



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

October 5, 2012

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Notice of Availability of Environmental Planning's *Environmental Review Guidelines*

The Environmental Planning (EP) Division of the San Francisco Planning Department is pleased to announce the issuance of our *Environmental Review Guidelines* (EP Guidelines). This document, dated October 5, 2012, is either attached or can be obtained on EP's "Consultant Resources" web page, along with other related documents. (To access this document, go to <<http://ep.sfplanning.org>> and click on **Consultant Resources**, or click on the link <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1886>.)

The EP Guidelines describe the Planning Department's current requirements for the preparation of environmental review documents, specifically initial studies, negative declarations/mitigated negative declarations, and environmental impact reports. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist in the preparation of useful, organized, consistent, and legally adequate documents in a timely and cost-effective manner. The primary intended users of the EP Guidelines are Planning Department staff and professional environmental consultants, though others may find them to be informative. The guidelines apply in their entirety for all projects for which an Environmental Evaluation (EE) Application was filed on or after October 5, 2012. For projects for which an EE application was filed prior to that date, the guidelines will apply to the maximum extent practicable.

The EP Guidelines are an update to the Planning Department's 2008 *Consultant Guidelines for the Preparation of Environmental Review Documents* and reflect current EP standards and practices. Compared to this earlier guidance document, the changes in the EP Guidelines include:

- A new chapter providing an overview of the environmental review process, beginning with preliminary project assessment,
- A new chapter on initial study preparation,
- More detailed guidelines on the formatting of impact statements and mitigation measures,
- Specific guidelines on the formatting of responses to comments, including those for appeals of CEQA documents and in "responses to comments" documents (note the new naming convention),
- A new project management chapter that identifies tools that EP staff and consultants will be required to use to manage projects more efficiently, and
- More than 30 appendices with new and updated document templates.

Consultants who are in the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool will be required to send a representative to attend a mandatory approximately half-day training workshop on the EP Guidelines. The workshop will be scheduled in October and/or November and attendees will be offered

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a choice of two dates. Consultants who are in other Planning Department consultant pools (i.e., transportation, historic resources, and archeological resources) will be invited to attend as well, but the training will not be mandatory for those consultant pools.

We hope that you will find the EP Guidelines to be a helpful update and welcome your comments and suggestions on how to improve them further. Please send your comments to Lisa Gibson at (415) 575-9032 or lisa.gibson@sfgov.org. Thank you in advance for your review.