



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Executive Summary

### Administrative Code Text Change

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE: APRIL 25, 2013

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HEARING DATE: MAY 15, 2013

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*Project Name:* **California Environmental Quality Act Procedures, Appeals, and Public Notice**

*Case Number:* 2013.0463U [Board File No. 13-0248]

*Initiated by:* Supervisor Kim

*Introduced:* April 9, 2013

*Staff Contact:* AnMarie Rodgers, Manager Legislative Affairs  
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*Reviewed by:* **Sarah Jones, Acting Environmental Review Officer**  
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*Recommendation:* **Approval of Certain Portions, Disapproval of Certain Portions**

### ADMINISTRATIVE CODE AMENDMENT

The proposed Ordinance introduced by Supervisor Kim would amend the Administrative Code, Chapter 31, to provide for appeals under the California Environmental Quality Act to the Board of Supervisors of environmental impact reports, negative declarations, exemption determinations, and determinations on modified projects; to clarify and update existing Chapter 31 procedures, including without limitation: to provide for the Planning Department or Planning Commission to approve all exemption determinations; to require the Planning Department to establish an electronic notification system; to expand noticing of exempt projects; to require new noticing when filing notices of exemption and notices of determination; to revise noticing of negative declarations and environmental impact reports for plans of 20 acres or more; to provide an expanded role for the Historic Preservation Commission; and making environmental findings.

#### Background:

On November 7, 2012; December 5, 2012; and March 20, 2013, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Historic Preservation Commission") conducted duly noticed public hearings to consider a proposed Ordinance that would amend local CEQA procedures sponsored by Supervisor Wiener under Board of Supervisors File Number 12-1019. On November 29, 2012 and March 14, 2013, the San Francisco Planning Commission (hereinafter "Planning Commission") conducted duly noticed public hearings to consider the same proposed Ordinance. At each of the hearings, each Commission passed a resolution with advisory recommendations. At the most recent hearings, in March of this year, both Commissions recommended approval of the Ordinance with two modifications. Supervisor Wiener has subsequently modified the proposal in response to these resolutions (HPC Resolution No. 704 and PC Resolution No. 18826). Supervisor Wiener's proposed Ordinance was considered on April 8, 2013 at the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Committee and was continued two weeks.

On March 12, 2013 Supervisor Kim introduced an alternative proposal that would also amend Administrative Code Chapter 31 to address San Francisco's local administration of CEQA and appeal procedures. As this proposed ordinance was introduced shortly before the Commissions' hearings on Supervisor Wiener's proposal and as it was not yet signed to form, the Commissions briefly discussed this proposal but did not consider the content. On April 9, 2013, Supervisor Kim introduced the version described in this case report.

**The Way It Is Now Summary:**

In San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors considers appeals because the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires local agencies to allow a CEQA appeal to the elected decision-making body *if* a non-elected decision-making body approves the CEQA document. Since the Planning Commission and Planning Department are not elected bodies, CEQA provides that CEQA documents approved by the Commission and Department are appealable to the Board. CEQA Guidelines clarify that such appeal is allowed after the project is approved. Case law has clarified that where the elected decision-making body approves the CEQA document itself, no appeal is required.

The appeal right derives from state law and the ordinance under consideration would not change or abrogate that right.

State CEQA law leaves establishment of the appeal process (and other provisions) to local bodies. In San Francisco, Chapter 31 of the Administrative Code establishes local regulations to implement CEQA. At present, Chapter 31 provides procedures for an appeal of an EIR certification<sup>1</sup> to the Board, but does not provide procedures for an appeal of a neg dec or an exemption. To fill this void, the Clerk of the Board has provided interim procedures for an appeal of a neg dec and an exemption. Not only does Chapter 31 currently *not* provide for a process for an appeal of such determinations, but Chapter 31 does not provide specified time limits for filing appeals. The Clerk has addressed this problem by referring every appeal to the City Attorney's Office for advice on whether an appeal is timely. On February 22, 2008, the City Attorney drafted a memorandum<sup>2</sup> explaining general guidelines for determining if appeals of private projects were 1) "ripe" or ready for appeal and 2) "timely" meaning not too late. This memo provides general guidance whereby appeals could be filed prior to the expiration of the appeal period for the final administrative approval. For private projects, the time in which an appeal can be filed depends on the entitlements needed for a project. The Clerk continues to refer each appeal to the City Attorney's Office for a case by case determination. In practice, it is difficult for the public to understand when the filing of a CEQA appeal is appropriate.

**The Way It Would Be Summary:**

The proposed Ordinance would establish new controls in the following categories:

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<sup>1</sup> The current procedures for appeal of an EIR are set forth in Administrative Code Section 31.16.

<sup>2</sup> The full title of the memorandum is "Amendments to CEQA Guidelines Affecting Board of Supervisors CEQA Appeal Procedures for Negative Declarations and Exemption Determinations/Determining Whether Appeals Are Ripe for Review and Timely Filed". It is posted on the Clerk's web page.

1. procedural requirements for the Planning Commission, Historic Resource Commission, and the Environmental Review Officer (ERO),
2. substantial increases in notification requirements,
3. specific controls for projects with multiple approvals,
4. regulations concerning modifications of projects previously determined to be exempt from CEQA,
5. delegation of ERO's authority to the SFPUC and SFMTA,
6. procedures specific to appeal of CEQA documents to the Board of Supervisors.

### The Way It Would Be: Details and Analysis

Below is an examination of the six types of changes contained in the proposed Ordinance and the Department's analysis of these changes.

1. **THE LEGISLATION CONTAINS MULTIPLE AMENDMENTS ESTABLISHING NEW PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW. SPECIFICALLY, THE CHANGES WOULD AFFECT THE PLANNING COMMISSION, HISTORIC RESOURCE COMMISSION, AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OFFICER (ERO).**

**Sec 31.04(d):** "The Historic Preservation Commission shall have the authority to review and comment on all environmental documents and determinations for projects that may have an impact on historic or cultural resources."

*Analysis:* This language is in the Planning Code and Charter, and does not appear to have any further implications.

*Recommendation:* The Department has no recommendation on this language.

**Sec 31.08(h)(1):** The legislation calls for the Planning Commission to approve an exemption determination prior to approving a project (Sec 31.08(h)(1)).

*Analysis:* This would transfer responsibility for the administrative action of determining if a project qualifies for exemption from the ERO to the Planning Commission approval. For an exemption, the question at hand is whether there are unusual circumstances that disqualify a project that otherwise fits into the exemption category. If a project is exempt from CEQA, it means it is not subject to CEQA review and therefore there is no CEQA finding for the Commission to approve. The Commission's role in the exemption process is the adoption of policies and procedures (e.g. the list of project types that qualify for exemptions), rather than individual determinations regarding exempt projects.

There are staff time impacts of both this section, and Section 31.08(i)(3), in that Environmental Planning (hereinafter "EP") staff would be required to attend every project approval hearing before the Planning Commission or other boards and commissions in case of public testimony or questions on the environmental determination. The estimated staff time impact could be up to 3 Full-Time Employees given the uncertainty of Commission hearing length.

*Recommendation:* The Department recommends opposing the changes contained in Sec 31.08(h)(1) and Sec 31.08(i)(3).

**Sec 31.11(j) and 31.15(f):** The legislation proposes amending the statement that the ERO “may” file a Notice of Determination (NOD) to state that the ERO “shall” file the NOD.

*Analysis:* In practice, since this notice requires payment of fees to the County Clerk by the project sponsor, it is subject to the sponsor’s discretion to pay the fee and file this notice. The fee can exceed \$3,000. The incentive to the sponsor to file a NOD is a shortening of the time in which a lawsuit may be filed. As it now stands, the sponsor may choose whether or not to assume the risk of not filing an NOD, and if it is not filed there is more opportunity for the public to challenge a project.

*Recommendation:* There is no apparent reason to make the proposed change. Compliance is uncertain since it would be in the project sponsor’s control. Therefore, the language should be modified to state that the ERO shall file an NOD upon payment of required fees by the project sponsor. With this modification, the Department could recommend support this provision.

**Sec 31.12:** The legislation requires public scoping meetings for every EIR.

*Analysis:* These meetings are required during the scoping process for certain types of projects as specified in CEQA, including some General Plan amendments, residential development exceeding 500 units, office development exceeding 250,000 square feet, and projects located in the California Coastal Zone/Bay Conservation and Development Commission jurisdiction (CEQA Guidelines Sec 15206 and 15082(c)). Requiring scoping meetings for every EIR would require expenditure of cost and time associated with venue fees, materials, court reporter, and meeting attendance.

*Recommendation:* The Department recommends that the Commissions oppose this proposed amendment.

**Sec 31.14(a)(1)(c):** This provision would require that any Draft EIR addressing alterations to a structure more than 50 years old be referred to the HPC for comment at a noticed public meeting, scheduled at least 10 days before the Planning Commission hearing on the DEIR.

*Analysis:* There are two aspects of this provision that are problematic. First, not every structure more than 50 years old is a historic resource under CEQA. If the structure has been determined not to be a historic resource, then there is no basis for review of the EIR by the HPC. Requiring this additional hearing for buildings that are not historic resources is unduly burdensome for staff, the HPC, the project sponsor, and the public, and is beyond the responsibilities of the HPC.

Second, given the biweekly schedule of the HPC, the requirement that hearings occur 10 days prior to the Planning Commission could serve to delay the Planning

Commission hearing and lengthen the comment period. Planning and/or HPC resolution would be an appropriate mechanism for defining a preferred time lapse between hearings.

*Recommendation:* The Department recommends opposing the inclusion of all buildings over 50 years old in the list of projects that would require a hearing before the HPC. The Department recommends opposing any codified requirement regarding the amount of time between hearings.

**Sec 31.14(c):** This provision allows for distribution of EIRs in electronic form unless hard copy is requested.

*Analysis:* Any reduction in the number of EIRs that must be printed would reduce cost and resource use.

*Recommendation:* The Department recommends strongly supporting this provision.

**Sec 31.15(a):** The legislation states that Response to Comments documents shall be distributed no less than 14 days prior to the Planning Commission's consideration of certification.

*Analysis:* The requirement under CEQA is 10 days. While Response to Comments documents are usually distributed 14 days ahead of the hearing, anything longer than what CEQA requires should not be defined by ordinance.

*Recommendation.* The Department should oppose codification of this provision.

## 2. THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE CONTAINS SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

*General Analysis of Increased Notification:* The ordinance requires a substantial increase in mailed and electronic notification. The result of these requirements would be substantial additional staff time devoted to notification, and possible delays in otherwise over-the-counter permits. Conversely, adding notification of CEQA actions for permits that are not issued over the counter would involve minor additional time and cost. There is already extensive notification and review associated with these permits, and the review process provides adequate time for notification. The Department could combine CEQA notification with other notification that already occurs (e.g. Section 311/213, See Exhibit D).

The increased notification would be unduly burdensome for both staff and project sponsors when it comes to over-the-counter permits. These permits are only issued for the very smallest of projects, those that result in no increase in intensity of use, dwelling units, or building envelope. In short, **they are permits that have no potential to result in significant environmental impacts.** The Department is committed to developing a web-based map of exemptions issued, on which these minor exemptions would be visible and searchable, a substantial improvement over our existing system. Beyond web posting,

notification of these exemptions, which number in the hundreds per month, would not have sufficient benefit to justify the substantial time and cost.

The various aspects of the increased notification requirements are described below.

**Sec 31.04(h):** A subscription-based electronic notification system is required. As defined it would have to allow subscribers to receive notifications tailored to their subscription, e.g. notification about a specific property, neighborhood, or type of CEQA determination.

*Analysis:* As proposed, this system would be extremely cumbersome. It means that for every CEQA determination there would need to be a decision made as to which list of subscribers should be notified. It would add staff time to every determination and it would create a lot of potential for error. Also, it would be impossible to offer a choice of mailing list that is tailor-made for every possible preference; it is not equitable notification to meet some people's requests and not others.

A distinction has to be made here for electronic notification lists based on document type, in contrast to electronic notification list based on project attribute. For types of determinations that are already notified, it would be a simple addition to add an email notification for anyone who had indicated a desire to receive that kind of document – that is to say, if someone wants a notification every time a Neg Dec is issued, or a catex is issued for a permit that is not issued over the counter, that would be a simple additional step. Even for catexes issued over the counter, we could consider design of a system that could summarize the week's catexes and notify the interested list. The salient point is that document type-based mailing list distinctions do not require individual, project-by-project consideration for inclusion on different mailing lists, and therefore can be administered automatically. Administration of such a system would potentially require up to 1 FTE.

*Recommendation:* Mailing list subscriptions based on project attributes (such as location, size, site ownership, historic status, etc.) would be extremely problematic to administer. For each CEQA determination, staff would need to analyze and consider which list should be included in the notification; this means that the process could not be completed automatically. The additional time and potential for error would be substantial, potentially requiring up to an estimated five (5) Full-Time Employees. It is questionable whether the benefit of an attribute-based notification service would exceed these costs. The Department recommends opposing this aspect of the ordinance.

**Sec 31.08(d):** As it currently exists in Chapter 31, this section requires the mailed notification of Class 31 and Class 32 exemptions, exemptions for projects that are historic resources as defined by CEQA, and any demolition of a structure. The exemption

determinations for projects in these categories are mailed to a list of individuals and organizations who have requested such notice.

The amendments add the following categories of projects to the notice requirement: alteration of a building 50 years or older, "demolition" of a residential building under Planning Code Section 317 (which includes major alterations), "demolition" of an existing structure as defined in Section 1005(f) of the Planning Code (it is unclear if this is intended to include any structure or only structures subject to Article 10 of the Code), projects within or affecting any park or open space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Commission or any other City board or commission, and any community plan exemption.

*Analysis:* These changes would substantially increase the number of catexes requiring mailed notice. Most notably, the requirement for mailed notice of a catex determination for any alteration to a building 50 years or older could apply to a very large number of projects and permits. This would involve mailed notice of an estimated 15 determinations per day beyond those already noticed. Up to three (3) Full-Time Employees might be necessary to meet this requirement, in addition to materials and postage costs. The ordinance would also require posting on the Department website of all exemption determinations associated with these projects.

Mailed notice is already provided for exemptions associated with historical resources under CEQA and for other types of projects that have potential impacts (such as demolition of a structure). A further category of projects are subject to 311/312 notification. The remaining projects that have no notification of exemption determinations at this stage constitute those very minor projects that have no potential to significantly impact the environment. Moreover, the Department completes a CEQA Categorical Exemption Determination checklist for each catex, which identifies projects that may have unusual circumstances (such as steep slopes or historical resources) and requires further environmental review prior to permit issuance (see Exhibit C). The costs of mailed notice for the projects that do not already qualify for notice and/or further environmental review would far exceed any benefits.

That said, while there is no added benefit to a CEQA-specific notification it should be noted that most of the projects described above would benefit from mailed public notification of the project *and* that the Commissions' and the Department have proposed such project notification also include public notification of the CEQA determination. Mailed project notification is currently required for demolitions and defacto demolitions as defined under Planning Code Section 317. The Building Department also provides notification of demolition as defined in the Building Code. Mailed public notice is required for major permit to alter in relation to Conservation Districts as described in Planning Code Section 1110.

Mailed public notification is required for Certificate of Appropriateness as described in Planning Code Section 1006.

*Recommendation:* While the Department recommends opposing the expanded requirements for mailed notice, the proposed requirements for web posting would provide great public benefit and should be supported. Independent of any requirement to provide additional online notice, the Department is already pursuing vastly improved posting of all exemptions, in a system searchable by location with filtering by date of issuance.

**Sec 31.11(c)(5), 31.13(d)(4):** This section calls for mailed notice to residential occupants within 300 feet, to the extent practical.

*Analysis:* Since mailing labels are generated through property tax and ownership records, it is substantially more complex to provide mailed notice to occupants (i.e. renters).

*Recommendation:* The mailed notices to which these sections refer are replicated on the Department's website, in a newspaper of general circulation, and through posting at the project site. The notice is adequate, and the Department recommends opposing the addition of residential occupants to the notice requirements even with the caveat regarding practicality.

3. **THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE SPECIFIES CONTROLS FOR PROJECTS WITH MULTIPLE APPROVALS.**

Sec 31.08(f) requires "written determinations" for projects with multiple permits or other approvals that describe and evaluate the whole of the project and list all approval actions necessary.

*Analysis:* Any project reviewed by Planning, whether over-the-counter or otherwise, could involve multiple permits or approvals.

It is unclear what constitutes a "written determination", since the next section (31.08(g)) discusses Certificates of Exemption. Depending on the intent and interpretation, this requirement could be onerous if it would constitute a greater effort than our current catex checklist. (See Exhibit C which is the four-page thorough checklist.) Currently, approximately 300 exemptions per year that are taken in by Planning staff for review and receive an exemption without a certificate of determination. Literally thousands more exemptions per year are issued over-the-counter. Requiring some additional written determination beyond the checklist for these would represent an estimated 50% increase in the time required to grant each and every exemption.

The ordinance would require that the written determination identify all discretionary approvals needed to implement the project. Since most of these approvals are granted by other agencies, further staff time would be required to coordinate with the agencies, and there is no guarantee that such a list would be accurate over time. Furthermore, it should be noted that CEQA always requires

analysis of the whole of the action for which approval is sought in its very definition of the term “project”, and specifically states that the project may be subject to several discretionary approvals (CEQA Guidelines Sec 15378).

*Recommendation:* The concept of an “approval” as it is defined in CEQA and in the existing provision of Chapter 31 is discussed below under Appeals. The Department recommends supporting the concept of identifying the “approval” in the CEQA determination, and recommends opposing the other aspects of this provision.

**4. THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE INCREASES REGULATIONS CONCERNING MODIFICATIONS OF PROJECTS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED TO BE EXEMPT FROM CEQA.**

*Analysis:* The legislation defines “modifications” as follows: “a modification requiring re-evaluation under Section 31.19 shall mean a change in the scope of a project as described in the original application upon which Planning based the exemption determination.” (Sec 31.08(k)) Under CEQA, a change to the scope of the project as described will necessarily require issuance of a new exemption, as there is no mechanism for amending a catex. There is no description or definition in the ordinance to guide the determination of whether there has been a “change to the scope of the project.”

*Recommendation:* Re-evaluation of changed projects is an appropriate and necessary component of CEQA, and is one that is done now by the ERO. The concept of codified assurance that modified projects will be referred to the ERO is one that the Commissions should support. However, the language as proposed does not provide sufficient clarity around the salient determination that a project has changed. The issue addressed in this Section 31.08(k) should be that, when a project is referred to Planning regarding a modification in an aspect of the project regulated under the Planning Code (such as height, setbacks, or uses) the application shall be referred to the ERO for consideration of its consistency with the project as described in the original exemption. If the ERO determines that the project description no longer fits within the previous project description, a new determination shall be issued. The Department recommends supporting language to this effect.

While a new exemption associated with an altered project should always be appealable, the Commissions should oppose legislation that makes appealable the determination of a modified project’s consistency with the original project description. This is a ministerial decision involving use of fixed measurements that requires little to no application of judgment on the part of the ERO. Ministerial decisions are not subject to CEQA.

**5. THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE AMENDS THE ERO’S DELEGATION OF ERO’S AUTHORITY TO OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS.**

*ANALYSIS:* The ERO currently has delegation agreements with SFPUC and SFMTA for issuance of exemptions, as provided for under Chapter 31. These agencies may prepare exemptions that are affirmed by the ERO and posted by the Planning Department along with other exemptions. The Department's analysis shows that together these agencies issue approximately 100 exemptions per year; in some cases an exemption will cover multiple exempt activities such as no parking zones, stop signs, sewer repair affecting less than one mile of linear feet, etc.

*Recommendation:* There has been no indication or evidence that these delegation agreements have resulted in problematic circumstances for the public. However, the ordinance amendments would eliminate these agreements (Sec 31.08(d)). Elimination of the agreements would require additional staff time at the Planning Department for completion of these exemptions (estimated increase of one to two Full-Time Employees), and would likely be highly burdensome to the agencies' efforts to complete minor projects that are clearly exempt from CEQA. The Department recommends opposing this aspect of the ordinance.

#### 6. PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO APPEAL OF CEQA DOCUMENTS TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS.

*ANALYSIS:* The aspect of the legislation concerning the timing of appeal of exemption determinations is a critical issue for the Department. The legislation proposes an appeal window extending from the time that the exemption determination is noticed (which could occur many months prior to project approval) until 30 days following the issuance of any discretionary permit or any other approval action for the project (Sec 31.16(e)(1)(A)) – therefore, 30 days beyond the last permit issued. This lengthens the appeal window on the front end of a project; on the back end, it is substantially identical to our current system. For an exemption that was not noticed, the appeal window would extend to 60 days beyond the discretionary action.

*Recommendation:* The Department recommends **strongly opposing** codification of the appeal window in this manner. Both CEQA and Chapter 31 are very clear on the question of the relationship of CEQA to multiple discretionary approvals. Section 15352 of the CEQA Guidelines defines "approval" as "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," and makes it clear that a single "project" may be subject to multiple discretionary approvals. Section 31.20 of Chapter 31 applies this definition in the context of multiple approvals, specifying that "For purposes of determining the appropriate time for evaluation of projects and preparation of EIRs pursuant to this Chapter, there shall be only one relevant decision by the City to carry out or approve, or not to carry out or approve, a project. However for other purposes there may be more than one determination by the same or separate boards, commissions and departments of the

City, either discretionary or ministerial, affecting the carrying out or approval of the project.”[emphasis added] (Sec 31.20(d)).

Appeals of exemptions are allowed under Section 15061(e) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that “when a nonelected official or decisionmaking body of a local lead agency decides that a project is exempt from CEQA, and the public agency approves or determines to carry out the project, the decision that the project is exempt from CEQA may be appealed...” Since both “project” and “approval” are defined in CEQA, the apparent intent of this section of the Guidelines is that the exemption determination be appealable after the approval, that is, after that single “decision by a public agency to which commits the agency to a definite course of action in regard to a project.”

**The Department believes that just as CEQA review for any project must consider the entirety of the project regardless of the number of discretionary approvals involved, so too should the CEQA determination only be appealable in association with that single approval defined in the CEQA Guidelines and in Administrative Code Section 31.20.**

In the interest of maximum clarity, the Department should clearly identify the “approval” as defined by CEQA associated with each project on that project’s environmental determination. The Department recommends supporting a requirement that the approval be identified on each CEQA determination.

#### *Other Appeals-Related Issues*

Sec 31.16(b)(4): This provision would allow consideration of landmarking to continue while an appeal to the Board of Supervisors is pending, but other actions could not be considered.

**Analysis:** Why should this action be able to proceed, but not others? Furthermore, one issue in the appeal could be the historic status of the building, so landmarking might constitute action on an issue under dispute. There are other approvals that are just as important and time-sensitive as landmarking, so calling this one out does not seem equitable.

**Recommendation:** The Department recommends opposing the singling out of landmarking as the only approval that could occur during the appeal period.

31.16(b)(5): This section provides that if multiple appellants file an appeal, each individual appellant shall be granted the full amount of time that would be granted to a single appellant.

**Analysis:** The granting of equal time for testimony to up to 3 appellants could create an incentive for multiple appeals to be filed in order for appellants to gain more presentation time. Currently, both the lead appellant and the project sponsor are each granted 10 minutes to present with an allowance for individual speakers to present a lesser amount (typically 2-3 minutes apiece) in either support or opposition to the appeal. If there were three appellants and if all

parties were granted the 10 minutes that are currently allocated for presentations, there could be up to 90 minutes for the primary presentations in addition to any public comment.

**Recommendation:** The Department recommends opposing this provision.

31.16(b)(6): This provision establishes timeframes for submittal of material to the Board and would guard against “data dumping” in the appeals process.

**Analysis:** The Department recommends supporting this provision with a modification.

**Recommendation:** The recommended modification would be to revise as follows: "Written materials submitted later than noon, eight days prior to the scheduled hearing, other than Planning Department responses to the appeal, will not be considered part of the record unless the Board affirmatively votes to include such written materials in the record."

31.16(d)(1): This provision allows appeals of Negative Declarations to the Board without an appeal to the Planning Commission.

**Analysis:** The public comment and appeal opportunity on Negative Declarations to the Planning Commission is widely noticed and is an integral part of the Neg Dec process under CEQA. It is consistent with the purpose and spirit of CEQA, which is to encourage public participation in the assessment of environmental impacts so as to allow for improvements to projects as proposed for approval. Further, per City Attorney advice, appellants may unwittingly weaken their own prospects in litigation before the courts if they do not partake in the appeal opportunity at the Planning Commission. It is also unfair to project sponsors who have fully submitted to the CEQA process to allow later appeal of the environmental review if this critical opportunity for input was ignored.

**Recommendation:** Because application of this provision may impact both appellants and project sponsors, the Department recommends opposing this provision.

## POTENTIAL COMMISSION ACTION

The proposed Ordinance is before both the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission so that each may recommend adoption, rejection, or adoption with modifications to the Board of Supervisors.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Department strongly recommends that both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission recommend *approval of some portions* of the proposed Ordinance and disapproval of other portions and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect.

## BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

In March of this year, both the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of a similar Ordinance [BF 121019, Supervisor Wiener] that would amend local CEQA procedures. (HPC Resolution No. 704 and PC Resolution No. 18826). In light of that recommendation, the Department recommends that the Commission approve some portions of this proposed Ordinance [BF 130248, Supervisor Kim] that would complement and support the Commission's earlier recommendation.

While the detailed recommendations were reviewed section by section in the earlier portion of this report, overall the Department recommends that the Commissions' position on the major aspects of the Chapter 31 amendments proposed by Supervisor Kim should be as follows:

- **Procedural Requirements:** The Department recommends that the Commissions support requiring distribution of EIRs by electronic means unless hard copies are requested. The Department should also recommend a modification to the requirement that NODs be filed by adding "Upon submittal of required fees by the project sponsor" to the requirement. All other procedural amendments should be opposed.
- **Modification of Projects:** Chapter 31 should have stronger language requiring referral to the ERO when a previously approved project has been referred to the Planning Department for changes to aspects of the project regulated under the Planning Code. If the ERO makes the ministerial determination that an exempt project is no longer consistent with the original project description, a new exemption shall be issued. The Department recommends that the Commissions support a modified version of 31.08(k), but should oppose amendments that would make the determination that a project requires a new exemption appealable.
- **Multiple Approvals:** The Department recommends that the Commissions oppose the requirement of a "written determination" for projects with multiple approvals.
- **Notification and Posting:** Expanded requirements for web posting and for subscription-based alerts by document type would be feasible to implement and could be incorporated into any effort to update Article 31 (although specific codification is probably unwise given the need to respond to changes in available technology). The Department recommends that all other provisions of the legislation related to notification and posting be opposed.
- **Delegation Agreements:** The Department recommends that the Commissions oppose the elimination of the ability to delegate issuance of exemption determinations to Departments carrying out projects.
- **Appeals:** The timeline for appeals should be tied to the project approval, as defined in CEQA and Section 31.20. In addition, the Department recommends that the Commissions support a new requirement that, for each project, this project approval should be identified on the CEQA determination.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed amendment is exempt from environmental review under Section 15060(c)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

The Planning Department has not received communication specific to Supervisor Kim's proposal since the March 2013 hearings on Supervisor Wiener's proposal. In March 2013, the Department received multiple letters that have previously been submitted to the Commissions.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b> <b>Approval of Certain Portions and Disapproval of Certain Portions</b>
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**Attachments:**

Exhibit A:        Draft PC/HPC Resolution

Exhibit B:        Board of Supervisors Ordinance and Legislative Digest for Board of Supervisors File No. 130248 V.2

Exhibit C:        Existing CatEx Checklist

Exhibit D:        List of Notifications



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## Draft HPC/PC Resolution Administrative Code Text Change

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*Recommendation:* **Approval of Certain Portions, Disapproval of Certain Portions**

RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT PORTIONS OF THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, CHAPTER 31, TO PROVIDE FOR APPEALS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS, NEGATIVE DECLARATIONS, EXEMPTION DETERMINATIONS, AND DETERMINATIONS ON MODIFIED PROJECTS; TO CLARIFY AND UPDATE EXISTING CHAPTER 31 PROCEDURES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION: TO PROVIDE FOR THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT OR PLANNING COMMISSION TO APPROVE ALL EXEMPTION DETERMINATIONS; TO REQUIRE THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT TO ESTABLISH AN ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEM; TO EXPAND NOTICING OF EXEMPT PROJECTS; TO REQUIRE NEW NOTICING WHEN FILING NOTICES OF EXEMPTION AND NOTICES OF DETERMINATION; TO REVISE NOTICING OF NEGATIVE DECLARATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS FOR PLANS OF 20 ACRES OR MORE; TO PROVIDE AN EXPANDED ROLE FOR THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION; AND MAKING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS.

### PREAMBLE

Whereas, on October 16, 2012, Supervisor Wiener introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 12-1019 which would to reflect revisions in the California Environmental Quality Act and to update and clarify certain procedures provided for in Chapter 31, including appeals to the Board of Supervisors of environmental decisions and determinations under the California Environmental Quality Act, and amending the provisions for public notice of such decisions and determinations.

Whereas, on November 7, 2012, the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "HPC") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance. At the hearing, the Commission voted to make advisory recommendations to Supervisor Wiener concerning the proposal; and

Whereas, the HPC's recommendations are recorded in Resolution Number 694; and

Whereas, on November 29, 2012, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "PC") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance; and

Whereas, the Planning Commission's recommendations are recorded in Resolution Number 18754; and

Whereas, on March 14, 2013, the PC conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance; and

Whereas, on March 20, 2013, the HPC conducted duly noticed public hearings to consider a proposed Ordinance that would amend local CEQA procedures sponsored by Supervisor Wiener under Board of Supervisors File Number 12-1019; and

Whereas, at these March 2013 hearings, Commissions recommended approval of the Ordinance with two modifications in HPC Resolution No. 704 and PC Resolution No. 18826; and

Whereas, Supervisor Wiener's proposed Ordinance was considered on April 8, 2013 at the Board of Supervisors' Land Use Committee and was continued two weeks to April 22, 2013; and

Whereas, at the April 8 2013 Land Use Committee hearing Supervisor Kim announced that she would be introducing an alternative proposal; and

Whereas on April 9, 2013 Supervisor Kim introduced an ordinance titled "Administrative Code-California Environmental Quality Act Procedures, Appeals and Public Notice [BF 130248]; and

Whereas, this proposed Administrative Code amendment has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the CEQA Section 15060(c)(2); and

Whereas on April 25, 2013, the PC conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance; and

Whereas on May 15, 2013, the HPC conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance; and

Whereas, the **HPC/PC** has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of the legislative sponsor, Department staff, and other interested parties; and

Whereas, the all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; and

Therefore be it resolved that, the **HPC/PC** has reviewed the proposed Ordinance;

Be it further resolved that in March of this year, both the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of a similar Ordinance [BF 121019, Supervisor Wiener] that would amend local CEQA procedures. (HPC Resolution No. 704 and PC Resolution No. 18826) and **MOVED**, in light of that recommendation, Commission recommends that the Board approve some portions of this proposed Ordinance [BF 130248, Supervisor Kim] that would complement and support the Commission's earlier recommendation; and

Be it further **MOVED**, that **In general, this Commission recommends the following by subject area:**

- **Procedural Requirements:** The Department recommends that the Commissions support requiring distribution of EIRs by electronic means unless hard copies are requested. The Department should also recommend a modification to the requirement that NODs be filed by adding "Upon submittal of required fees by the project sponsor" to the requirement. All other procedural amendments should be opposed.
- **Modification of Projects:** Chapter 31 should have stronger language requiring referral to the ERO when a previously approved project has been referred to the Planning Department for changes to aspects of the project regulated under the Planning Code. If the ERO makes the ministerial determination that an exempt project is no longer consistent with the original project description, a new exemption shall be issued. The Department recommends that the Commissions support a modified version of 31.08(k), but should oppose amendments that would make the determination that a project requires a new exemption appealable.
- **Multiple Approvals:** The Department recommends that the Commissions oppose the requirement of a "written determination" for projects with multiple approvals.
- **Notification and Posting:** Expanded requirements for web posting and for subscription-based alerts by document type would be feasible to implement and could be incorporated into any effort to update Article 31 (although specific codification is probably unwise given the need to respond to changes in available technology). The Department recommends that all other provisions of the legislation related to notification and posting be opposed.
- **Delegation Agreements:** The Department recommends that the Commissions s oppose the elimination of the ability to delegate issuance of exemption determinations to Departments carrying out projects.
- **Appeals:** The timeline for appeals should be tied to the project approval, as defined in CEQA and Section 31.20. In addition, the Department recommends that the Commissions support a new requirement that, for each project, this project approval should be identified on the CEQA determination.

**And, be it further MOVED**, that the Commission concurs with the more detailed recommendations as described in the attached Executive Summary from the Department.

## FINDINGS

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. In 2006, the Planning Commission considered a similar Ordinance. At that time, the Planning Commission recommended approval with modification in Resolution Number 17335;
2. In 2010, the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission considered another Ordinance that incorporated the changes recommended by the Planning Commission in 2006 and would also establish procedures for certain CEQA appeals. In 2010, both the PC, with Resolution 18116, and the HPC, with Motion 649, recommended approval of the proposed Ordinance with modifications.
3. The proposal with the two recommended modifications would greatly improve local administration of CEQA by establishing a defined appeal process and increasing public notification.
4. The establishment of the proposed rules, will improve for appellants resulting in more valid appeals and reducing the number of attempted appeals that are found to be invalid.
5. The proposal is anticipated to reduce the amount of time between the issuance of a CEQA Exemption and appeal of that Exemption, thereby increasing certainty for project sponsors and allowing a project to proceed logically and in a manner consistent with the intent of CEQA.
6. The proposed ordinance would also allow (at the project sponsor's risk) necessary approvals to proceed concurrently with consideration of a CEQA appeal, provided they do not allow any physical actions to occur. This provision would avoid delays that can have unintended consequences for project viability.
7. The costs for the City will be reduced in two ways: first each filed appeal will no longer need City Attorney review to determine validity and second, the establishment of procedures for submittal of materials to the Clerk will increase clarity of the appellant's arguments allowing the City to respond specifically to those issues of interest to the appellant.
8. The codification of noticing requirements and time frames for all aspects of the CEQA appeals will make the process more transparent, comprehensive, and implementable for appellants, project sponsors and staff.
9. The Commission reaffirms their earlier decision to approve Board File Number 121019 CEQA Procedures and recommends forwarding certain portions of this proposal with a positive recommendation to the Board.

I hereby certify that the **PC/HPC** Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Resolution on **\_\_\_\_\_** 2013.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Acting Commission Secretary

AYES:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:  
ADOPTED:

**BOARD of SUPERVISORS**



**City Hall**  
**Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244**  
**San Francisco 94102-4689**  
**Tel. No. 554-5184**  
**Fax No. 554-5163**  
**TDD/TTY No. 554-5227**

April 12, 2013

Planning Commission  
Attn: Jonas Ionin  
1660 Mission Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Commissioners:

On April 9, 2013, Supervisor Kim introduced the following proposed legislation:

**File No. 130248-2**

Ordinance amending Administrative Code, Chapter 31, to provide for appeals under the California Environmental Quality Act to the Board of Supervisors of environmental impact reports, negative declarations, exemption determinations, and determinations on modified projects; to clarify and update existing Chapter 31 procedures, including without limitation: to provide for the Planning Department or Planning Commission to approve all exemption determinations; to require the Planning Department to establish an electronic notification system; to expand noticing of exempt projects; to require new noticing when filing notices of exemption and notices of determination; to revise noticing of negative declarations and environmental impact reports for plans of 20 acres or more; to provide an expanded role for the Historic Preservation Commission; and making environmental findings.

The proposed ordinance is being transmitted pursuant to Planning Code Section 302(b) for public hearing and recommendation. The ordinance is pending before the Land Use & Economic Development Committee and will be scheduled for hearing upon receipt of your response.

Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alisa Miller".

By: Alisa Miller, Committee Clerk  
Land Use & Economic Development Committee

- c: John Rahaim, Director of Planning
- Scott Sanchez, Zoning Administrator
- Sarah Jones, Chief, Major Environmental Analysis
- AnMarie Rodgers, Legislative Affairs
- Monica Pereira, Environmental Planning
- Joy Navarrete, Environmental Planning

## **REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

(4/9/2013, Substituted)

[Administrative Code - California Environmental Quality Act Procedures, Appeals, and Public Notice]

**Ordinance amending Administrative Code, Chapter 31, to provide for appeals under the California Environmental Quality Act to the Board of Supervisors of environmental impact reports, negative declarations, exemption determinations, and determinations on modified projects; to clarify and update existing Chapter 31 procedures, including without limitation: to provide for the Planning Department or Planning Commission to approve all exemption determinations; to require the Planning Department to establish an electronic notification system; to expand noticing of exempt projects; to require new noticing when filing notices of exemption and notices of determination; to revise noticing of negative declarations and environmental impact reports for plans of 20 acres or more; to provide an expanded role for the Historic Preservation Commission; and making environmental findings.**

### Existing Law

The City of San Francisco, in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et seq.* ("CEQA"), and CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15000 *et seq.* has adopted local procedures for administering its responsibilities under CEQA. These procedures are codified in San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 31. These procedures tailor the general provisions of the CEQA Guidelines to the specific operations of the City and incorporate by reference the provisions of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

### Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance clarifies and updates procedures in San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 31 to reflect revisions to CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, to provide for appeals to the Board of Supervisors of various CEQA decisions, to update and expand noticing and to expand the role of the Historic Preservation Commission in CEQA reviews. The primary updates to Chapter 31 are as follows:

- Section 31.02.
  - States a purpose of the ordinance is that EIRs consider a reasonable range of alternatives.
  - States a purpose of the ordinance is to resolve appeals to the Board in a fair and timely manner.

- Section 31.04.
  - Deletes a no longer relevant reference to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.
  - Clarifies certain administrative functions of entities within the City and County to reflect actual practice and changes in local law, including activities of the Clerk of the Board and the Environmental Review Officer ("ERO") in transmitting notices to the County Clerk.
  - Provides that the Historic Preservation Commission has authority to review all environmental documents for projects that may have an impact on historic or cultural resources.
  - Provides for the Historic Preservation Commission to hold a hearing and comment on Planning's proposed administrative regulations if they concern historic or cultural resources issues.
  - Requires all notices provided for under Chapter 31 to be provided in hard copy unless some one specifically requests electronic copies.
  - Requires the Planning Department to establish an electronic notification system for all notices provided under Chapter 31 that allows persons to pick different specified categories of projects or different types of CEQA documents for which they would like to receive electronic notice.
- Section 31.05. Deletes an existing provision providing for the ERO to delegate specified exemption determinations to another city entity.
- Section 31.08. Revises how Planning makes and notices exemption determinations.
  - Updates the ordinance to be consistent with existing Planning Department practice, which is to apply Chapter 31 procedures for exempt projects to all types of exemptions - statutory exemptions, categorical exemptions, community plan exemptions and general rule exclusions.
  - Requires the Planning Department to post on it website and provide to city departments a list of the types of projects in the city that Planning has identified as categorically exempt.

- Provides that other City departments may provide analyses to the Planning Department on why projects are exempt but requires the ERO to issue all exemptions.
- **Public notices of exemptions.** Requires Planning to post and mail notices of exemption determinations for these specified projects:
  - Projects involving historic resources, which is defined as those that include sites or districts listed on the California Register, listed in Planning Code Articles 10 or 11, listed on an historic resource survey that has been adopted or officially recognized by the City, and any other resource for which substantial evidence supports a findings of historic significance under CEQA criteria.
  - Projects involving demolition, as defined in Planning Code Section 317.
  - Projects involving demolition, as defined in Planning Code Section 1005(f).
  - Alterations to buildings 50 years old or older.
  - Any project in or affecting a park or open space under the jurisdiction of or planned for acquisition by the Recreation and Parks Commission or any park under the jurisdiction of another city department.
  - Projects relying on a community plan exemption.
  - Any project that qualifies for a Class 31 exemption.
  - Any project that qualifies for a Class 32 exemption.
- **Written determinations.** Requires Planning to prepare written determinations and post and mail notice of the exemption for projects requiring multiple permits or other approvals. The exemption determination must cover the whole project and list the approvals.
- **Certificates of exemption.** Allows but does not require use of written Certificates of Exemption; if prepared, Planning must post and mail notices of the certificate.
- **Final exemption determination.** Provides that the Planning Department's issuance of an exemption determination is final unless the project requires Planning Commission approval, in which case the Planning Commission must

approve the exemption determination before approving the project. Planning must provide notice of hearings on these exemptions determinations.

- **Project approval noticing.** Requires any city department that holds a public hearing to approve an exempt project to provide notice of the exemption determination and advise of the right of appeal to the Board.
- **Notices of exemption.** Specifies that notices of exemption, which CEQA provides may be filed with the County Clerk to start the running of a statute of limitation, may be filed only after a project is approved and the appeal period to the Board has expired with no appeal filed, or, if an appeal has been filed, the exemption upheld. In addition to filing these notices with the County Clerk, and the state Office of Planning and Research if specified by CEQA, the ordinance also requires Planning to post the notices in its offices, on the website and to mail the notices to all approving entities and to anyone who has requested notice.
- **Modification to exempt project.** Requires re-evaluation of an exemption and issuance of a new exemption determination, if the project is still exempt, if the scope of a project changes or if Planning is presented with new information regarding the environmental impacts of the project.
- Sections 31.10 and 31.11.
  - Clarifies in Section 31.10(f) as to when a negative declaration or an environmental impact report is required by CEQA.
  - Updates notice and publication provisions for negative declarations to reflect CEQA requirements and Planning Department practices.
  - Provides in Section 31.11(c)(5) that for rezonings, area plans or general plan amendments covering 20 acres or more, Planning is not required to mail a notice of intent to adopt a negative declaration to each property owner within 300 feet of the exterior boundaries of the project area.
  - Provides in Section 31.11(h) that the decision-making body that adopts the negative declaration shall so advise the ERO.
  - Specifies in Section 31.11(j) that CEQA-required notices of determination shall be filed with the County Clerk to start the running of a statute of limitation, only after a project is approved and the appeal period to the Board has expired with no appeal filed, or, if an appeal has been filed, the exemption upheld. In addition to filing these notices with the County Clerk, and the state Office of

Planning and Research if specified by CEQA, the ordinance also requires Planning to post the notices in its offices, on the website and to mail the notices to all approving entities and to anyone who has requested notice.

- Sections 31.12 – 31.15.
  - Provides in Section 31.14(a)(1) that the Planning Department shall obtain comments from the Historic Preservation Commission, on a draft EIR for any projects that may impact historic or cultural resources. Planning shall obtain any comments 10 days before the Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the draft EIR.
  - Provides in Section 31.14(a)(5) that for rezonings, area plans or general plan amendments covering 20 acres or more, Planning is not required to mail a notice of availability of a draft EIR to each property owner within 300 feet of the exterior boundaries of the project area.
  - Requires in Section 31.14(c) that Planning make the draft EIR available on Planning's website and provide a copy in electronic form on a text searchable digital storage device or by text searchable electronic mail transmission to anyone who requests a copy and provides an email address, unless they request a hard copy.
  - Requires in Section 31.15(a) that Planning make a final EIR available to the public no less than 14 days before the Planning Commission hearing to consider certification of the final EIR.
  - Provides in Section 31.15(c) that the ERO must have the draft EIR hearing record transcribed as part of the administrative record.
  - Requires the first decision-making body to approve the project to so advise the ERO.
  - In section 31.15(f) contains the same provision regarding the filing of notices of determination for EIRs as found in Section 31.11(j) for negative declarations.
  - Section 31.19. Provides in section 31.19(b) that when an exempt project is modified, as defined in Section 31.08(k), and again determined to be exempt, Planning must post the determination on its website, and mail notice to all approving entities and all entities requesting notice.
- Section 31.16. Deletes existing Section 31.16 pertaining to appeals of final EIRs and proposes a new Section 31.16 to address appeals of exemption determinations,

negative declarations, environmental impact reports, and determinations that no additional environmental review is required for modified projects requiring subsequent approvals that previously relied on an EIR or negative declaration for approval. The key provisions of the new section include:

- To file an appeal, one must pay a fee, file the appeal within the time frames specified in the ordinance and state the specific grounds for appeal.
- The time frames for filing appeals are:
  - For an EIR, after EIR certification and no later than 30 days after the first approval of the project in reliance on the EIR.
  - For a negative declaration, after the Planning Commission affirms a negative declaration on appeal, or, if no appeal is filed, after the Planning Department issues a final negative declaration, and no later than 30 days after the first decision-making body to consider the project adopts the negative declaration.
  - For an exemption determination that is noticed, after notice of the exemption determination and no later than 30 days after issuance of any permit or other project approval for the project, provided, that once the Board has heard and upheld an appeal of the same determination for the same project, the Clerk will reject subsequent appeals.
  - For an exemption determination that is not noticed, whenever the exemption determination is discovered, but no later than 60 days after the project is approved.
  - For determinations that modified projects for which EIRs or negative declarations were prepared, within 30 days of notice of the determination that no further environmental review is required.
- The ordinance specifies the time frame for the ERO to transmit the environmental documents to the Board and to provide the Board with lists of interested parties.
- The Clerk is directed to schedule the appeal hearing before the full Board without regard to any rule or policy of the Board, no less than 30 or more than 45 days following the date the Clerk has accepted the letter of appeal and: (1) for exemption determinations, the City has taken an action to approve the project; and (2) for EIRs, negative declarations, and determinations on modified projects, the time for filing the appeal has expired.

- For projects that require multiple approvals, once the appeal is scheduled for hearing by the Clerk, other City agencies and officials may not approve the project, except (1) the Historic Preservation Commission can proceed to landmark the site or a historic district that includes the project, and (2) other City departments can take essential actions to abate hazards to public health and safety.
- The Board President may consolidate up to 3 appeals; if consolidated, each appellant shall have the same time for testimony as if such appeals were heard separately.
- Appellants must submit written materials pertaining to the appeal 11 days before the scheduled hearing. The Planning Department and anyone else may submit written responses to the Board within 8 days before the hearing. Materials submitted 8 days before the scheduled hearing will be distributed through the Board's normal distribution procedures and will be part of the record. Later submitted materials will not be part of the record unless the Board affirmatively votes to include such written materials in the record.
- The Board shall act within 30 days of the scheduled hearing date but may extend this date to not more than 90 days from the date that the Clerk schedules the appeal hearing.
- The ordinance specifies the actions that the Board may take for each kind of appeal and the process for then completing the CEQA document in the event the Board reverses the decision of the Planning Commission or Planning Department. If the Board upholds the CEQA decision, prior approval actions are valid. If the Board reverses the CEQA decision, prior approval actions are void.
- In the case of a negative declaration, if the Board reverses Planning's approval, the Board may remand the negative declaration to Planning for revision and if so, further appeals of the revised negative declaration are appealable directly to the Board.

### Background Information

The ordinance is proposed to revise the City's existing CEQA procedures so that they conform to current provisions of CEQA and CEQA Guidelines, provide codified procedures for appealing negative declarations, exemption determinations and determinations regarding whether additional environmental review is required for modified projects. The provisions concerning appeals to the Board of EIRs, negative declarations, and determinations of exemption are intended to respond to requirements in the CEQA statute that if the Board, as the elected body of the City, does not make the final decision regarding a CEQA

determination, and instead, such decisions are made by the Planning Commission or Planning Department, the public has the right to appeal those decisions of Planning to the elected Board.

The ordinance also contains provision that are not required by CEQA, including, for example, a provision for appeal of determinations regarding whether additional environmental review is required for modified projects and Planning Department noticing and posting requirements for notices of exemption and notices of determination.

Prior to 2003, the CEQA statute provided for appeals of EIR certifications to the elected decision-making body where a non-elected decision-making body rendered certified the EIR for a project. In response to this earlier provision of CEQA, the City codified an appeal process for EIRs, which is currently found in Administrative Code Chapter 31.16. The Legislature amended the CEQA statute in 2003 to provide that where a non-elected decision-making body of a lead agency adopts a negative declaration or makes a determination that a project is exempt from CEQA, the negative declaration or CEQA exemption may be appealed to the lead agency's elected decision-making body, if any, after the project is approved. Since 2003, the City has not amended Chapter 31 to provide for an appeal process for negative declarations or exemption determinations. Instead, the City has relied on interim guidelines issued by the Clerk's Office, City Attorney opinions on ripeness and timeliness of appeals and Board Rules of Order for conducting land use appeal hearings.

1 [Administrative Code - California Environmental Quality Act Procedures, Appeals, and Public  
2 Notice]

3 **Ordinance amending Administrative Code, Chapter 31, to provide for appeals under the**  
4 **California Environmental Quality Act to the Board of Supervisors of environmental**  
5 **impact reports, negative declarations, exemption determinations, and determinations**  
6 **on modified projects; to clarify and update existing Chapter 31 procedures, including**  
7 **without limitation: to provide for the Planning Department or Planning Commission to**  
8 **approve all exemption determinations; to require the Planning Department to establish**  
9 **an electronic notification system; to expand noticing of exempt projects; to require**  
10 **new noticing when filing notices of exemption and notices of determination; to revise**  
11 **noticing of negative declarations and environmental impact reports for plans of 20**  
12 **acres or more; to provide an expanded role for the Historic Preservation Commission;**  
13 **and making environmental findings.**

14 NOTE: Additions are single-underline italics Times New Roman;  
15 deletions are ~~strike through italics Times New Roman~~.  
16 Board amendment additions are double-underlined;  
17 Board amendment deletions are ~~strikethrough normal~~.

18 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

19 Section 1. The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in  
20 this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public  
21 Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the  
22 Board of Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and is incorporated herein by reference.

23 Section 2. The San Francisco Administrative Code is hereby amended by amending  
24 Sections 31.02, 31.04, 31.05, 31.06, 31.08, 31.10, 31.11, 31.12, 31.13, 31.14, 31.15 and  
25 31.19 to read as follows:

1           **SEC. 31.02. POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES.**

2           The basic purposes of CEQA and this Chapter 31 are to:

3           (a)    Provide decision makers and the public with meaningful information regarding  
4 the environmental consequences of proposed activities.

5           (b)    Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly  
6 reduced.

7           (c)    Provide for public input in the environmental review process.

8           (d)    Bring environmental considerations to bear at an early stage of the planning  
9 process, and to avoid unnecessary delays or undue complexity of review. Simplicity and  
10 directness are to be emphasized, with the type of review related to the depth and variety of  
11 environmental issues raised by a project, so that government and public concern may be  
12 focused upon environmental effects of true significance.

13          (e)    Provide procedural direction on implementation of CEQA by the City.

14          (f)    When an environmental impact report is required by CEQA, consider a reasonable  
15 range of substantially less damaging alternatives that feasibly attain most of a project's objectives.

16          ~~(g)~~(g)   Prevent significant avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes  
17 in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the government  
18 agency finds the changes to be feasible.

19          ~~(g)~~(h)   Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the  
20 project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

21          (i)    Resolve appeals of decisions of nonelected decision-making bodies in a fair and timely  
22 manner.

23           **SEC. 31.04. RESPONSIBILITY.**

24           (a)    The City and all its officials, boards, commissions, departments, bureaus and  
25 offices shall constitute a single "local agency," "public agency" or "lead agency" as those

1 terms are used in CEQA, ~~except that the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency shall be a separate~~  
2 ~~"local agency" or "public agency" as specified in CEQA. With regard to establishment of any~~  
3 ~~redevelopment area, the City shall be the "lead agency."~~

4 (b) The administrative actions required by CEQA with respect to the preparation of  
5 environmental documents, giving of notice and other activities, as specified in this Chapter,  
6 shall be performed by the San Francisco Planning Department as provided herein, acting for  
7 the City. When CEQA requires posting of a notice by the county clerk of the county in which the  
8 project will be located, the Planning Department shall transmit the required notice to the applicable  
9 county clerk, and instruct the county clerk on the length of time the notice shall be posted and when the  
10 posting shall commence.

11 (c) For appeals to the Board of Supervisors ("Board") under Section 31.16 of this Chapter,  
12 the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors shall perform any administrative functions necessary for  
13 resolution of the appeal.

14 (d) The Historic Preservation Commission shall have the authority to review and comment  
15 on all environmental documents and determinations for projects that may have an impact on historic or  
16 cultural resources.

17 (e)(e) Where adoption of administrative regulations by resolution of the Planning  
18 Commission after public hearing is specified herein, the Planning Department shall provide the  
19 Historic Preservation Commission with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed  
20 administrative regulations concerning historic or cultural resources issues. The Planning Department,  
21 with the agreement of the Historic Preservation Commission, shall schedule public hearings at the  
22 Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission, which hearings there shall be  
23 noticed at least 20 days prior to each scheduled hearing by publication in a newspaper of general  
24 circulation in the City ~~at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing~~ and by posting in the offices of  
25 the Planning Department and on the Planning Department website, with copies of the proposed

1 regulations sent to the Board of Supervisors and any other affected boards, commissions and  
2 departments of the City and to all organizations and individuals who have previously  
3 requested such notice in writing. The Planning Department shall provide any comments of the  
4 Historic Preservation Commission to the Planning Commission in writing in advance of the Planning  
5 Commission's hearing on the proposed administrative regulations. The Planning Commission may  
6 adopt, modify or disapprove the administrative regulations, taking into consideration the comments of  
7 the Historic Preservation Commission. The decision of the Planning Commission in adopting  
8 administrative regulations shall be final.

9 ~~(d)~~(f) The City shall be responsible for conducting environmental review for projects  
10 undertaken by the City within the City's territorial limits and for projects undertaken by the City  
11 outside the territorial limits of the City.

12 (g) Notwithstanding Administrative Code Section 8.12.5, all notices required by this  
13 Chapter shall be provided by mail in hard copy form unless an individual or organization has  
14 requested notice in electronic form. Electronic notification shall not be used when CEQA requires  
15 mailed notice by the United States Postal Service in hard copy form. All notices required by this  
16 Chapter 31 to be posted in the Planning Department shall also be posted on the Planning Department's  
17 website.

18 (h) Electronic Notifications.

19 (1) The Environmental Review Officer shall implement an electronic notification  
20 system for the notification requirements in this Chapter 31. The Environmental Review Officer shall  
21 offer interested persons and organizations the opportunity to subscribe to an automated electronic mail  
22 notification system. The system shall distribute all notifications required by this Chapter to subscribers.  
23 Subscribers shall have the option to receive electronic mail regarding all CEQA notifications or all  
24 CEQA notifications for: (A) a specific project; (B) a specific park, historic district, historic property,  
25

1 neighborhood, or geographic area; (C) exemption determinations; (D) negative declarations; and (E)  
2 environmental impact reports.

3 (2) The electronic notification system shall allow subscribers to opt-out of  
4 notifications by mail in hard copy form. However, the electronic notification system shall not be used in  
5 lieu of notifications by mail in hard copy form as required by this Chapter 31 unless: (A) a subscriber  
6 affirmatively opts-out of notice in such form; and (B) no other provision of law requires notice in such  
7 form.

8 **SEC. 31.05. OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.**

9 (a) An Office of Environmental Review is hereby created in the Planning  
10 Department, which shall be responsible, acting through the Director of Planning, for the  
11 administration of those actions in this Chapter 31 assigned to the Planning Department by Section  
12 31.04.

13 (b) Said office shall be under the direction of an Environmental Review Officer, who  
14 shall supervise the staff members of the office and have charge of the collection of fees by the  
15 office. The Environmental Review Officer shall report to, and coordinate and consult with, the  
16 Director of Planning.

17 (c) In addition to the powers and duties conferred below, the Environmental Review  
18 Officer may, upon delegation by the Planning Commission as to specific projects, take  
19 testimony at supplemental public hearings on draft environmental impact reports, in addition  
20 to, and not in lieu of, the hearing held by the Planning Commission as set forth in section  
21 31.14 of this Chapter, and shall report to, and make all such testimony available to, the  
22 Planning Commission at a public hearing.

23 (d) The Environmental Review Officer shall also take such measures, within his or  
24 her powers, as may be necessary to assure compliance with this Chapter 31 by persons, and  
25 officials, boards, commissions, departments or agencies outside the Planning Department, and

1 shall periodically review the effectiveness and workability of the provisions of this Chapter 31  
2 and recommend any refinements or changes that he or she may deem appropriate for  
3 improvement of such provisions.

4 (e) All projects that are not ~~excluded or categorically~~ exempt from CEQA as defined in  
5 Section 31.08(a) of this Chapter shall be referred to the Environmental Review Officer for  
6 environmental review. All other officials, boards, commissions, departments, bureaus and  
7 offices of the City shall cooperate with the Environmental Review Officer in the exercise of  
8 his/her responsibilities, and shall supply necessary information, consultations and comments.

9 (f) The Environmental Review Officer shall be responsible for assuring that the City  
10 is carrying out its responsibilities set forth in CEQA. In addition, when the City is to carry out or  
11 approve a project and some other public agency is the "lead agency," as defined by CEQA,  
12 and where projects are to be carried out or approved by the State and Federal governments,  
13 the Environmental Review Officer shall provide consultation and comments for the City to the  
14 other government agencies when appropriate.

15 (g) To the extent feasible, the Environmental Review Officer shall combine the  
16 evaluation of projects, preparation of environmental impact reports and conduct of hearings  
17 with other planning processes; and shall coordinate environmental review with the Capital  
18 Improvement Program, the San Francisco General Plan and the San Francisco Planning  
19 Code.

20 (h) Adoption and/or revision of administrative regulations to implement CEQA shall  
21 be by resolution of the Planning Commission after a the public hearings held according to  
22 Section 31.04(e) of this Chapter 31. The Environmental Review Officer may adopt necessary  
23 forms, checklists and processing guidelines to implement CEQA and this Chapter 31 without a  
24 public hearing.

1 (i) Upon prior authorization by the Planning Commission, the Environmental  
2 Review Officer may attend hearings and testify on matters related to CEQA before  
3 governmental organizations and agencies other than governmental agencies of the City and  
4 County of San Francisco and may advocate on behalf of the City on matters related to CEQA.

5 (j) The Environmental Review Officer may provide information to other  
6 governmental or environmental organizations and members of the public.

7 (k) The Environmental Review Officer may delegate his or her responsibilities to an  
8 employee of the Office of Environmental Review. All references herein to the Environmental  
9 Review Officer shall be deemed to include the Environmental Review Officer's delegate.

10 **SEC. 31.06. COVERAGE OF STATE LAW.**

11 CEQA provides that certain kinds of projects ~~may be~~ are subject to CEQA. Some of  
12 these projects may be excluded or ~~category~~ exempt from CEQA. If a project is not excluded  
13 or ~~category~~ exempt, CEQA provides a process whereby an initial study is completed, then  
14 a determination is made as to whether a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or  
15 an environmental impact report ("EIR") ~~should be prepared~~ is required. In accordance with the  
16 requirements of CEQA and as specified herein, the Planning Commission and/or the  
17 Environmental Review Officer shall determine when CEQA applies to a project, when the  
18 project is excluded or exempt, or when a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or  
19 environmental impact report is required.

20 **SEC. 31.08. CATEGORICAL EXEMPTIONS.**

21 (a) CEQA provides that certain classes of projects are exempt from CEQA because: (1)  
22 the project is exempt by statute ("statutory exemption"); (2) the project falls within certain classes of  
23 projects that generally do not have a significant effect on the environment and therefore are  
24 categorically exempt from CEQA in accordance with the letter and the intent expressed in the  
25 classes of categorical exemptions specified in CEQA ("categorical exemption"); (3) the activity is

1 covered under the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects with the potential for causing a  
2 significant effect on the environment, thus, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no  
3 possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is  
4 not subject to CEQA ("general rule exclusion"); or (4) in certain cases, CEQA streamlining  
5 procedures may allow reliance on a prior environmental document prepared on a zoning or planning  
6 level decision, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific significant  
7 effects which are peculiar to the project or its site ("community plan exemption"). Unless otherwise  
8 specifically stated, reference in this Chapter 31 to "exemptions" or "exempt from CEQA" or an  
9 "exemption determination" shall collectively refer to statutory exemptions, categorical exemptions,  
10 general rule exclusions, and community plan exemptions.

11 (b) For categorical exemptions:

12 (1) CEQA requires that public agencies create and maintain a Each public agency  
13 must list the of specific activities that fall within each categorical exemption such class, subject to  
14 the qualification that these lists must be consistent with both the letter and the intent of the  
15 classes set forth in CEQA. Except as provided in this section 31.08, projects that are categorically  
16 exempt are not subject to the requirements of this Chapter 31. (b) The Environmental Review  
17 Officer shall maintain the required list of types of projects which are categorically exempt, and such  
18 list and shall be kept posted post it in the offices of the Planning Department and on the Planning  
19 Department website and shall provide it to all City departments. SuchThe list shall be kept up to  
20 date in accordance with any to implement changes in CEQA and any changes in the status of  
21 local projects. The initial list and any additions, deletions and modifications thereto shall be  
22 adopted as administrative regulations by resolution of the Planning Commission after public  
23 hearing, hearings thereon held, according to the procedure set forth in Section 31.04(e)(e) of this  
24 Chapter.

1           ~~(e)~~—(2) CEQA ~~provides for~~ allows public agencies to request that the Secretary of  
2 the Resources Agency make additions, deletions and modifications to the classes of projects  
3 listed as categorically exempt in CEQA. The Planning Commission or the Historic Preservation  
4 Commission shall make any such requests, after ~~at~~ public hearings thereon held according to  
5 the procedure specified in Section 31.04~~(e)~~(e) of this Chapter 31 for adoption of administrative  
6 regulations.

7           ~~(d)~~(c) The Environmental Review Officer may ~~create~~ adopt necessary forms, checklists  
8 and processing guidelines to aid the Planning Department and other departments in  
9 determining that whether a project may be ~~category~~categorically exempt from CEQA in accordance with  
10 ~~the letter and the intent expressed in the classes of categorical exemptions specified in~~ CEQA and with  
11 the administrative regulations adopted by the Planning Commission.

12           ~~(e)~~(d) The Environmental Review Officer shall be responsible for determining whether a  
13 project is exempt from CEQA. The Environmental Review Officer shall advise other departments of  
14 the ~~categorical exemptions. The Environmental Review Officer requirements of CEQA for determining~~  
15 whether a project is exempt from environmental review and may delegate to them the analysis  
16 necessary for determination-determining whether a project is ~~category~~categorically exempt from CEQA.  
17 The Environmental Review Officer may consult with and rely on the analysis by other departments in  
18 making an exemption determination but the Environmental Review Officer shall make all such  
19 determinations. to other departments, provided that other departments shall consult with the  
20 Environmental Review Officer regarding the application of the categorical exemptions, and provided  
21 further that the Environmental Review Officer shall be responsible for all determinations so delegated  
22 to other departments.

23           ~~(f)~~(e) **Public Notice of Certain Exemptions.** When the Environmental Review Officer, ~~or~~  
24 ~~any other department to which the Environmental Review Officer has delegated responsibility pursuant~~  
25 ~~to Section 31.08(e) above,~~ has determined that a project is ~~excluded or~~ categorically exempt from

1 CEQA, the Environmental Review Officer shall post its determinations in the offices of the Planning  
2 Department and on the Planning Department website, and mail notice of its determinations to any  
3 individuals or organizations that have previously requested such notice to the public shall be provided  
4 for all ~~such~~ exemption determinations involving ~~the following types of projects: (1) any historical~~  
5 ~~resources as defined in CEQA, including without limitation,~~

6 (1) any buildings and sites listed individually or located within districts listed  
7 ~~(i)(A)~~ in Planning Code Articles 10 or 11, ~~(ii)(B)~~ in ~~City-recognized~~ any historical resource  
8 surveys that have been adopted by or officially recognized by the City, or (iii)(C) on in the California  
9 Register or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register by the State Historical  
10 Resources Commission, including, without limitation, any location listed or determined eligible for, or  
11 ~~(iv) on~~ the National Register of Historic Places;

12 (2) any other resource for which substantial evidence supports a finding of historic  
13 significance, including, but not limited to, compliance with the criteria of Public Resources Code  
14 Section 5024.1;

15 ~~(2)~~ (3) any Class 31 categorical exemption;

16 ~~(3)~~ (4) any demolition as defined in Planning Code Section 1005(f) of an existing  
17 structure; ~~or,~~

18 (4) (5) any alteration to a building 50 years or older; (6) any demolition as defined in  
19 Planning Code Section 317, of an existing structure;

20 (6) any Class 32 categorical exemption;

21 (7) any project within or affecting a park or open space under the jurisdiction or  
22 designated for acquisition by the Recreation and Park Commission, or any park under the jurisdiction  
23 of any other City department, board or commission; and

24 (8) any community plan exemption.  
25

1 ~~Written determinations of categorical exemptions for these types of projects shall be posted in~~  
2 ~~the offices of the Planning Department and shall be mailed to any individuals or organizations that~~  
3 ~~have previously requested such notice in writing.~~

4 ~~(g)(f) Written Determinations for Projects with Multiple Approvals. When approval of a~~  
5 ~~project that is the subject of an exemption determination involves issuance of multiple discretionary~~  
6 ~~permits or other project approvals, the Environmental Review Officer shall prepare a written~~  
7 ~~determination of exemption that describes and evaluates the whole of the project as required by CEQA~~  
8 ~~that will result from all of the discretionary approval actions and lists all of the discretionary approval~~  
9 ~~actions that are needed to implement the project. The Planning Department shall post the written~~  
10 ~~determination of exemption in the offices of the Planning Department and on the Planning Department~~  
11 ~~website, and shall mail the determination to any individuals or organizations that have previously~~  
12 ~~requested such notice in writing.~~

13 (g) Certificates of Exemption. When the Environmental Review Officer, ~~or any other~~  
14 ~~department to which the Environmental Review Officer has delegated responsibility pursuant to Section~~  
15 ~~31.08(e) above,~~ has determined that a project is ~~excluded or categorically~~ exempt from CEQA,  
16 the Environmental Review Officer may, but is not required to, prepare and issue a written  
17 Certificate of Exemption from Environmental Review by posting a copy thereof in the offices of  
18 the Planning Department and on the Planning Department website, and by mailing copies thereof  
19 to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or department(s) that will carry out or approve  
20 the project, and to any individuals or organizations who have previously requested such notice  
21 in writing.

22 (h) Final Exemption Determination.

23 (1) The Planning Department's determination that a project is exempt from CEQA  
24 shall be final unless the exemption determination is reviewed and approved or rejected by The-the  
25 Planning Commission as provided for in this Section 31.08(h). may take- The Planning Commission

1 shall allow testimony on any ~~eategorical~~ exemption determination of the Planning Department prior  
2 to and separate from consideration of project approval at the public hearing, if any, in connection  
3 with the Planning Commission's consideration of the project that is the subject of the  
4 ~~eategorical~~ exemption. The Planning Commission shall approve the exemption determination prior to  
5 approving the project. If the Planning Commission finds that the Planning Department's exemption  
6 determination does not conform to the requirements of CEQA for an exemption, it shall direct the  
7 Planning Department to revise the exemption determination or to take such further action as it  
8 determines is required by CEQA before it approves the project. When the Planning Commission  
9 reviews and approves the exemption determination, the determination shall be final upon its approval  
10 by the Planning Commission.

11 (2) When the Planning Department provides public notice of the public hearing at  
12 the Planning Commission to consider the project approval for the exempt project, the notice shall: (A)  
13 describes the exemption determination; (B) explains how to obtain a copy of the exemption  
14 determination; and (C) explains that any person may raise objections to the exemption determination at  
15 or before the public hearing at the Planning Commission on the project.

16 (i) **Project Approval Noticing.** After an exemption determination is final as provided in  
17 Section 31.08(h) of this Chapter, when any other City department provides public notice of any project  
18 approval for the exempt project to be considered at a public hearing the notice shall: (1) describe the  
19 exemption determination; (2) explain how to obtain a copy of the exemption determination; (3) explain  
20 that any person may raise objections to the exemption determination at or before the public hearing on  
21 the project; and (4) explain that any person may appeal the exemption determination to the Board of  
22 Supervisors as provided for in Section 31.16 of this Chapter.

23 (j) **Notices of Exemption.** After the City has decided to carry out or approve the project  
24 and the project is considered finally approved as provided for in Section 31.16(b)(11), the  
25 Environmental Review Officer may file a Notice of Exemption with the county clerk in the county or

1 counties in which the project is to be located. The Planning Department shall also post any such  
2 Notice of Exemption in the offices of the Planning Department and on the Planning Department  
3 website, and mailed such Notice of Exemption to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or  
4 department(s) that will carry out or approve the project, and to any individuals or organizations that  
5 have previously requested such notice in writing.

6 (k) **Modification of Exempt Project.** Where a modification occurs to a project that the  
7 Planning Department or Planning Commission has determined to be exempt, prior to any subsequent  
8 approval actions, the Environmental Review Officer shall make a new determination and carry out the  
9 procedures as provided for in Section 31.19 of this Chapter 31. For purposes of exempt projects, a  
10 modification requiring re-evaluation under Section 31.19 shall mean a change in the scope of a project  
11 as described in the original application upon which Planning based the exemption determination or  
12 Planning is presented with new information regarding the environmental impacts of the project. If the  
13 Environmental Review Officer again determines the project is exempt, the new determination may be  
14 appealed to the Board of Supervisors as provided for in Section 31.16.

15 **SEC. 31.10. INITIAL EVALUATION OF PROJECTS.**

16 (a) Upon receiving an environmental evaluation application for a project, or upon  
17 referral of a project by the board, commission or department that is to carry out or approve the  
18 project, the Environmental Review Officer shall determine whether such project is exempt  
19 from environmental review. If not exempt, the Environmental Review Officer shall complete an  
20 initial study to determine the level of environmental analysis required. In the event it is clear at  
21 the outset that an environmental impact report is required, the Environmental Review Officer  
22 may, with the consent of the applicant, make an immediate determination and dispense with  
23 the initial study. Each environmental evaluation application or referral shall include a project  
24 description using as its base the environmental information form set forth as Appendix H of  
25 the CEQA Guidelines, which form shall be supplemented to require additional data and

1 information applicable to a project's effects, including consistency with the environmental  
2 issues included in the Eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1 of the Planning Code  
3 and incorporated into the General Plan, shadow impacts, including the analysis set forth in  
4 Planning Code Section 295, and such other data and information specific to the urban  
5 environment of San Francisco or to the specific project. Each environmental evaluation  
6 application or referral shall be certified as true and correct by the applicant or referring board,  
7 commission or department. Each initial study shall include an identification of the  
8 environmental effects of a project using as its base the environmental checklist form set forth  
9 in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines and addressing each of the questions from the  
10 checklist form that are relevant to a project's environmental effects; provided that the checklist  
11 form shall be supplemented to address additional environmental effects, including consistency  
12 with the environmental issues included in the Eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1  
13 of the Planning Code and incorporated into the General Plan, shadow impacts, including the  
14 analysis set forth in Planning Code Section 295, and such other environmental effects specific  
15 to the urban environment of San Francisco or to the specific project.

16 (b) The initial study shall provide data and analysis regarding the potential for the  
17 project to have a significant effect on the environment. The basic criteria for determination of  
18 significant effect shall be consistent with the provisions set forth in CEQA.

19 (c) The applicant or the board, commission or department that is to carry out or  
20 approve the project shall submit to the Environmental Review Officer such data and  
21 information as may be necessary for the initial study. If such data and information are not  
22 submitted, the Environmental Review Officer may suspend work on the initial evaluation.

23 (d) During preparation of the initial study, the Environmental Review Officer may  
24 consult with any person having knowledge or interest concerning the project. In cases in  
25 which the project is to be carried out or approved by more than one government agency and

1 the City is the lead agency, the Environmental Review Officer shall solicit input from all other  
2 government agencies that are to carry out or approve the project.

3 (e) If a project is subject to CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act, an  
4 initial evaluation prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act may be used to  
5 satisfy the requirements of this Section.

6 (f) Based on the analysis and conclusions in the initial study, the Environmental  
7 Review Officer shall determine, based on the requirements of CEQA, whether there is  
8 substantial evidence to support a "fair argument" that the project ~~could~~ may have a significant  
9 effect on the environment ~~and an environmental impact report is required, and/or~~ whether a project  
10 could not have a significant effect on the environment and a negative declaration ~~or environmental~~  
11 impact report shall be prepared is required.

12 ~~(f) — Based on the analysis and conclusions in the initial study, the Environmental Review~~  
13 ~~Officer shall determine, based on the requirements of CEQA, whether the project could have a~~  
14 ~~significant effect on the environment, and whether a negative declaration or environmental impact~~  
15 ~~report shall be prepared.~~

16 **SEC. 31.11. NEGATIVE DECLARATIONS OR MITIGATED NEGATIVE**  
17 **DECLARATIONS.**

18 (a) When the Environmental Review Officer determines that a ~~any~~ negative declaration  
19 or a mitigated negative declaration is the appropriate level of environmental review required by  
20 CEQA for the project, ~~it such determination~~ shall be prepared by or at the direction of the  
21 Environmental Review Officer. ~~Unless otherwise specifically stated, reference in this Chapter 31 to~~  
22 "negative declaration" shall collectively refer to a negative declaration and a mitigated negative  
23 declaration. The negative declaration shall ~~include the information required by CEQA and in each~~  
24 instance shall describe the project proposed, include the location of the property, preferably  
25 shown on a map, and the name of the project proponent, state the proposed finding that the

1 project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and have attached to it a copy  
2 of the initial study documenting reasons to support that finding. *The A mitigated negative*  
3 *declaration shall also indicate mitigation measures, ~~if any,~~ included in the project to avoid*  
4 *potentially significant effects.*

5 (b) The Environmental Review Officer shall first prepare a negative declaration on a  
6 preliminary basis, and shall post a copy of the proposed negative declaration in the offices of  
7 the Planning Department and on the Planning Department website and mail notice thereof to the  
8 applicant and the board(s), commission(s) or department(s) that will carry out or approve the  
9 project.

10 (c) The Environmental Review Officer shall provide a notice of intent to adopt a  
11 negative declaration ~~or mitigated negative declaration~~ to those persons required by CEQA. In each  
12 instance, the Environmental Review Officer shall provide notice by:

13 (1) Mail to the applicant and the board(s), commission(s) or department(s) that will  
14 carry out or approve the project.

15 (2) by publication Publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the City,

16 (3) by posting Posting in the offices of the Planning Department and on the  
17 Planning Department website.

18 (4) Posting on the subject site.

19 (5) by mail Mail to the owners and, to the extent practical, the residential  
20 occupants, of all real property within the area that is the subject of the negative declaration and  
21 within 300 feet of all exterior boundaries of such area, and by mail to all organizations and  
22 individuals who have previously requested such notice in writing, sufficiently prior to adoption  
23 of the negative declaration to allow the public and agencies a review period of not less than  
24 ~~twenty (20) days, or thirty (30) days~~ if a 30-day circulation period is required by CEQA. In the  
25 case of City-sponsored projects that involve rezonings, area plans or General Plan amendments and

1 are either citywide in scope or the total area of land that is part of the project, excluding the area of  
2 public streets and alleys, is 20 acres or more, the Environmental Review Officer shall only be required  
3 to mail notice to the owners or occupants within the exterior boundaries of the project area, and to all  
4 organizations and individuals who previously requested such notice in writing.

5 (d) The notice of intent shall specify the period during which comments are to be  
6 received, the date, time and place of any public hearings on the project when known to the  
7 Planning Department at the time of the notice, a brief description of the project and its location,  
8 and the address where copies of the negative declaration and all documents referenced in the  
9 negative declaration are available for review.

10 (e) Within ~~twenty (20)~~ days, or ~~thirty (30)~~ days if a 30-day circulation period is required  
11 by CEQA, following the publication of ~~such the~~ notice of intent, any person may appeal the  
12 proposed negative declaration to the Planning Commission, specifying the grounds for such  
13 appeal, ~~or Any person~~ may submit comments on the proposed negative declaration.

14 (f) The Planning Commission shall ~~hold~~ schedule a public hearing on any such  
15 appeal within not less than ~~fourteen (14)~~ nor more than ~~thirty (30)~~ days after the close of the  
16 appeal period. Notice of such hearing shall be posted in the offices of the Planning  
17 Department and on the Planning Department website, and shall be mailed to the appellant, to the  
18 applicant, to the board(s), commission(s) or department(s) that will carry out or approve the  
19 project, to any individual or organization that has submitted comments on the proposed  
20 negative declaration, and to any other individual(s) or organization(s) that ~~has~~ have previously  
21 requested such notice in writing.

22 (g) After holding such hearing the Planning Commission shall: (1) affirm the  
23 proposed negative declaration if it finds that the project could not ~~may~~ have a significant effect  
24 on the environment; (2) may refer the proposed negative declaration back to the Planning  
25 Department for specified revisions in accordance with CEQA requirements; or (3) ~~shall~~ overrule

1 the proposed negative declaration and order preparation of an environmental impact report if  
2 *the Commission* finds that substantial evidence supports a fair argument that the project may have  
3 a significant effect on the environment.

4 (h) If the proposed negative declaration is not appealed as provided herein, or if it is  
5 affirmed on appeal, the negative declaration shall be considered final, subject to any  
6 necessary modifications. Thereafter, the first City decision-making body to act on approval of  
7 the project shall review and consider the information contained in the final negative  
8 declaration, together with any comments received during the public review process, and, upon  
9 making the findings ~~as provided in~~ required by CEQA, shall adopt the negative declaration, prior  
10 to approving the project. All decision-making bodies shall review and consider the negative  
11 declaration and make findings as required by CEQA prior to approving the project. The  
12 decision-making body that adopts the negative declaration shall promptly so advise the Environmental  
13 Review Officer.

14 (i) If the City adopts a mitigated negative declaration, the decision-making body  
15 shall also adopt a program for reporting on or monitoring the mitigation measures for the  
16 project that it has either required or made a condition of approval to mitigate or avoid  
17 significant environmental effects.

18 (j) After the City has decided to carry out or approve the project subject to a final  
19 negative declaration and the project is considered finally approved as provided for in Section  
20 31.16(b)(11), the Environmental Review Officer ~~may~~ shall file a notice of determination with the  
21 county clerk in the county or counties in which the project is to be located. If required by  
22 CEQA, the notice of determination shall also be filed with the California Office of Planning and  
23 Research. When the Environmental Review Officer files a notice of determination with the county  
24 clerk, the California Office of Planning and Research, or both, the Planning Department shall also post  
25 a copy of the notice of determination in the offices of the Planning Department and on the Planning

1 Department website, and mail a copy of the notice of determination to any individuals or organizations  
2 who have previously requested such notice in writing.

3 **SEC. 31.12. DETERMINATIONS THAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS ARE**  
4 **REQUIRED.**

5 When the Environmental Review Officer determines ~~If it is determined~~ that a project may  
6 have a significant effect on the environment ~~that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than~~  
7 significant level and, ~~therefore, that~~ an environmental impact report is required, the  
8 Environmental Review Officer shall ~~prepare and distribute a notice of preparation in the manner~~  
9 and containing the information required by CEQA and provide such other notice as required by CEQA.  
10 In addition, the Environmental Review Officer shall ~~scheduled~~ scoping meetings and publish the  
11 notice of preparation in a newspaper of general circulation in the City, ~~shall~~ post the notice of  
12 preparation in the offices of the Planning Department ~~and on the Planning Department website,~~  
13 and ~~shall~~ mail the notice of preparation to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or  
14 department(s) that will carry out or approve the project and to all organizations and individuals  
15 who have previously requested such notice in writing. The Environmental Review Officer shall  
16 provide such other notice as required by CEQA.

17 **SEC. 31.13. DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS.**

18 (a) When an environmental impact report ("EIR") is required, it shall be prepared by  
19 or at the direction of the Environmental Review Officer. The EIR shall first be prepared as a  
20 draft report.

21 (b) The applicant or the board, commission or department that is to carry out or  
22 approve the project shall submit to the Environmental Review Officer such data and  
23 information as may be necessary to prepare the draft EIR. If such data and information are  
24 not submitted, the Environmental Review Officer may suspend work on the draft EIR. The  
25 data and information submitted shall, if the Environmental Review Officer so requests, be in

1 the form of all or a designated part or parts of the proposed draft EIR itself, although the  
2 Environmental Review Officer shall in any event make his or her own evaluation and analysis  
3 and exercise his or her independent judgment in preparation of the draft EIR for public review.

4 (c) During preparation of the draft EIR, the Environmental Review Officer may  
5 consult with any person having knowledge or interest concerning the project. If he/she has not  
6 already done so in accordance with Section 31.10 above, in cases in which the project is to be  
7 carried out or approved by more than one public agency, the Environmental Review Officer  
8 shall consult with all other public agencies that are to carry out or approve the project.

9 (d) When the draft EIR has been prepared, the Environmental Review Officer shall:  
10 (1) Filefile a notice of completion of such draft with the California Office of Planning and  
11 Research as required by CEQA and make the draft EIR available through the State Clearinghouse if  
12 and as required by the California Office of Planning and Research.

13 A(2) Post a copy of such notice, or a separate notice containing the same information,  
14 shall thereupon be posted in the offices of the Planning Department and on the Planning  
15 Department website, and on the subject site, and

16 (3) mailed Mail such notice to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or  
17 department(s) that will carry out or approve the project, and to any individual or organization  
18 that has previously requested such notice in writing.

19 (4) Mail the The notice of completion shall be sent by mail to the owners and, to the extent  
20 practical, the residential occupants, of all real property within the area that is the subject of the  
21 environmental impact report and within 300 feet of all exterior boundaries of such area. In the  
22 case of City-sponsored projects that involve rezonings, area plans or General Plan amendments and  
23 are either citywide in scope or the total area of land that is part of the project, excluding the area of  
24 public streets and alleys, is 20 acres or more, the Environmental Review Officer shall only be required  
25 to mail notice to the owners or occupants within the exterior boundaries of the project area.

1           (5) A Provide a copy of the draft EIR shall be provided to the applicant and to such  
2 board(s), commission(s) or department(s) and to any individual or organization that has so  
3 requested.

4           **SEC. 31.14. CONSULTATIONS AND COMMENTS.**

5           (a) The Environmental Review Officer shall provide public notice of the availability of the  
6 draft EIR and schedule a public hearing on the draft EIR with the Planning Commission. The  
7 Environmental Review Officer shall provide the notice of availability at the same time that the notice of  
8 completion is filed as required by CEQA. The notice of availability shall be distributed at least 30 days  
9 prior to any scheduled public hearing on the draft EIR. The Environmental Review Officer shall  
10 distribute the notice of availability in the manner required by CEQA and in each instance Notice shall  
11 be:

12           (1) ~~sent~~ Send the notice to public agencies with jurisdiction by law, and persons  
13 with special expertise as follows: ~~after filing a notice of completion as required by CEQA,~~

14           (A) ~~†~~The Environmental Review Officer shall send a copy of the draft  
15 EIR to any public agencies as required by CEQA, and may send copies to and consult with  
16 persons who have special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved.

17           ~~(b)~~(B) In sending such copies, the Environmental Review Officer shall  
18 request comments on the draft EIR from such agencies and persons, with particular focus  
19 upon the sufficiency of the draft EIR in discussing possible effects on the environment, ways  
20 in which adverse effects may be minimized, and alternatives to the project.

21           (C) For the types of projects set forth in Section 31.08(e)(1) through (5) of  
22 this Chapter and for any other projects that may be subject to the approval of the Historic Preservation  
23 Commission, the Environmental Review Officer shall send a copy of the draft EIR to the Historic  
24 Preservation Commission and obtain any comments that the Historic Preservation Commission has on  
25

1 the draft EIR at a noticed public meeting scheduled at least 10 days prior to any Planning Commission  
2 hearing on the draft EIR.

3 (2) Post the notice in the offices of the Planning Department, on the Planning  
4 Department website, and on the subject site.

5 (3) Publish the notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the City.

6 (4) Mail the notice to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or department(s)  
7 that will carry out or approve the project, and to any individuals or organizations that previously have  
8 requested such notice in writing.

9 (5) Mail the notice to the owners and, to the extent practical, the residential  
10 occupants, of all real property within the area that is the subject of the environmental impact report  
11 and within 300 feet of all exterior boundaries of such area. In the case of City-sponsored projects that  
12 involve rezonings, area plans or General Plan amendments and are either citywide in scope or the total  
13 area of land that is part of the project, excluding the area of public streets and alleys, is 20 acres or  
14 more, the Environmental Review Officer shall only be required to mail notice to the owners or  
15 occupants within the exterior boundaries of the project area.

16 (b) The notice of availability shall contain the information required by CEQA and in each  
17 instance shall:

18 (e)(1) ~~Each notice and request for comments shall state~~ State the starting and ending  
19 dates for the draft EIR review period during which the Environmental Review Officer will receive  
20 comments that any comments must be returned within a certain time after the sending of the draft EIR,  
21 and if comments are not returned within that time it shall be assumed that the agency or  
22 person has no comment to make that requires a written response in the EIR. The time limit shall  
23 normally be thirty (30) days, or forty five (45) days if required by CEQA. public review period shall be  
24 not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days except under unusual circumstances. When a draft EIR is  
25 submitted to the State Clearinghouse for review by state agencies, the public review period shall not be

1 less than 45 days, unless a shorter period, not less than 30 days, is approved by the State

2 Clearinghouse. The Environmental Review Officer may allow a longer period for comments on  
3 projects of exceptional size or complexity. The Planning Commission or the Environmental  
4 Review Officer may, upon the request of an agency, commission or person from whom  
5 comments are sought, grant an extension of time beyond the original period for comments,  
6 but such extension shall not interfere with the holding of any hearing on the draft EIR for  
7 which notice has already been given.

8 (2) State the time, place and date of the scheduled Planning Commission hearing on  
9 the draft EIR and all hearings at which the Environmental Review Officer will take testimony.

10 (c) The Planning Department shall make the draft EIR available to the public upon the date  
11 of the notice of availability. The Planning Department shall post a copy of the draft EIR on the  
12 Planning Department website and provide a copy of the draft EIR in electronic form on a text  
13 searchable digital storage device or by text searchable electronic mail transmission when an email  
14 address is provided, unless the draft EIR in printed hard copy form is specifically requested, to the  
15 applicant and to such board(s), commission(s) or department(s) and to any individuals or  
16 organizations that previously have requested a copy in writing.

17 (d) Notice to the general public shall be provided as follows:

18 (1) ~~Public participation, both formal and informal, shall be encouraged at all stages~~  
19 ~~of review, and written comments that require a written response in the EIR shall be accepted at~~  
20 ~~any time up to the conclusion of the public comment period. The Environmental Review~~  
21 ~~Officer may give public notice at any formal stage of the review process, beyond the notices~~  
22 ~~required by this Chapter 31 and CEQA, in any manner it may deem appropriate, and ~~may~~~~  
23 ~~maintain a public log as shall post on the Planning Department website the current status of all~~  
24 ~~projects under formal review. ~~Members of the general public shall be encouraged to submit their~~~~  
25 ~~comments in writing as early as possible.~~

1           ~~(2) — The draft EIR shall be available to the general public upon filing of the notice of~~  
2 ~~completion.~~

3           ~~(3)(e) The Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing on every draft EIR during~~  
4 ~~the public comment period, with such hearing combined as much as possible with other~~  
5 ~~activities of the Planning Commission. The Environmental Review Officer may, upon~~  
6 ~~delegation by the Planning Commission, take testimony at supplemental public hearing(s) on~~  
7 ~~draft EIRs, in addition to, and not in lieu of, the hearing conducted by the Planning~~  
8 ~~Commission, and shall report to and make all testimony received by the Environmental~~  
9 ~~Review Officer available to the Planning Commission at a public hearing. Notice of the Planning~~  
10 ~~Commission hearings and all hearings at which the Environmental Review Officer takes testimony shall~~  
11 ~~be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the City at least 30 days prior to the~~  
12 ~~hearing, by posting in the offices of the Planning Department, by posting on or near the site proposed~~  
13 ~~for the project, and by mail sent not less than 30 days prior to the hearing to the applicant, to the~~  
14 ~~board, commission or department that is to carry out or approve the project, and to any other~~  
15 ~~individual or organization requesting such notice.~~

16           ~~(4)(f) The draft EIR, including any revisions made prior to or during the public hearing,~~  
17 ~~shall be the basis for discussion at the hearing. To the extent feasible, any comments already~~  
18 ~~received from any agency, organization or individual shall be available at the public hearing.~~

19           **SEC. 31.15. FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS.**

20           (a) A final EIR shall be prepared by, or at the direction of, the Environmental Review  
21 Officer, based upon the draft EIR, the consultations and comments received during the review  
22 process, and additional information that may become available. No less than 14 days prior to the  
23 Planning Commission hearing to consider certification of the final EIR, the final EIR shall be made  
24 available to the public and to any board(s), commission(s) or department(s) that will carry out or  
25 approve the project.

1 (b) The final EIR shall include a list of agencies and persons consulted, the  
2 comments received, either verbatim or in summary, and a response to any comments that  
3 raise significant points concerning effects on the environment. The response to comments  
4 may take the form of revisions within the draft EIR, or by adding a separate section in the final  
5 EIR, or by providing an explanation in response to the comment.

6 (c) ~~A public~~ An administrative record shall be kept of each case in which an EIR is  
7 prepared, including all comments received in writing in addition to a record of the public  
8 hearing or hearings. The final EIR shall indicate the location of such record. ~~Any transcription of~~  
9 ~~a hearing record shall be at the expense of the person requesting such transcription. The~~  
10 Environmental Review Officer shall cause the draft EIR hearing record to be transcribed and retained  
11 as part of the administrative record.

12 (d) When the final EIR has been prepared and in the judgment of the Planning  
13 Commission it is adequate, accurate and objective, reflecting the independent judgment and  
14 analysis of the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission shall certify its completion in  
15 compliance with CEQA. The certification of completion shall contain a finding as to whether  
16 the project as proposed will, or will not, have a significant effect on the environment.

17 (e) All decision-making bodies shall review and consider the EIR and make findings as  
18 required by CEQA prior to approving the project. The first decision-making body to approve the  
19 project shall promptly so advise the Environmental Review Officer.

20 (f) After the City has decided to carry out or approve the project subject to a final EIR, and  
21 the project is considered finally approved as provided for in Section 31.16(b)(1), in accordance with  
22 CEQA procedures, the Environmental Review Officer shall file a notice of determination with the  
23 county clerk in the county or counties in which the project is to be located. If required by CEQA, the  
24 notice of determination shall also be filed with the California Office of Planning and Research. The  
25 Environmental Review Officer shall also post the notice of determination in the offices of the Planning

1 Department and on the Planning Department website, and mail a copy of the notice of determination to  
2 any individuals or organizations who have previously requested such notice in writing.

3 **SEC. 31.19. EVALUATION OF MODIFIED PROJECTS.**

4 (a) After evaluation of a proposed project has been completed pursuant to this  
5 Chapter, a substantial modification of the project may require reevaluation of the proposed  
6 project.

7 (b) Where ~~such~~ a modification as defined in Section 31.08(k) occurs as to a project that  
8 has been determined to be ~~excluded or categorically~~ exempt pursuant to this Chapter, a new  
9 determination shall be made as provided in this Chapter.

10 (1) ~~If the Environmental Review Officer the project is again determines the project~~  
11 ~~to be excluded or categorically exempt, no further evaluation shall be required by this Chapter. the~~  
12 Environmental Review Officer shall note the determination and the reasons therefore in the case  
13 record, post a notice of the determination in the offices of the Planning Department and on the  
14 Planning Department website, and mail such notice to the applicant, the board(s), commission(s) or  
15 department(s) that will carry out or approve the project, and to any individuals or organizations that  
16 have previously requested such notice in writing.

17 (2) If the project is determined not to be ~~excluded or categorically~~ exempt, an  
18 initial study shall be conducted as provided in this Chapter.

19 (c) Where such a modification occurs as to a project for which a negative  
20 declaration has been adopted or a final EIR has been certified, the Environmental Review  
21 Officer shall reevaluate the proposed project in relation to such modification.

22 (1) If, on the basis of such reevaluation, the Environmental Review Officer  
23 determines, based on the requirements of CEQA, that no additional environmental review is  
24 necessary, this determination and the reasons therefor shall be noted in writing in the case  
25 record, and no further evaluation shall be required by this Chapter. Notice of any such written

1 determination and the reasons therefor shall be posted in the Planning Department, and shall  
2 be mailed to the applicant, the board, commission or department that will carry out or approve  
3 the project, to any individual or organization that has commented on the environmental  
4 document, and to any other individual or organization requesting such notice in writing.

5 (2) If, on the basis of such reevaluation, the Environmental Review Officer  
6 determines that additional environmental review is necessary, the project shall be considered  
7 a new project for purposes of environmental review pursuant to this Chapter. In that event, a  
8 new evaluation shall be completed prior to the decision by the City as to whether to carry out  
9 or approve the project as modified. CEQA sets forth specific requirements for the  
10 determination of whether a supplemental or subsequent EIR is necessary, as well as the  
11 process therefor.

12 Section 3. The Administrative Code is hereby amended by deleting Section 31.16 in its  
13 entirety and adding new Section 31.16, to read as follows:

14 ***SEC. 31.16. APPEAL OF FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS***

15 ~~(a) Any person or entity that has submitted comments to the Planning Commission or the~~  
16 ~~Environmental Review Officer on a draft EIR, either in writing during the public review period, or~~  
17 ~~orally or in writing at a public hearing on the EIR, may appeal the Planning Commission's certification~~  
18 ~~of a final EIR to the Board of Supervisors (the "Board").~~

19 ~~— (1) A letter of appeal shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board within twenty (20)~~  
20 ~~calendar days after the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR, stating the specific grounds for~~  
21 ~~appeal, and accompanied by a fee, as set forth in Section 31.22 herein, payable to the Clerk of the~~  
22 ~~Board. The grounds for appeal shall be limited to issues related to the adequacy, accuracy and~~  
23 ~~objectiveness of the final EIR, including but not limited to the sufficiency of the final EIR as an~~  
24 ~~informational document and the correctness of its conclusions, and the correctness of the findings~~  
25 ~~contained in the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR. The appellant shall submit a copy of~~

1 ~~the letter of appeal to the Environmental Review Officer at the time appellant submits a letter of appeal~~  
2 ~~to the Clerk of the Board.~~

3 ~~—— (2) — After receipt of the letter of appeal, the Environmental Review Officer shall promptly~~  
4 ~~transmit copies of the EIR to the Clerk of the Board and make the administrative record available to~~  
5 ~~the Board.~~

6 ~~—— (3) — While the appeal is pending, and until the EIR is affirmed or re-certified as may be~~  
7 ~~required by the Board, the City shall not carry out or consider the approval of a project that is the~~  
8 ~~subject of the EIR on appeal.~~

9 ~~—— (b) — The Clerk of the Board shall promptly schedule a hearing on the appeal before the full~~  
10 ~~Board, without regard to any rule or policy of the Board requiring a 30-day review period. If more~~  
11 ~~than one person submits a letter of appeal on a final EIR, the Board shall consolidate such appeals so~~  
12 ~~that they are heard simultaneously. The Board may consolidate or coordinate its hearing on the appeal~~  
13 ~~with other hearings on the project. Notice of the appeal shall be provided by mail to the appellants and~~  
14 ~~to all organizations and individuals who have previously requested such notice, not less than ten (10)~~  
15 ~~days prior to the date of the hearing.~~

16 ~~—— (c) — The Board shall conduct its own independent review of the final EIR. The Board shall~~  
17 ~~consider anew all facts, evidence and/or issues related to the adequacy, accuracy and objectiveness of~~  
18 ~~the final EIR, including but not limited to the sufficiency of the final EIR as an informational document~~  
19 ~~and the correctness of its conclusions, and the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR. The~~  
20 ~~Board may consider new facts, evidence and/or issues that were not introduced before the Planning~~  
21 ~~Commission or the Environmental Review Officer.~~

22 ~~—— (d) — The Board shall affirm the Planning Commission's certification of the final EIR only if~~  
23 ~~the Board finds that the final EIR is adequate, accurate and objective, that its conclusions are correct,~~  
24 ~~and that the findings contained in the Planning Commission's certification are correct. The Board may~~  
25 ~~affirm or reverse the action of the Planning Commission only by a vote of a majority of all members of~~

1 ~~the Board. If the Board reverses the Planning Commission's certification of the final EIR, it shall make~~  
2 ~~specific findings and remand the final EIR to the Planning Commission for further action consistent~~  
3 ~~with the Board's findings. The Board shall act by motion in affirming or reversing the Planning~~  
4 ~~Commission's certification of the final EIR.~~

5 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ (e) \_\_\_\_\_ The Board shall act on an appeal within thirty (30) days of appeal of the Planning~~  
6 ~~Commission's certification of the EIR, provided that, if the full membership of the Board is not present~~  
7 ~~on the last day on which said appeal is set or continued for hearing within such 30 days, the Board may~~  
8 ~~postpone said hearing and decision thereon until, but not later than, the full membership of the Board~~  
9 ~~is present; provided further, that the latest date to which said hearing and decision may be so~~  
10 ~~postponed shall be not more than ninety (90) days from the date of filing the appeal. The date of~~  
11 ~~certification of the final EIR shall be the date upon which the Planning Commission originally certified~~  
12 ~~the final EIR if: (i) no appeal is filed; or (ii) an appeal is filed and the Planning Commission's~~  
13 ~~certification of the final EIR is affirmed by action of the Board.~~

14 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ (f) \_\_\_\_\_ In the event the Board remands an EIR to the Planning Commission, the Planning~~  
15 ~~Commission shall take such action as may be required by the specific findings made by the Board and~~  
16 ~~consider re-certification of the EIR. In the event the EIR is re-certified by the Planning Commission,~~  
17 ~~only the portions of the EIR which have been revised, or the new issues which have been addressed, by~~  
18 ~~the Planning Commission may be appealed again to the Board pursuant to the procedures set forth~~  
19 ~~herein.~~

20 ~~\_\_\_\_\_ (g) \_\_\_\_\_ The Board may reject an appeal if it finds that the appeal fails to state proper grounds~~  
21 ~~for appeal. The Board shall act by motion in rejecting an appeal.~~

22 **SEC. 31.16. APPEAL OF CEQA DECISIONS**

23 **(a) Decisions Subject to Appeal. The following CEQA decisions made by any City**  
24 **commission, department, agency or official may be appealed to the Board: (1) Certification of a final**  
25 **EIR by the Planning Commission; (2) Adoption of a negative declaration by a City decision-maker; (3)**

1 Determination by the Planning Commission or Planning Department that a project is exempt from  
2 CEQA; and (4) Determination by the Environmental Review Officer that no additional environmental  
3 review is required for a modification to a project that was the subject of a prior EIR, negative  
4 declaration or exemption determination.

5 (b) **Appeal Procedures.** In addition to the applicable requirements of Section 31.16(c)  
6 pertaining to EIRs, Section 31.16(d) pertaining to negative declarations, Section 31.16(e) pertaining to  
7 exemption determinations or Section 31.16(f) pertaining to determinations on modified projects, the  
8 following requirements shall apply to an appeal of any of the decisions listed in Section 31.16(a) of this  
9 Chapter:

10 (1) The appellant shall submit a letter of appeal to the Clerk of the Board within the  
11 time frames set forth in Sections 31.16(c), (d), (e) or (f), as applicable. The letter must state the specific  
12 grounds for appeal and must be accompanied by a fee, as set forth in Section 31.22 of this Chapter,  
13 payable to the San Francisco Planning Department. The appellant must sign the letter of appeal or may  
14 have an agent or attorney file and sign the letter on its behalf. The appellant must also submit with the  
15 appeal a copy of the CEQA decision being appealed, if available, and otherwise shall submit it when  
16 available. Appellant shall concurrently submit a copy of the letter of appeal to the Environmental  
17 Review Officer. The submission to the Environmental Review Officer may be made by electronic means.  
18 The Clerk may reject a letter of appeal that does not comply with the requirements of this subpart.

19 (2) After receipt of a copy of the letter of appeal, the Environmental Review Officer  
20 shall transmit copies of the environmental review documents to the Clerk of the Board not less than 11  
21 days prior to the appeal hearing and shall make the administrative record available to the Board.

22 (3) After the Clerk has accepted the letter of appeal and scheduled the appeal for  
23 hearing, all project approvals shall be suspended and the City shall not carry out or consider further  
24 the approval of the project that is the subject of the appeal while the appeal is pending, except that  
25 project-related activities may be undertaken if and only to the extent they are essential to abate hazards

1 to the public health and safety, including abatement of hazards on a structure or site as determined by  
2 a qualified City official, including but not limited to the Director of Building Inspection, the Director of  
3 Public Works, the Director of Public Health, the Fire Marshal or the Port Chief Engineer, to be an  
4 emergency presenting an imminent hazard to the public requiring immediate corrective action. If the  
5 Historic Preservation Commission is in the process of considering a nomination of the project site, or  
6 an area that includes the project, as a landmark or historic district, the designation may proceed  
7 during the pendency of the appeal to the Board.

8 (4) The Clerk of the Board shall schedule the appeal for hearing before the full  
9 Board, without regard to any rule or policy of the Board, no less than 30 and no more than 45 days  
10 following the date that the Clerk has accepted the letter of appeal and: (A) for exemption  
11 determinations, the City has taken an action as described in Section 31.16(e) to approve the project in  
12 reliance on the exemption determination; and (B) for EIRs, negative declarations and determinations  
13 on modified projects, the applicable time period for filing an appeal as set forth in Sections 31.16(c),  
14 31.16(d) or 31.16(f) has expired. The Planning Department shall assist the Clerk in determining  
15 whether the City has approved an exempt project and when the time period for filing an appeal of a  
16 particular project has expired. No less than 20 days prior to the scheduled hearing date, the Planning  
17 Department shall provide to the Clerk of the Board a list of all individuals and organizations that have  
18 previously requested notice in writing or have commented on the decision of determination on appeal.  
19 No less than 14 days prior to the scheduled hearing date, the Clerk of the Board shall provide notice of  
20 the appeal by mail to the appellant or appellants and to all organizations and individuals on the list  
21 provided by the Planning Department.

22 (5) If more than one person submits a letter of appeal on the same decision or  
23 determination, the Board President may consolidate such appeals so that they are heard  
24 simultaneously, and up to 3 individual appellants each shall have its own time for testimony as if such  
25 appeals were being heard separately. Where the appeals are consolidated, the Board shall provide the

1 same total time for testimony at the public hearing to appellants, the Planning Department and the  
2 project applicant or project sponsor. The Board may coordinate its hearing on the CEQA appeal with  
3 other hearings on the project, provided that the CEQA appeal shall be heard prior to and separate  
4 from any other hearings or decisions on the project.

5 (6) Appellants shall submit all written materials pertaining to the appeal to the  
6 Board and the Environmental Review Officer no later than noon, 11 days prior to the scheduled  
7 hearing. The Planning Department shall submit a written response to the Board no later than noon,  
8 eight days prior to the scheduled hearing. Appellants, members of the public, real parties in interest or  
9 City agencies sponsoring the proposed project may also submit a written response to the Board no  
10 later than noon, eight days prior to the scheduled hearing. The Clerk will distribute any written  
11 documents submitted by these deadlines to the Board through the Board's normal distribution  
12 procedures and such written materials will be part of the record. Written materials submitted later  
13 than noon, eight days prior to the scheduled hearing, will not be considered part of the record unless  
14 the Board affirmatively votes to include such written materials in the record.

15 (7) The Board shall conduct its own independent review of the CEQA decision  
16 including the correctness of any supporting findings contained in the record. The Board shall consider  
17 anew all facts, evidence and issues related to the adequacy, accuracy and objectiveness of the CEQA  
18 decision, including but not limited to, the sufficiency of the CEQA decision and the correctness of its  
19 conclusions. The Board shall consider the written record before it, the Planning Commission, the  
20 Environmental Review Officer or other City department, and shall also consider any additional new  
21 facts, evidence or issues presented in testimony prior to the close of the appeal hearing.

22 (8) The Board shall act on an appeal within 30 days of the date set for the hearing,  
23 provided that if the full membership of the Board is not present on the last day on which said appeal is  
24 set for hearing within such 30 days, the Board may postpone the hearing and decision until the full  
25 membership of the Board is present. If the Board does not conduct at least three regular Board

1 meetings during such 30 day period, the Board shall decide such appeal within 40 days of the date set  
2 for the hearing; and provided further that the latest date to which the hearing and decision may be so  
3 postponed under this Section shall not be more than 90 days from the date the Clerk schedules the  
4 appeal for hearing as provided for in Section 31.16(b)(4).

5 (9) The Board may affirm or reverse any CEQA decision by motion adopted by a  
6 vote of a majority of all members of the Board. A tie vote shall be deemed to be disapproval of the  
7 CEQA decision. The Board shall adopt findings in support of its decision to affirm or reverse the  
8 CEQA decision based on the record.

9 (10) If the Board reverses the CEQA decision, the Board shall remand the matter to  
10 the Planning Commission or Planning Department with directions to take further action consistent with  
11 the Board's findings.

12 (11) If the Board affirms the CEQA decision, the date of the final EIR, the final  
13 negative declaration, exemption determination, or determination of modification, shall be the date upon  
14 which the environmental document was originally approved or the exemption determination or  
15 determination of modification was issued and any decisions made prior to the date that the Clerk  
16 determined the appeal qualified for hearing shall be deemed valid.

17 (12) If the Board reverses the CEQA decision, the prior CEQA decision and any  
18 actions approving the project in reliance on the reversed CEQA decision shall be deemed void.

19 (13) The date the project shall be considered finally approved shall occur no earlier  
20 than either the expiration date of the appeal period, if no appeal is filed, or the date the Board affirms  
21 the CEQA decision, if the CEQA decision is appealed.

22 (c) **Appeal of Final Environmental Impact Reports.** In addition to those requirements set  
23 forth in Section 31.16(b) above, the following requirements shall apply only to appeals of EIRs.

1           (1) Any person or entity may appeal a final EIR by submitting a letter of appeal to  
2 the Clerk of the Board after the Planning Commission's certification of the final EIR as complete and  
3 no later than 30 days after a City decision-maker first approves the project in reliance on the EIR.

4           (2) The grounds for appeal of an EIR shall be limited to issues related to whether the  
5 final EIR complies with the requirements of CEQA, is adequate, accurate and objective, reflects the  
6 independent judgment and analysis of the City, and the EIR conclusions and the findings contained in  
7 the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR are correct.

8           (3) The Board shall affirm the Planning Commission's certification of the final EIR  
9 if the Board finds that the final EIR complies with the requirements of CEQA, it is adequate, accurate  
10 and objective and reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the City, and its conclusions and  
11 the findings contained in the Planning Commission's certification motion are correct.

12           (4) The Board shall reverse the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR if  
13 the Board finds that the final EIR does not comply with the requirements of CEQA, it is not adequate,  
14 accurate and objective, it does not reflect the independent judgment and analysis of the City, or its  
15 conclusions or the findings contained in the Planning Commission's certification motion are incorrect.  
16 If the Board reverses the Planning Commission's certification of the final EIR, it shall make specific  
17 findings as to the reasons for its action and remand the final EIR to the Planning Commission for  
18 further action consistent with the Board's findings.

19           (d) **Appeal of Negative Declarations.** In addition to those requirements set forth in Section  
20 31.16(b) above, the following requirements shall apply only to appeals of negative declarations.

21           (1) Any person or entity may appeal a negative declaration by submitting a letter of  
22 appeal to the Clerk of the Board after the Planning Commission has affirmed the negative declaration  
23 on appeal, or, if no one appealed the negative declaration to the Planning Commission, after the  
24 Planning Department has issued a final negative declaration and no later than 30 days after a City  
25 decision-maker adopts the final negative declaration.

1           (2) The grounds for appeal of a negative declaration shall be limited to raising  
2 issues related to whether the negative declaration conforms to the requirements of CEQA, the  
3 correctness of the finding that the project could not have a significant effect on the environment and  
4 that there is no substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the project may have a significant  
5 impact on the environment, and the adequacy and feasibility of any proposed mitigation measures.

6           (3) The Board shall affirm the approval of a negative declaration if it finds that the  
7 negative declaration conforms to the requirements of CEQA and that the record does not include  
8 substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the project may have a significant effect on the  
9 environment.

10           (4) The Board shall reverse the approval of the negative declaration if it finds that  
11 the record includes substantial evidence to support a fair argument that the project may have a  
12 significant effect on the environment, or that the negative declaration does not otherwise comply with  
13 the requirements of CEQA. If the Board reverses the negative declaration, the Board shall make  
14 specific findings as to the reasons for its action and remand the negative declaration to the Planning  
15 Department for further action consistent with the Board's findings.

16           (5) If the Board requires the Planning Department to prepare an EIR, it shall be  
17 prepared in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in this Chapter 31. If the Board  
18 requires the negative declaration to be revised, including the addition or revision of mitigation  
19 measures in the project to avoid potentially significant effects, the Environmental Review Officer shall  
20 finalize the revised negative declaration consistent with the Board's direction and send notice to the  
21 public, as set forth in Section 31.11 of this Chapter 31, of the availability of the revised negative  
22 declaration. In the event any organization or individual wishes to appeal the revised negative  
23 declaration, such appeal shall be made directly to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days of  
24 publication of the revised negative declaration in accordance with the procedures and requirements set  
25 forth in this Section 31.16 of this Chapter.

1           (e) Appeal of Exemption Determinations. In addition to those requirements set forth in  
2 Section 31.16(b) above, the following requirements shall apply to appeals of exemption determinations  
3 to the Board of Supervisors.

4           (1) Any person or entity may appeal a final exemption determination for a project by  
5 submitting a letter of appeal to the Clerk of the Board within the following time periods:

6           (A) As to any exemption determination for a project for which the  
7 Environmental Review Officer or any other City department has provided public notice of the  
8 exemption determination as provided for in Section 31.08(e), Section 31.08(f), Section 31.08(g), Section  
9 31.08(h), Section 31.08(i), or Section 31.19(b)(1), after the Environmental Review Office or any other  
10 City department has provided public notice of the exemption determination and no later than 30 days  
11 after a City decision-maker has issued a discretionary permit for the project or taken any other project-  
12 related approval action for the project. However, for a project involving multiple approval actions, the  
13 Clerk shall reject an appeal if at the time of the appeal the Board has already considered and upheld  
14 the same exemption determination following an earlier appeal.

15           (B) As to any exemption determination for a project for which neither the  
16 Environmental Review Officer nor any other City department has provided public notice of the  
17 exemption determination as provided for in Section 31.08(e), Section 31.08(f), Section 31.08(g), Section  
18 31.08(h), Section 31.08(i) or Section 31.19(b)(1), an appeal may be filed at any time following the  
19 appellant's discovery of the exemption determination, provided that such appeal shall be filed no later  
20 than 60 days after the issuance of the discretionary permit or other project-related approval action.

21           (C) The appeal periods in this Section 31.16(e) shall apply even if the  
22 conclusion of any appeal period for the discretionary permit or permits or project approval or  
23 approvals is less than the appeal period for the exemption determination. Departments that issue  
24 discretionary permits or other project approvals that are subject to separate, shorter appeal periods for  
25 the permits or other project approvals than provided for in this Chapter 31 for the appeal of an

1 exemption determination, shall take steps as they determine appropriate to advise applicants seeking  
2 permits or other appealable project approvals of the longer appeal period for exemption  
3 determinations provided for in this Chapter 31.

4 (2) The grounds for appeal of an exemption determination shall be limited to  
5 whether the project conforms to the requirements of CEQA for an exemption.

6 (3) The Board shall affirm the exemption determination if it finds that the project  
7 conforms to the requirements of CEQA for an exemption.

8 (4) The Board shall reverse the exemption determination if it finds that the project  
9 does not conform to the requirements of CEQA for an exemption. If the Board finds that the project  
10 does not conform to the requirements of CEQA for an exemption, the Board may remand the exemption  
11 determination to the Environmental Review Officer for revisions or reconsideration, or may reverse the  
12 determination and require preparation of an appropriate environmental document. If the Board  
13 reverses the exemption determination, the Board shall make specific findings as to the reasons for its  
14 action and shall remand the matter to the Planning Department for the preparation of a negative  
15 declaration or an EIR, as appropriate.

16 (f) **Appeal of Determinations on Modified Projects.**

17 (1) In addition to those requirements set forth in Section 31.16(b) of this Chapter, any  
18 person or entity may appeal the Environmental Review Officer's determination in Section 31.19(c)(1)  
19 of this Chapter that no additional environmental review is necessary for modifications to a project that  
20 was the subject of a prior EIR or negative declaration, following the written notice given by the  
21 Environmental Review Officer pursuant to Section 31.19(c)(1) of this Chapter and for up to 30 days  
22 following the notice.

23 (2) The grounds for appeal under this Section 31.16(f) shall be limited to whether  
24 the project modification requires additional environmental review.





# CEQA Categorical Exemption Determination

SAN FRANCISCO  
PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT

## Property Information/Project Description

PROJECT ADDRESS	BLOCK/LOT(S)

CASE NO.	PERMIT NO.	PLANS DATED

- Addition/ Alteration (detailed below)       Demolition (requires HRER if over 50 years old)       New Construction

### STEP 1 EXEMPTION CLASS

- Class 1: Existing Facilities**  
Interior and exterior alterations; additions under 10,000 sq.ft.; change of use if principally permitted or with a CU.
- Class 3: New Construction**  
Up to three (3) single family residences; six (6) dwelling units in one building; commercial/office structures under 10,000 sq.ft.; accessory structures; utility extensions.

**NOTE:**  
If neither class applies, an *Environmental Evaluation Application* is required.

### STEP 2 CEQA IMPACTS ( To be completed by Project Planner )

If ANY box is initialed below an *Environmental Evaluation Application* is required.

- Transportation:** Does the project create six (6) or more net new parking spaces or residential units? Does the project have the potential to adversely affect transit, pedestrian and/or bicycle safety (hazards) or the adequacy of nearby transit, pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities?
- Air Quality:** Would the project add new sensitive receptors (specifically, schools, colleges, universities, day care facilities, hospitals, residential dwellings [subject to Article 38 of the Health Code], and senior-care facilities)?
- Hazardous Materials:** Would the project involve 1) change of use (including tenant improvements) and/or 2) soil disturbance; on a site with a former gas station, auto repair, dry cleaners, or heavy manufacturing use, or on a site with underground storage tanks?  
*Phase I Environmental Site Assessment required for CEQA clearance (E.P. initials required)*
- Soil Disturbance/Modification:** Would the project result in the soil disturbance/modification greater than two (2) feet below grade in an archeological sensitive area or eight (8) feet in non-archeological sensitive areas?  
*Refer to: EP ArcMap > CEQA CatEx Determination Layers > Archeological Sensitive Areas*
- Noise:** Does the project include new noise-sensitive receptors (schools, colleges, universities, day care facilities, hospitals, residential dwellings, and senior-care facilities) fronting roadways located in the noise mitigation area?  
*Refer to: EP ArcMap > CEQA CatEx Determination Layers > Noise Mitigation Area*
- Subdivision/Lot-Line Adjustment:** Does the project site involve a subdivision or lot-line adjustment on a lot with a slope of 20% or more?  
*Refer to: EP ArcMap > CEQA CatEx Determination Layers > Topography*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**Slope = or > 20%:** Does the project involve excavation, square footage expansion, shoring, underpinning, retaining wall work, grading – including excavation or fill?

*Exceptions: Do not check box for work performed on previously graded level portion of site; stairs, patio, deck and fence work.*

Geotechnical report required and a Certificate or higher level CEQA document required – File an Environmental Application

**Seismic: Landslide Zone:** Does the project involve excavation, square footage expansion, shoring, underpinning, retaining wall work, grading – including excavation and fill on a landslide zone – as identified in the San Francisco General Plan?

*Exceptions: Do not check box for stairs, patio, deck and fence work.*

Geotechnical report required and a Certificate or higher level CEQA document required – File an Environmental Application

**Seismic: Liquefaction Zone:** Does the project involve excavation, square footage expansion, shoring, underpinning, retaining wall work, grading – including excavation and fill on either seismic, flooding, or liquefaction zone?

*Exceptions: Do not check box for stairs, patio, deck and fence work.*

Geotechnical report will likely be required. File an Environmental Application

**Serpentine Rock:** Does the project involve any excavation in a property containing serpentine rock?

*No exceptions.*

File an Environmental Application to determine the applicable level of CEQA analysis

**NOTE:**  
Project Planner must initial box below before proceeding to Step 3.

**Project Can Proceed With Categorical Exemption Review.**

The project does not trigger any of the CEQA Impacts and can proceed with categorical exemption review.

**GO TO STEP 3**

**STEP 3 PROPERTY STATUS - HISTORICAL RESOURCE**

Property is one of the following: (Refer to: San Francisco Property Information Map)

**Category A: Known Historical Resource** **GO TO STEP 5**

**Category B: Potential Historical Resource** ( over 50 years of age ) **GO TO STEP 4**

**Category C: Not a Historical Resource or Not Age Eligible** ( under 50 years of age ) **GO TO STEP 6**

**STEP 4 PROPOSED WORK CHECKLIST** ( To be completed by Project Planner )

If condition applies, please initial.

1. **Change of Use and New Construction** (tenant improvements not included).
2. **Interior alterations/interior tenant improvements.** Note: Publicly-accessible spaces (i.e. lobby, auditorium, or sanctuary) require preservation planner review.
3. **Regular maintenance and repair** to correct or repair deterioration, decay, or damage to the building.
4. **Window replacement** that meets the Department's *Window Replacement Standards* (does not include storefront window alterations).
5. **Garage work**, specifically, a new opening that meets the *Guidelines for Adding Garages and Curb Cuts*, and/or replacement of garage door in an existing opening.
6. **Deck, terrace construction, or fences** that are not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
7. **Mechanical equipment installation** not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way.
8. **Dormer installation** that meets the requirements for exemption from public notification under *Zoning Administrator Bulletin: Dormer Windows*.
9. **Additions** that are not visible from any immediately adjacent public right-of-way for 150' in each direction; does not extend vertically beyond the floor level of the top story of the structure or is only a single story in height; does not have a footprint that is more than 50% larger than that of the original building; and does not cause the removal of architectural significant roofing features.

**NOTE:**  
Project Planner must check box below before proceeding.

Project is **not listed:**

**GO TO STEP 5**

Project **does not conform** to the scopes of work:

**GO TO STEP 5**

Project involves **4 or more** work descriptions:

**GO TO STEP 5**

Project involves **less than 4** work descriptions:

**GO TO STEP 6**

**STEP 5 CEQA IMPACTS - ADVANCED HISTORICAL REVIEW** ( To be completed by Preservation Planner )

If condition applies, please initial.

- 1. Project involves a **Known Historical Resource (CEQA Category A)** as determined by Step 3 and conforms entirely to Scope of Work Descriptions listed in Step 4. (Please initial scopes of work in STEP 4 that apply.)
  - 2. **Interior alterations to publicly-accessible spaces.**
  - 3. **Window replacement** of original/historic windows that are not "in-kind" but are is consistent with existing historic character.
  - 4. **Façade/storefront alterations** that do not remove, alter, or obscure character-defining features.
  - 5. **Raising the building** in a manner that does not remove, alter, or obscure character-defining features.
  - 6. **Restoration** based upon documented evidence of a building's historic condition, such as historic photographs, plans, physical evidence, or similar buildings.
  - 7. **Addition(s)**, including mechanical equipment that are minimally visible from a public right of way and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
  - 8. **Other work consistent** with the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*  
Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*  9. **Reclassification of property status** to Category C
    - a. Per Environmental Evaluation Evaluation, dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
\* Attach *Historic Resource Evaluation Report*
    - b. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- \* Requires initial by Senior Preservation Planner / Preservation Coordinator

**NOTE:**  
If ANY box is initialed in STEP 5, Preservation Planner MUST review & initial below.

**Further Environmental Review Required.**

Based on the information provided, the project requires an *Environmental Evaluation Application* to be submitted.

**GO TO STEP 6**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preservation Planner Initials

**Project Can Proceed With Categorical Exemption Review.**

The project has been reviewed by the Preservation Planner and can proceed with categorical exemption review.

**GO TO STEP 6**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preservation Planner Initials

**STEP 6 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION DETERMINATION** ( To be completed by Project Planner )

- Further Environmental Review Required.**  
Proposed Project does not meet scopes of work in either:  
(check all that apply)
  - Step 2 (CEQA Impacts) or
  - Step 5 (Advanced Historical Review)

**STOP!**

Must file *Environmental Evaluation Application*. \_\_\_\_\_

- No Further Environmental Review Required.** Project is categorically exempt under CEQA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Planner's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Once signed and dated, this document constitutes a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines and Chapter 31 of the Administrative Code.

## Existing Requirements for Specific Project Types

With any amendment to Article 31 of the Administrative Code, the Department would pair notification of CEQA determination and notification of the right to appeal the CEQA determination with these existing mailed notifications.

### 311 Notification for Owners and Occupant in Residential Districts:

- Any expansion beyond existing building envelope (visible or not from public right-of-way)
- Addition of dwelling unit(s)
- Change of use
- Demolition or defacto demolition of an existing building

### 312 Notification for Owners and Occupant in Neighborhood Commercial, RTO and RED Districts and the Western SoMa SUD

- Demolition or defacto demolition
- New construction
- Expansion of building envelope
- Change of use to a bar, liquor store, walk-up facility, other large institution, other small institution, restaurant, limited restaurant, massage establishment, outdoor activity, adult or other entertainment use, fringe financial service use, or formula retail

### Additional Notifications to Owners & Occupants

- Discretionary Review request by the public per 311(d) 312(e)
- Staff DR for the loss of dwelling unit or medical cannabis dispensary
- Conditional Use for Wireless Antenna
- Office allocation
- Certificate of Appropriateness
- Changes to Sutro Tower

### Additional Notifications to Owners

- Conditional Use in commercial/mixed use district
- Downtown Permit Review
- Large Project Authorization in EN
- Variances by the Zoning Administrator
- Permit to alter historic building
- Institutional Master Plan Hearing