

# CITY OF LAKEPORT

## GUIDE TO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The State of California and the City of Lakeport require an environmental review for proposed development projects. Typically, an environmental review is conducted in conjunction with an application for a land use action prior to the issuance of a development permit.

Environmental review applications, available at the City of Lakeport Community Development Department, must be filled out completely and submitted with the applications for other land use projects or development permits in order for your application package to be considered complete. The completed applications, fees, and any additional materials (such as maps and relevant studies) are submitted to the Community Development Department. The Department reviews the application for completeness prior to beginning processing.

Processing begins with the preparation of an Initial Study by the Community Development Department. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, a number of environmental factors are evaluated to determine whether the project may have a significant impact on the environment. These environmental factors may include:

• <i>AESTHETICS</i>	• <i>AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES</i>	• <i>AIR QUALITY</i>
• <i>BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES</i>	• <i>CULTURAL RESOURCES</i>	• <i>GEOLOGY / SOILS</i>
• <i>GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS</i>	• <i>HAZARDS &amp; HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</i>	• <i>HYDROLOGY / WATER QUALITY</i>
• <i>LAND USE / PLANNING</i>	• <i>MINERAL RESOURCES</i>	• <i>NOISE</i>
• <i>POPULATION / HOUSING</i>	• <i>PUBLIC SERVICES</i>	• <i>RECREATION</i>
• <i>TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC</i>	• <i>UTILITIES / SERVICE SYSTEMS</i>	• <i>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</i>

Based on the Initial Study, one of the following determinations (environmental clearance) will be made:

1. The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act because it poses no potential significant impact. This determination takes approximately two to six weeks.
2. The project is related to other projects which have been previously reviewed by the Department. Existing environmental documents (with or without updating) can be applied to the new project.
3. The project requires a Negative Declaration (ND). This is a written statement describing why the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore does not require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). NDs can include mitigation measures agreed to

by the applicant to avoid significant effects. Preparation of an ND takes between four weeks and three months.

4. The proposed project requires an EIR because it has the potential for a significant impact on the environment. The impacts may include such items as considerable increases in traffic, impacts in the provision of public services, changes in air quality, and other things. One area of environmental impact may be enough to require an EIR. The EIR requires approximately nine months to complete, depending on the complexity of the environmental issues involved.

### **The Negative Declaration**

If a Negative Declaration (ND) is necessary, the Community Development Department will prepare a draft ND. The draft document will state why there will be no significant environmental effects from the project, or it will describe ways the project can be altered to reduce impacts to an acceptable level. These mitigation measures will include specific requirements and conditions.

A public notice of the intent to adopt a ND is published in the local newspaper. A public hearing is scheduled to consider finalization of the proposed ND as complete and accurate according to the California Environmental Quality Act's requirements. Only after the ND has been accepted by decision-makers can action be taken to approve or deny the project.

### **The Environmental Impact Report**

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is a full-disclosure document used by the City to inform the public of the significant effects of a proposed project, to explain possible ways of reducing or avoiding the effects, and to identify project alternatives.

If an EIR is necessary, the Community Development Department will contract with an environmental consultant for its preparation. The private consultant is carefully selected through a cooperative effort between the applicant and the City. The consultant usually requires several months to prepare a Draft EIR (DEIR).

Once a DEIR is completed, it is available for public review. It is circulated to various public agencies, the county library, and to interested parties as required by law. Following this review, an environmental hearing is scheduled to allow final public comments, response to the comments, and finalization of the document. The public hearing is advertised in the local newspaper, and a written notice is sent to the applicant, responsible agencies, property owners near the project site, and other interested parties. The EIR is usually modified in response to the comments received during the public review period, and the modified document constitutes the final EIR.

Before a permit for the proposed project can be approved or denied, the EIR must be forwarded to the City Planning Commission and the City Council for certification. The mitigation measures for the reduction of environmental impacts which are identified in the EIR are usually adopted by the City Council as Conditions of Approval for the project. Should the City Council decide to approve the project and not adopt the mitigation measures as Conditions of Approval, the law requires that specific findings be made as a basis for allowing the impacts to remain unresolved. Once the project has been approved, specific conditions of approval must be satisfied in order to obtain land use and building permits.

During the environmental review of a proposed project, the City may require that an applicant submit additional information that is needed to make the appropriate environmental clearance. This can

include special studies or engineering reports on various aspects of the proposal. An important aspect of the process is providing the City with enough detailed information about the project in order for an informed recommendation and decision to be made.

If you have any questions about this guide, please contact the City of Lakeport Community Development Department at (707) 263-5613 x25 or by mail at 225 Park Street, Lakeport, CA 95453.

Information is also available on the City of Lakeport's website: [www.cityoflakeport.com](http://www.cityoflakeport.com)

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