

**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 acting on the actual development proposal.

**STEP 9: Final Action on Project**

If not certified, the EIR is returned to the staff and applicant for further review or information. Environmental Review is used to assist the decision-making body in reviewing and taking action on the development proposal. If the development is approved, conditions may be added to the project in order to mitigate potential environmental impacts. These conditions are contained in the "Mitigation Monitoring Report," which must be adopted by the decision-making body, along with the project approval.

*We encourage you to contact the Development Services Department as early in the process as possible. We will be happy to help you find out how the City regulations may affect your specific plans or ideas. We're here to help you achieve your goals while protecting the safety and interests of all citizens of Turlock.*

# Environmental Review



Development Services  
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## Purpose

**The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** requires all agencies to perform a review of development projects and certain other actions to determine if they may have a significant effect on the environment. The City has adopted procedures which set forth the criteria and processes to be followed in the environmental review of development projects or other actions by the City which fall under CEQA.

The guidelines state, "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." Most small projects, alterations to existing facilities, and minor alterations to land do not require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Environmental review is required in conjunction with an application for any discretionary action by the City (rezoning, subdivision map, conditional use permit, etc.). Generally, only one review is required for a project event if more than one discretionary action is required.

## Process

### STEP 1: *Pre-Application*

Early in the consideration of a proposed project, the applicant, in consultation with Planning staff, should determine how the regulations of the Turlock General Plan and Zoning Ordinance apply to the particular site under consideration. At this point, it is appropriate for the applicant to explore water, sewer, noise, traffic, public services, and other physical or social effects on the community, as all these components must be considered in determining "environmental impacts."

### STEP 2: *Submission of the Uniform Application and the Environmental Assessment Form*

The applicant may then submit the Uniform Application, including the Environmental Assessment Form, to the Planning Division for processing. The information provided must be complete and accompanied by all applicable documents and fees.

### STEP 3: *Preparation of Initial Study*

If the project is subject to CEQA, it is reviewed by the Planning staff, and a report termed an "Initial Study" is completed. The Initial Study is a detailed checklist that identifies all anticipated environmental impacts of the project and serves as the basis for making the determination of the need for a "Negative Declaration" or EIR. Based on the Initial Study, the Deputy Director of Development Services will make one of the following findings:

- (1) the project has "No Significant Effect" on the environment and therefore a Negative Declaration (with or without mitigation measures) would be in order; or
- (2) the project will have, or may have, a significant impact on the environment and therefore requires the preparation of an EIR.

### STEP 4: *Preparation of a Negative Declaration*

If it is determined that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment or can be mitigated to a level of insignificance, a Negative Declaration is prepared and posted for public review. Any citizen who believes that an Environmental Impact Report, rather than a Negative Declaration should be prepared for the proposal may appeal to the Planning Commission within 15 days of the notice being posted. The Planning Commission will review the environmental assessment and determine whether the Negative Declaration is satisfactory, or whether an EIR must be prepared pursuant to State and City EIR Guidelines. The Commission action may also be appealed to the City Council.

### STEP 5: *Preparation of Draft EIR*

If it is determined that an EIR is required, a "Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIR" is posted for public review. The length of time necessary to prepare a draft EIR will be dependent on the scope and complexity of the proposed project and its potential impacts.

Either City staff or a contracted environmental consulting firm will prepare the Draft EIR. In any case, the applicant is responsible for full payment of the cost to prepare the EIR.

### STEP 6: *Review of Draft EIR*

The Development Services Department will distribute copies of the Draft EIR to those individuals and agencies on its designated review list. Additional copies may be sent to those who have a special interest in the project. A notice will be posted stating that the Draft EIR has been received and is available for public review. Copies will be available for inspection at the Development Services Department and other designated locations for a minimum of 30 days.

### STEP 7: *Final EIR*

After the mandatory review period, the Planning staff and/or consultant staff will prepare the Final EIR. The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR, copies of all the comments received, a list of persons, organizations and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR, and the City's response to significant environmental issues raised in the comments received.

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