. Additional copies may be sent to those who have special interest in the project. A notice stating that the Draft EIR has been completed and that copies are available for inspection will be posted at the Community Development Department in City Hall. The review period must be in effect for a minimum of 30 days.

Step 7 – Final EIR

The Planning staff or City hired consultants will then prepare the Final EIR after the required review period. The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR with addenda containing all the comments received, a list of persons, organizations and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR, and the responses of the City to significant environmental issues raised in the Draft EIR.

Step 8 – Certification of Final EIR

The final decision making body (City Council or Planning Commission) for the development proposal must certify the Final EIR prior to or at the time the application is finally considered. If not certified, it is returned to the staff and applicant for further review or information. A Negative Declaration or EIR is used to assist the decision making body in reviewing and taking action on the subject development proposal(s).

If the development application is accepted, the final decision making body may impose conditions as suggested in the EIR or Negative Declaration to mitigate any adverse environmental impacts.

ESTIMATED TIME OF PROCESS

The estimated time for environmental review will vary depending upon the complexity and magnitude of the proposal and staff workload, but it is generally estimated as follows:

- A.** From receipt of complete environmental assessment form to determination of status (Negative Declaration or EIR): **2 WEEKS**
- B.** Preparation, posting and appeal period for Negative Declaration or Notice of EIR: **8-10 WEEKS**
- C.** Preparation of Draft EIR and Final EIR: **20-22 WEEKS**

- D. Total Estimated Time For:
1. A Negative Declaration: **10-12 WEEKS**
 - 2. An Environmental Impact Report: **22-24 WEEKS**

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

- A.** Signed and completed applicant environmental assessment form (Initial Study Part I).
- B.** Appropriate fees and/or deposits as specified by the City's current fee schedule. Checks shall be made payable to: "City of Santa Fe Springs."
- C.** Other required information will normally be provided with information material provided with the related discretionary application.

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