



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSING CHECKLIST

*This checklist represents a summary of key processing benchmarks. There will be some variations based on the nature of the application.*

STEP	ACTION	DATE
<b>Environmental Review</b>		
1.	<p><b>Prior to Project Application/Determination of “Project”:</b>            Prospective applicant comes to the counter to inquire about processing requirements and costs for prospective project. Counter planner provides applicable code sections; explains procedures and fee schedule; and discusses with potential applicant whether, in that staff person’s opinion, the proposal is something the City is looking and/or if staff would be able to support it.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Project Application:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicant comes to counter to obtain application materials. The counter planner conducts a preliminary consultation with the prospective applicant and discusses possible actions, alternatives or mitigation measures to proposed project that would better enable it to comply with City policies. The counter planner marks the development review application checklist indicating which materials and number of copies that will need to be submitted.</li> <li>▪ The project planner makes a preliminary determination whether the project is subject to CEQA (e.g. a typical single family house is not). If project is not a “project” under CEQA, these procedures do not apply. If it is a “project” under CEQA, an Initial Study is required. The counter planner provides the multi-sheet “Preliminary Environmental Description (Environmental Information Form),” along with the development review application checklist.</li> </ul>	
3.	<p><b>Project Application Submittal:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicant returns with application filled out, preliminary environmental description complete, and with all necessary documents. Counter planner goes through development review application checklist and checks off to see if everything has been turned in. The counter planner is responsible for seeing that all requested materials and fees have been submitted. The counter planner will not accept an application if it does not have everything indicated on the checklist.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If complete, counter planner processes the application and fees. The application is made into a file, logged in the computer log, and a project planner is assigned to the case. The project planner decides to whom to route the plans to, and routes to the appropriate department for comments.</li> </ul>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Project Application Review – Complete/Incomplete Letter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The project planner reviews the project application and receives and reviews comments regarding the project from other city departments. The project planner determines if the submitted materials are adequate and if the application is complete.</li> <li>▪ If it is complete, the project planner sends a complete letter to applicant. The complete letter should indicate the preliminary CEQA determination for the project (e.g., Categorical Exemption, Negative Declaration, or EIR).</li> <li>▪ If the application is not complete, the project planner sends a letter describing the materials and required items needed to make the application complete.</li> <li>▪ The complete letter or incomplete letter must be sent to the applicant <b>within 30 days</b> of receipt of the application submittal, or the project application is automatically deemed complete.</li> <li>▪ If the project is determined to be “exempt” under CEQA, proceed to Step 5. If not exempt, proceed to Step 6.</li> </ul>	
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Notice of Exemption:</b> If a project is “exempt” under CEQA, staff shall note the exemption and the applicable CEQA category on the project application processing checklist. Staff may also decide to file a Notice of Exemption with the County. Filing of a Notice of Exemption is mandatory for a housing project declared exempt under CEQA. Filing the Notice of Exemption triggers a 35-day statute of limitations on legal challenges to the City’s determination that the project is exempt. If the notice is not filed, a 180-day statute of limitations applies. The project planner shall request a check for \$50 from the applicant payable to the County of Los Angeles for the payment of noticing fees. The notice shall be mailed to the County as described in Step #8 below.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Initial Study</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The project planner prepares an Initial Study for the project. If the initial study does not identify any significant impacts; or if the Initial Study identifies significant impacts, but mitigation measures have been included in the project for all identified impacts, enabling the Initial study to conclude that there is not significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project; the project planner shall prepare a Negative Declaration for the project.</li> <li>b) If the Initial Study identifies significant impacts and sufficient mitigation measures have not been included in the project to offset these impacts, the project planner will work with the applicant to draft mitigation measures and include them as</li> </ol>	

	part of the project. Project approval will be contingent on the application accepting and adhering to the mitigation measures imposed on the project. Under these circumstances, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is the appropriate environmental documentation.	
7.	<b>Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration:</b> With private projects involving the issuance of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies, the Negative Declaration must be completed and approved <b>within 180 days</b> from the date the application is deemed complete.	
8.	<p><b>Notice of Intent to Adopt a Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration</b></p> <p>a) Approximately <b>35 days prior</b> to approving the project and the project Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration, the project planner shall mail two originals (both on wet signature) of the notice of the intent (Notice of Preparation) to adopt a Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration along with one copy, a signed original copy of the project Initial Study, the required check submitted by the applicant, a self-addressed return envelope, and a memorandum of transmittal to the County Clerk/Registrar Recorder’s Office. The notice shall include the scheduled public hearing date for the project. This notice package must be received and recorded by the County Clerk/Registrar Recorder <b>no less than 20 days prior</b> to project approval.</p> <p><i>The mailing address for the Los Angeles County Clerk/Registrar Recorder’s Office is:</i></p> <p><i>Los Angeles County Clerk/Registrar Recorder’s Office</i>  <i>Environmental Filings</i>  <i>12400 East Imperial Highway, Room 1101</i>  <i>Norwalk, CA 90650</i></p> <p>b) <b>At least 25 days prior</b> to acting on the project, a public notice describing the proposed project and scheduled hearing date, shall be faxed to the Pasadena Star News for publication <b>at least 20 days prior</b> to project approval. <i>The notice should be faxed to: Mary Cristal</i>  <i>Fax: (626) 856-2750</i>  <i>Phone: (626) 962-8811, ext. 2270</i></p> <p>c) <b>At least 20 days prior</b> to acting on the project, additional notice shall be sent to all responsible agencies with interest in the project and to any agency or individual that requested a notice. In addition, the public shall be notified by the following methods: direct mailing to the owners within a 300’ radius of the project site, posting on and off the project site.</p>	
9.	<b>Public Hearing to Adopt a Negative Declaration:</b> Prior to approving the project, the decision making body shall consider the	

	proposed Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration at a public hearing; and at the conclusion of hearings, shall sustain the Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration as proposed, or modification, or shall require the preparation of an EIR.	
10.	<b>Notice of Determination: Within 5 working days</b> following project approval, the project planner shall mail a Notice of Determination (along with a \$50 check) to be posted with the County. This posting starts a 30-day statute of limitations on court challenges to CEQA approvals. Failing to file the Notice of Determination within the required time period extends the statute of limitations to 180 days.	
11.	<b>De Minimus:</b> a) Concurrent with the Notice of Determination, Department of Fish and Game filings and fees shall be posted with the County. If the project is exempt, no fees or filings are required. If the project is a "project" under CEQA but will not impact fish and wildlife, no fees are required, but a certificate of fee exemption and de minimus impact finding must be posted with the County (see Appendix K). b) If a certificate of fee exemption and de minimus impact finding is required, the project planner shall request a check for \$25 from the applicant payable to the County of Los Angeles for the payment of De Minimus fees. c) If the project required a Negative Declaration/Mitigated Negative Declaration and would impact fish and wildlife, a check for \$1,800 must be filed with the County as established by Fish and Game. Fee for posting with the County is \$50. The \$1,800 check must be requested <b>14 days prior</b> to filing a Notice of Determination with the County, and will typically require the project planner to request the check prior to project approval.	
12.	<b>EIR</b> a) If a significant impact is identified that has not been, or cannot be adequately mitigated, the Initial Study shall conclude that the project has significant environmental effects and that an EIR is required. After determining that an EIR is required, the City shall prepare and distribute a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR. The period for agencies to respond to the NOP is typically 30 days. b) The EIR is typically prepared by a consultant retained by City staff. A screen check draft EIR shall be prepared for staff review and comment. c) As soon as the draft EIR is completed and ready for public circulation, the project planner shall file a Notice of Completion with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in a printed hard copy and in electronic form on a diskette. <i>The mailing address for the Governor's Office of Planning and Research</i>	

	<p>is:  <i>State Clearinghouse</i>  <i>P.O. Box 3044</i>  <i>Sacramento, CA 95812-3044</i></p> <p>d) Receipt of this notice by OPR will initiate the mandatory 45-day review period for draft EIRs.</p> <p>e) At the time the Notice of Completion is filed with OPR, the project planner shall provide public notice of the availability of a draft EIR. Copies of the draft EIR shall be sent to all agencies that commented on the NOP and to any organizations or persons who offered comments.</p> <p>f) The Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on the completion of the review period, and decide whether or not to accept the EIR as submitted. Failure of the Commission to render its decision <b>within 30 days</b> after the conclusion of the public hearing shall be deemed approval of the draft EIR as submitted. Public noticing for the hearing shall be as described in Step 8 above.</p> <p>g) The final EIR consists of the draft EIR, comments received, a list of persons and organizations who made the comments, and the response to comments document. The decision making body with approval power over the proposed project shall certify that the final EIR is in compliance with CEQA, was reviewed and considered prior to project approval, and reflects the independent judgment of the decision maker of the City. The decision maker shall certify the final EIR for private projects within one year of accepting the application as complete.</p> <p>h) <b>Within 5 working days</b> of project approval, the project planner shall file a Notice of Determination for posting to the Office of Planning and Research and County Clerk. The filing and posting of the Notice of Determination starts a 30-day statute of limitations on court challenges to approval under CEQA. Failure to file this notice, within the specified time period, increases the statute of limitations to 180 days.</p> <p>i) If the project required an EIR and would impact fish and wildlife, a check for \$850 must be filed with the County as established by Fish and Game. Fee for posting with the County is \$50. The check for \$850 must be requested <b>14 days prior</b> to filing a Notice of Determination with the County, and will typically require the project planner to request the check prior to project approval.</p>	
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b>Fees:</b> Fees for the preparation, distribution, and copying of environmental documents shall be paid by the applicant. The amount of these fees shall be established by City Council resolution, and shall be subject to periodic review and adjustment.</p>	