

# CEQA Process

Overview of the California Environmental Quality Act process for the 2004 and 2009 Housing Elements

September 30, 2009

SAN FRANCISCO  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



# California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

## ■ What is CEQA?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is intended:

1. To inform state and local agency decision-makers of the potential environmental consequences of proposed actions;
2. To identify ways to avoid or significantly reduce environmental impacts;
3. To reduce significant, unavoidable environmental harm by requiring either changes to proposed projects, and/or by requiring mitigation to lessen the environmental impacts; and,
4. To demonstrate to the public that the decision-makers have considered and analyzed the environmental implications of a proposed action.



# 2004 Housing Element CEQA Process

- CEQA requires Lead Agencies to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) when a project may have a significant impact on the environment.
- The City prepared a negative declaration on the 2004 Housing Element stating that the 2004 policies would not result in significant environmental impacts.
- The City's decision to prepare a negative declaration was challenged, and the court has directed the city to prepare an EIR on the 2004 Housing Element.



# 2004 Housing Element CEQA Process

- On October 8, 2008, the City prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR.
- A public scoping meeting was held on November 6, 2008.
- Public comments regarding the scope of the EIR received during previous scoping period will be considered in preparation of the 2004 and 2009 Housing Element EIR.



# 2009 Housing Element CEQA Process

- The City is due to update their Housing Element pursuant to State Housing Element Law which requires periodic update of the Housing Element (usually every five years).
- The City has prepared a Draft 2009 Housing Element. Prior to adoption of the 2009 Housing Element, the proposed policies require CEQA clearance.
- The City is preparing an Environmental Impact Report to address both the 2004 Housing Element (to meet the court's mandate) and the 2009 Housing Element (to comply with State Housing Element Law).



## 2004 & 2009 Housing Element CEQA Process

- The City will prepare a program EIR on the 2004 and 2009 Housing Element pursuant to section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines.
- Based on the CEQA definition of a “project” the environmental review of an amendment to a General Plan element need only to analyze the *changes* from a previously adopted plan element.
- CEQA review for the 2004 and 2009 Housing Element will analyze the changes of these policies from the 1990 Residence Element.



# CEQA Environmental Topics

- The 2004 & 2009 Housing Element EIR will address all of the following topics analyzed under CEQA:

1. Land Use and Land Use Planning
2. Aesthetics
3. Population and Housing
4. Cultural and Paleontological Resources
5. Transportation and Circulation
6. Noise
7. Air Quality
8. Wind and Shadow
9. Recreation
10. Utilities and Service Systems
11. Public Services
12. Biological Resources
13. Geology and Soils
14. Hydrology and Water Quality
15. Hazards and Hazardous Materials
16. Mineral and Energy Resources
17. Agricultural Resources
18. Cumulative Impacts



# CEQA Process

- Notice of Preparation
- Scoping Meeting
- Draft Environmental Impact Report
- Comments and Responses Document
- Final Environmental Impact Report  
Certification



# Scoping Process

- Scoping period ends October 5, 2009
- NOP is available at <http://www.sfgov.org/planning/mea>
- Send written comments to:  
Bill Wycko  
San Francisco Planning Department  
2004 and 2009 Housing Element  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103
- For more information contact:  
Jessica Range  
San Francisco Planning Department  
(415) 575-9018  
[Jessica.range@sfgov.org](mailto:Jessica.range@sfgov.org)



# Questions?



# Public Comment

- Ground Rules

- √ Be respectful of all speakers

- √ State and spell your name

- √ Speak clearly

- √ Adhere to the time limit

- √ Focus comments on environmental issues



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