



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

What is an Environmental Assessment?

An environmental assessment is a questionnaire completed by the applicant. Its purpose is to identify possible environmental impacts that may occur with the proposed project.

How do I determine if an environmental assessment is required for a particular project?

When you apply for a permit, a staff member will provide you with an Environmental Questionnaire that is included in your planning application packet.

What does Environmental Assessment involve?

All building projects require review to ensure they comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Many small projects are automatically exempt and require no further action (i.e.: signs, residential additions, and new single family residences).

If a project applied for is not exempt, the Planning Division will prepare an Initial Study based in part on information provided in your environmental assessment. If the study determines that your project will have no significant adverse effect on the environment, the Planning Division will issue a Negative Declaration (a declaration that your project will have no significant environmental impact). This is done as part of the normal application process and causes no delay to your project.

If the study determines that your project may have significant adverse effects on the environment, an Environmental Impact Report will be required.

What is an Environmental Impact Report?

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is used to determine if your project will have significant adverse effects on the surrounding environment. An EIR will involve additional costs and additional time, both for the EIR to be prepared and for the City and other appropriate agencies to review it. Depending upon the results of the report, you may also be required to add mitigation measures to your project, which will reduce the effect of your project on the environment. The cost of the EIR is the responsibility of the applicant. However, the City is responsible for selecting an independent consultant and the management of the EIR contract.

Fish and Game Fee Process

State law requires that the Department of Fish and Game impose and collect filing fees to defray the cost of managing and protecting fish and wildlife trust resources. These fees are collected during the environmental review process and are intended to be paid at the time the lead agency files a "Notice of Determination" (NOD) with the County Clerk. Under this legislation, your project approval "is not operative, vested or final" until the fees are paid.

This legislation may require payment of the following Fish and Game fees:

- Filing a NOD for a project approved under a Negative Declaration
- Filing a NOD for a project approved following preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
- Plus County filing fee

However, the Fish and Game fee may not apply to all projects. During the City's preparation of the environmental documents for your project, we will determine if the Fish and Game fee must be paid.