

CEQA Fact Sheet

Definitions

Addendum. An addendum relies on a previously approved Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), or Environmental Impact Report (EIR). An addendum is used if there are no significant impacts from project changes. Public review is not required for addendums.

Alternatives. Significant impacts can also be reduced through “alternatives”. Alternatives are unique only to an Environmental Impact Report. Alternatives must meet project objectives and must be feasible. Typical alternatives that are considered in EIRs include a no project alternative, and a range of alternatives to reduce impacts.

Applicant. “Applicant” means a person who proposes to carry out a project which needs a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use or financial assistance from one or more public agencies when that person applies for the governmental approval or assistance.

Approval. “Approval” means the decision by a public agency, which commits the agency to a definite course of action in regard to a project intended to be carried out by any person. The exact date of approval of any project is a matter determined by each public agency according to its rules, regulations, and ordinances. Legislative action in regard to a project often constitutes approval.

With private projects, approval occurs upon the earliest commitment to issue or the issuance by the public agency of a discretionary contract, grant, subsidy, loan, or other form of financial assistance, lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use of the project.

California Environmental Quality Act. The “California Environmental Quality Act” (CEQA) was passed into law in 1970. All agencies in the State of California, including the County of San Diego, are required to comply with CEQA. CEQA requires the County to identify the significant environmental impacts of projects and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. A Project is an action proposed by a private developer or by the County, which has the potential to result in a physical change to the environment.

Categorical Exemption. “Categorical exemption” means an exemption from CEQA for a class of projects based on a finding by the Secretary for Resources that the class of projects does not have a significant effect on the environment.

Cumulative Impacts. “Cumulative impacts” refer to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.

The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.

The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Decision-Making Body. “Decision-making body” means any person or group of people within a public agency permitted by law to approve or disapprove the project at issue.

A decision maker can be the Director of PDS, the Planning Commission, or the Board of Supervisors, depending on the permit type. The Director could make a decision on a site plan permit for a General Plan Consistent project for example. If a project required a Major Use Permit, that would be considered by the Planning Commission for a decision. If a project required a rezone or General Plan Amendment, that would be presented to the Board of Supervisors for a decision.

Discretionary Project. “Discretionary” means a permit or project which requires the exercise of judgment or deliberation by the public agency or body when they decide to approve or disapprove a permit. Most County permits are discretionary and require CEQA review. Some classes of projects under CEQA could be discretionary but may not always require a document or longer process, such as data collection activities, which are exempt from further CEQA review.

Effects/Impacts. “Effects” and “impacts” are synonymous. Effects include (1) direct or primary effects which are caused by the project and occur at the same time and place, and (2) indirect or secondary effects which are caused by the project and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect or secondary effects may include growth-inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density, or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems. Effects analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change.

Emergency. “Emergency” means a sudden, unexpected occurrence, involving a clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to life, health, property, or essential public services. Emergency includes such occurrences as fire, flood, earthquake, or other soil or geologic movements, as well as such occurrences as riot, accident, or sabotage.

Endangered, Rare or Threatened Species. “Species” means a species or subspecies of animal or plant or a variety of plant.

*A species of animal or plant is “endangered” when its survival and reproduction in the wild are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, disease, or other factors.

*A species of animal or plant is “rare” when (1) although not presently threatened with extinction, the species is existing in such small numbers throughout all or a significant portion of its range that it may become endangered if its environment worsens; or (2) the species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range and may be considered threatened as that term is used in the Federal Endangered Species Act.

A species of animal or plant shall be presumed to be endangered, rare or threatened, if it is listed in (1) Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Code of Regulations; or (2) Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations Section 17.11 or 17.12 pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act as rare, threatened, or endangered.

A species not included in any listing identified in the paragraph above shall nevertheless be considered endangered, rare or threatened, if the species can be shown to meet the criteria described in paragraphs*.

This definition shall not include any species of the Class Insecta which is a pest whose protection under the provisions of CEQA would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man as determined by (1) The Director of Food and Agriculture with regard to economic pests; or (2) The Director of Health Services with regard to health risks.

Environment. “Environment” means the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historical or aesthetic significance. The area involved shall be the area in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project. The environment includes both natural and man-made conditions.

Environmental Documents. “Environmental documents” means Initial Studies, Negative Declarations, draft and final EIRs, documents prepared as substitutes for EIRs and Negative Declarations under a program certified pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.5, and documents prepared under NEPA and used by a state or local agency in the place of an Initial Study, Negative Declaration, or an EIR.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR). EIR or “Environmental Impact Report” means a detailed statement prepared under CEQA describing and analyzing the significant environmental effects of a project and discussing ways to mitigate or avoid the effects. The contents of an EIR are discussed in Article 9, commencing with Section 15120 of the CEQA Guidelines. The term EIR may mean either a draft or a final EIR depending on the context.

Draft EIR means an EIR containing the information specified in Sections 15122 through 15131 of CEQA.

Final EIR means an EIR containing the information contained in the draft EIR, comments either verbatim or in summary received in the review process, a list of persons commenting, and the response of the Lead Agency to the comments received. The final EIR is discussed in detail in Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). EIS or “Environmental Impact Statement” means an environmental impact document prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA uses the term EIS in the place of the term EIR which is used in CEQA.

Feasible. “Feasible” means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors.

Findings. Projects or permits can be approved even if there are significant impacts. However, “findings” must be made by the decision makers that the benefits of the project outweigh the impacts. This is defined as a Statement of Overriding Considerations. Those benefits can be creation of jobs, housing, tax benefits, and more. See definition for Statement of Overriding Considerations.

General Plan Consistent Projects (15183 Checklist). When projects are consistent with the General Plan, the 15183 process may be used. A 15183 Checklist that relies on the requirements of the General Plan EIR

is prepared and a 30-day disclosure period is provided prior to decision or hearing. Comments received are considered and conveyed to the decision-makers.

Greenhouse Gas. “Greenhouse gas” or greenhouse gases includes but is not limited to: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride.

Initial Study (Checklist). Appendix G to the CEQA Guidelines is an environmental checklist form. The County uses this form and our own Guidelines to complete what is called an “initial study”. The initial study is the first evaluation of a permit application to determine what type of CEQA document or process must be followed.

Jurisdiction by Law. “Jurisdiction by law” means the authority of any public agency to (1) grant a permit or other entitlement for use, (2) provide funding for the project in question, or (3) exercise authority over resources which may be affected by the project.

A city or county will have jurisdiction by law with respect to a project when the city or county having primary jurisdiction over the area involved is (1) the site of the project, (2) the area in which the major environmental effects will occur, and/or (3) the area in which reside those citizens most directly concerned by any such environmental effects.

Where an agency having jurisdiction by law must exercise discretionary authority over a project in order for the project to proceed, it is also a Responsible Agency, see Section 15381, or the Lead Agency, see Section 15367 of the CEQA Guidelines. Also see definitions below for Lead Agency and Responsible Agency.

Lead Agency. “Lead Agency” means the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project. The Lead Agency will decide whether an EIR or Negative Declaration will be required for the project and will cause the document to be prepared. Criteria for determining which agency will be the Lead Agency for a project are contained in Section 15051 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The County is usually what is called a lead agency in CEQA, meaning we take the lead on complying with CEQA.

Local Agency. “Local agency” means any public agency other than a state agency, board, or commission. Local agency includes but is not limited to cities, counties, charter cities and counties, districts, school districts, special districts, redevelopment agencies, local agency formation commissions, and any board, commission, or organizational subdivision of a local agency when so designated by order or resolution of the governing legislative body of the local agency.

Ministerial Project. “Ministerial” describes a governmental decision involving little or no personal judgment by the public official as to the wisdom or manner of carrying out the project. The public official merely applies the law to the facts as presented but uses no special discretion or judgment in reaching a decision. A ministerial decision involves only the use of fixed standards or objective measurements, and the public official cannot use personal, subjective judgment in deciding whether or how the project should be carried out. Common examples of ministerial permits include automobile registrations, dog licenses, and marriage licenses. A building permit is ministerial if the ordinance requiring the permit limits the public official to determining whether the zoning allows the structure to be built in the requested location,

the structure would meet the strength requirements in the Uniform Building Code, and the applicant has paid his fee.

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). “Mitigated negative declaration” means a negative declaration prepared for a project when the initial study has identified potentially significant effects on the environment, but (1) revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by, the applicant before the proposed negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur, and (2) there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the public agency that the project, as revised, may have a significant effect on the environment.

Mitigation. “Mitigation” includes (1) avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action, (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation, (3) rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the impacted environment, (4) reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action, (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments, including through permanent protection of such resources in the form of conservation easements.

Mitigation Measure. A “mitigation measure” is a requirement that is placed on a project to reduce or eliminate environmental damage that will be caused by building the project. Mitigation can be in the form of avoiding the impact all together, usually through redesign. It can also be a measure that reduces the impact, or if it cannot be avoided or reduced, then compensating for the impact.

Negative Declaration. “Negative Declaration” means a written statement by the Lead Agency briefly describing the reasons that a proposed project, not exempt from CEQA, will not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore does not require the preparation of an EIR. The contents of a Negative Declaration are described in Section 15071 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Notice of Completion. “Notice of Completion” means a brief notice filed with the Office of Planning and Research by a Lead Agency as soon as it has completed a draft EIR and is prepared to send out copies for review. The contents of this notice are explained in Section 15085 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Notice of Determination. “Notice of Determination” means a brief notice to be filed by a public agency after it approves or determines to carry out a project which is subject to the requirements of CEQA. The contents of this notice are explained in Sections 15075 and 15094 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Notice of Exemption. “Notice of Exemption” means a brief notice which may be filed by a public agency after it has decided to carry out or approve a project and has determined that the project is exempt from CEQA as being ministerial, categorically exempt, an emergency, or subject to another exemption from CEQA. Such a notice may also be filed by an applicant where such a determination has been made by a public agency which must approve the project. The contents of this notice are explained in Section 15062 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Notice of Preparation. “Notice of Preparation” means a brief notice sent by a Lead Agency to notify the Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, the Office of Planning and Research, and involved federal agencies that the Lead Agency plans to prepare an EIR for the project. The purpose of the notice is to

solicit guidance from those agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Public agencies are free to develop their own formats for this notice. The contents of this notice are described in Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Person. “Person” includes any person, firm, association, organization, partnership, business, trust, corporation, limited liability company, company, district, city, county, city and county, town, the state, and any of the agencies and political subdivisions of such entities, and to the extent permitted by federal law, the United States, or any of its agencies or political subdivisions.

Private Project. A “private project” means a project which will be carried out by a person other than a governmental agency, but the project will need a discretionary approval from one or more governmental agencies for (1) a contract or financial assistance, or (2) a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use.

Project. “Project” means the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and that includes (1) an activity directly undertaken by any public agency including but not limited to public works construction and related activities clearing or grading of land, improvements to existing public structures, enactment and amendment of zoning ordinances, and the adoption and amendment of local General Plans or elements thereof pursuant to Government Code Sections 65100–65700, (2) an activity undertaken by a person which is supported in whole or in part through public agency contacts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies, (3) an activity involving the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies.

Project does not include (1) proposals for legislation to be enacted by the State Legislature, (2) continuing administrative or maintenance activities, such as purchases for supplies, personnel-related actions, general policy and procedure making (except as they are applied to specific instances covered above), (3) the submittal of proposals to a vote of the people of the state or of a particular community that does not involve a public agency sponsored initiative, (4) the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, (5) organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

The term project refers to the activity which is being approved and which may be subject to several discretionary approvals by governmental agencies. The term project does not mean each separate governmental approval.

Where the Lead Agency could describe the project as either the adoption of a particular regulation or as a development proposal which will be subject to several governmental approvals, the Lead Agency shall describe the project as the development proposal for the purpose of environmental analysis.

Public Agency. “Public agency” includes any state agency, board, or commission and any local or regional agency, as defined in the CEQA Guidelines. It does not include the courts of the state. This term does not include agencies of the federal government.

Responsible Agency. “Responsible Agency” means a public agency which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purposes of CEQA, the term Responsible Agency includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency which have discretionary approval power over the project.

There are occasions when the County has a secondary role to that of a Lead Agency. For example, the issuance of a permit after another agency determines project approval. In this instance, we would be called a Responsible Agency - that is, we are responsible for a part of the project.

Significant Impact. “Significant impact” means a substantial or potentially substantial adverse in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Harmful changes to land, water, air, plants, wildlife, mineral resources, noise levels, and cultural resources are examples of physical impacts which are to be avoided whenever possible.

State Agency. “State agency” means a governmental agency in the executive branch of the State Government or an entity which operates under the direction and control of an agency in the executive branch of State Government and is funded primarily by the State Treasury.

Statement of Overriding Considerations. “Statement of Overriding Considerations” are a written statement by the lead agency to support a decision to take an action even though it results in significant and unavoidable impacts to the environment. The statement contains the specific reasons why the benefits of the action outweigh the environmental effects.

Substantial Evidence. “Substantial evidence” means enough relevant information and reasonable inferences from this information that a fair argument can be made to support a conclusion, even though other conclusions might also be reached. Whether a fair argument can be made that the project may have a significant effect on the environment is to be determined by examining the whole record before the lead agency. Argument, speculation, unsubstantiated opinion or narrative, evidence which is clearly erroneous or inaccurate, or evidence of social or economic impacts which do not contribute to or are not caused by physical impacts on the environment does not constitute substantial evidence.

Substantial evidence shall include facts, reasonable assumptions predicated upon facts, and expert opinion supported by facts.

Thresholds (Significance Guidelines). CEQA Appendix G, the initial study checklist and our Guidelines contain what are called “thresholds”. Thresholds are the level of effect above which the County will consider impacts to be significant, and below which it will consider impacts to be less than significant. For example, a threshold for biological resources could state that a certain type of habitat or tree requires mitigation at a certain ratio. If an impact were to occur to a 1 tree under this threshold and the required mitigation is 1:1, for every 1 tree impacted, you would have to provide mitigation of 1 tree. However, if the mitigation were 2:1 for the same scenario, you would have to provide mitigation of 2 trees for every 1 tree impacted. This example would be a significant impact that was mitigated.

Tiering. “Tiering” refers to the coverage of general matters in broader EIRs (such as on general plans or policy statements) with subsequent narrower EIRs or ultimately site-specific EIRs incorporating by reference the general discussions and concentrating solely on the issues specific to the EIR subsequently prepared. Tiering is appropriate when the sequence of EIRs is (1) from a general plan, policy, or program EIR to a program, plan, or policy EIR of lesser scope or to a site-specific EIR, (2) from an EIR on a specific action at an early stage to a subsequent EIR or a supplement to an EIR at a later stage. Tiering in such cases is appropriate when it helps the Lead Agency to focus on the issues which are ripe for decision and exclude from consideration issues already decided or not yet ripe.

Trustee Agency. “Trustee Agency” means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. Trustee Agencies include (1) the California Department of Fish and Game with regard to the fish and wildlife of the state, to designated rare or endangered native plants, and to game refuges, ecological reserves, and other areas administered by the department, (2) the State Lands Commission with regard to state owned “sovereign” lands such as the beds of navigable waters and state school lands, (3) the State Department of Parks and Recreation with regard to units of the State Park System, and (4) the University of California with regard to sites within the Natural Land and Water Reserves System.

Urbanized Area. “Urbanized area” means a central city or a group of contiguous cities with a population of 50,000 or more, together with adjacent densely populated areas having a population density of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. A Lead Agency shall determine whether a particular area meets the criteria in this section either by examining the area or by referring to a map prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census which designates the area as urbanized. Maps of the designated urbanized areas can be found in the California EIR Monitor of February 7, 1979. Use of the term “urbanized area” in Section 15182 or the CEQA Guidelines is limited to areas mapped and designated as urbanized by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

CEQA ISSUE AREAS

CEQA requires the study of physical impacts on the environment. It also sets forth the types of environmental issues that can be analyzed. Currently, there are 20 environmental issues that are required to be studied.

Aesthetics	Agriculture	Air Quality	Biological Resources	Cultural Resources
Geology and Soils	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Energy Use	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	Hydrology and Water Quality
Land Use and Planning	Mineral Resources	Noise	Population and Housing	Public Services
Recreation	Tribal Cultural Resources	Transportation and Traffic	Utilities and Service Systems	Wildfire

Aesthetics: “Aesthetics resources” are the natural and cultural features of the landscape that can be seen and that contribute to the public’s appreciative enjoyment of the environment. They include but are not limited to scenic vistas, scenic resources (e.g. trees, rock outcroppings, historic buildings), and state scenic highways.

Agriculture: “Agricultural resources” are identified as land with an active agricultural operation or any site with a history of agricultural production. Examples of agricultural resources include row crops, orchards, and livestock and poultry raising and production.

Air Quality: “Air quality” is defined as the concentration of various pollutants in the atmosphere and includes ozone (O₃), respirable particulate matter (PM₁₀), fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), lead (Pb), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂).

Biological Resources: “Biological resources” include common vegetation and habitat types, sensitive plant communities, and candidate, sensitive, or special-status plant and animal species. They include but are not limited to Coastal sage scrub, Non-native grasslands, Coast Burrowing owl, Golden eagle, Quino checkerspot butterfly, San Diego fairy shrimp, Orcutt’s brodiaea, Lakeside ceanothus, and San Diego adolphia.

Cultural Resources: “Cultural resources” include the remains of the built (post-1769) and archaeological environments. The built environment includes buildings, structures, objects, and districts. The archaeological environment includes sites, rock art, rock shelters, and villages.

Geology and Soils: “Geology and soils” are natural processes that include fault zones, expansive and erodible soils, and weathering. Geologic hazards include earthquakes, liquefaction, landslides, and rockfalls. Unique geological features (Borrego Badlands, San Onofre breccia, and Dos Cabazas marble, etc.) and paleontological resources (fossils) are also included in this category.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: A “greenhouse gas” is any gaseous compound (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane, water vapor, etc.) in the atmosphere that is capable of absorbing infrared radiation, thereby trapping and holding in heat in the atmosphere.

Energy Use: “Energy consumption” or “use” includes considering a project’s equipment and processes which will be used during construction, operation and/or removal of the project. The goal of conserving energy includes (1) decreasing overall per capita energy consumption, (2) decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, and (3) increasing reliance on renewable energy sources.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials: “Hazardous materials” are any material that because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or future hazard to human health and safety or to the environment, if released into the workplace or the environment. Hazards also include vectors such as flies, mosquitoes, or rodents, etc.

Hydrology and Water Quality: “Hydrology” includes the properties, distribution, and effects of water (e.g. flooding, debris flows, tsunamis, dam failure, etc.) on the earth’s surface, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere. “Water quality” in this section is concerned with pollutants, and specifically how a project will provide for better water quality post-approval. Groundwater is also analyzed under this section.

Land Use and Planning: “Land use and planning” focuses on land use conflicts in relation to the physical division of an existing community and existing land use plans, policies, and regulations.

Mineral Resources: “Mineral resources” are a concentration or occurrence of natural, solid, inorganic or fossilized organic material in or on the earth’s crust in such form and quantity and of such a grade or quality that it has reasonable prospects for economic extraction. Resources include construction materials (sand, gravel, crushed rock, etc.), industrial and chemical mineral materials (limestone, dolomite, marble, specialty sands, etc.), and metallic and rare minerals (precious metals, iron, copper, gemstones, etc.).

Noise: Environmental “noise” is comprised of infinite combinations of sound intensities of varying frequency and duration. Terms used in analyzing noise include A-weighted sound pressure level (dB or dBA), equivalent sound level (Leq), one-hour equivalent noise level (Leq(h)), community noise equivalent level (CNEL), day-night average sound level (DNL), noise sensitive land use (NSLU), impulsive noise, and maximum sound level (L_{MAX}).

Population and Housing: “Population and housing” is focused on substantial unplanned population growth and the displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing.

Public Services: “Public services” include environmental impacts associated with existing or new facilities for fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, and other public facilities that are required for a project.

Recreation: “Recreation” includes the increase in use, construction or expansion of existing or new neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities.

Transportation and Traffic: Amount of driving and length of trips - as measured by “vehicle miles traveled” or VMT - is used to assess transportation impact.

Tribal Cultural Resources: “Tribal cultural resources” include sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that is listed in the California or local register of historical resources or determined significant by the lead agency (County).

Utilities and Service Systems: “Utilities and service systems” include water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. In addition, water supply and wastewater capacity are included in this category. Finally, the management and reduction of solid waste is also considered.

Wildfire: A “wildfire”, wildland fire or rural fire is an uncontrolled fire in an area of combustible vegetation. When projects are located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, a fire protection plan (FPP) is required. The FPP analyzes whether a project would exacerbate fire risk or post-fire risk (flooding, landslide, etc.), or substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Permit Types

Permit Type	Examples	Approving Body
Administrative Permit (AD)	Small Wineries Host Homes Oversized Structures	Director
Boundary Adjustment/ Certificate of Compliance (BA/BC/CC)	Lot Line Adjustments Legal Lot Determination	Director
General Plan Amendment (GPA)	County’s General Plan Update Community Plan Update	Board of Supervisors
Major Use Permit (MUP)	Churches Wedding and Event Venues Solar Energy Facilities Wind Energy Facilities	Planning Commission
Minor Deviation (various)	See Major and Minor Use Permits and Site Plans	Director
Minor Use Permit (ZAP)	Small Schools Animal Sales & Services – Grooming Eating & Drinking Establishments	Zoning Administrator (ZA)
Open Space Vacation (VAC)	Vacation of Open Space	Board of Supervisors
Open Space Encroachment (AD)	Infrastructure Utilities	Director
Rezone/Zone Reclassification (REZ)	Major Subdivisions	Board of Supervisors
Site Plan (STP)	Properties Zoned with Special Area Designators - may include Residential, Commercial, etc.	Director
Specific Plan (SP)/ Specific Plan Amendment (SPA)	Major Subdivisions Master Planned Communities	Board of Supervisors
Tentative Map (TM)	Major Subdivision	Planning Commission
Tentative Parcel Map (TPM)	Minor Subdivision	Director
Variance (VAR)	Setbacks Floor-Area-Ratio	Director (or ZA hearing if requested)