

Development Services Department  
offers informational brochures on the  
following topics:

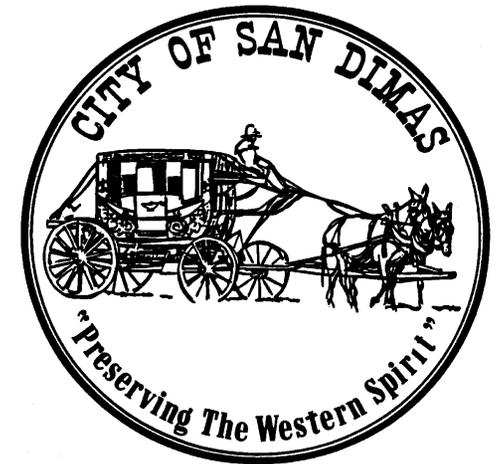
Artificial Turf Guidelines  
Banners and Temporary Signs  
CEQA and Environmental Review  
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Tree Preservation  
Variances  
Window Replacement – Town Core  
Window Signs  
Zone Changes  
Zoning Descriptions

*\*These brochures are generally intended to assist  
in the processing of application material. It does  
not necessarily provide every detail regarding  
Municipal Code regulations.*

UPDATED: 1/22/14

City of San Dimas  
Planning Division  
245 East Bonita Ave.  
San Dimas, CA. 91773

# CEQA and Environmental Review



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Mon-Thurs 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Fridays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

[www.cityofsandimas.com](http://www.cityofsandimas.com)

## WHAT IS CEQA?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a system of checks and balances for land use development and management decisions in California. It was enacted to minimize the negative effects of development on its surroundings.

## PRELIMINARY REVIEW

As with any development proposal, it is always recommended that applicants meet with a city planner to discuss the proposed project. In this pre-application meeting, the planner will explain all necessary city regulations and provide you with any application processing information.

After an application is submitted to the Development Services Department, a preliminary review will take place. Within thirty (30) days, the application is checked for its completeness. Incomplete applications are returned to the applicant for corrections. Complete projects will be reviewed to determine how CEQA applies. Projects that are not specifically exempt from CEQA must go through the Environmental Review Process.

## EXEMPTIONS

There are three basic types of exemptions, but generally, any project that can be shown to not have any possible significant effects is exempt from CEQA.

**Non-Projects** -- Projects are defined as any action that has a potential for resulting in physical change in the environment. Anything that does not fall into this category is considered a non-project.

**Categorical Exemptions** -- Minor projects such as room additions, remodeling, and tenant

improvements are categorically exempt because of their low impacts to the environment.

**Statutory Exemptions** -- Several types of specific actions have been granted exemption by the State Legislature. This includes ministerial projects such as building permits, business licenses, final subdivision map approval, etc.

A complete list of Categorical and Statutory Exemptions is provided in the "Guidelines for Local Compliance with CEQA" booklet.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### INITIAL STUDY

Once the Development Services Department determines that a project must comply with CEQA, an Initial Study is undertaken. This involves a checklist to identify all possible environmental effects that a project may or may not have.

The Initial Study includes analyses on land use and planning, population and housing, geologic problems, water resources, air quality, transportation and circulation, biological resources, energy and mineral resources, hazards, noise, public services, utilities and public services, aesthetics, cultural resources, and recreation.

Based on the Initial Study, the City will determine the need for a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### NEGATIVE DECLARATION

If the Initial Study shows that there are no adverse environmental impacts a Negative Declaration is prepared. A Negative Declaration may also be prepared if mitigation measures are taken to minimize all detrimental environmental effects to the point that there is no substantial impact.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR)

If it can be fairly argued on the basis of substantial evidence that a project may have significant environmental effects, an EIR must be prepared. The Initial Study is used to focus the EIR on areas of environmental impact.

The EIR is prepared by the City with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide the City Council with enough information to adequately decide on the environmental consequences. A good faith effort is made to ensure completeness and full disclosure. The EIR is written in plain language and graphics may be used to make the document easily understood by the public and decision makers.

A project **may not** be approved if the final EIR shows that there will be a significant environmental impact. However, the City Council may adopt a Statement of Over-riding Considerations if a project's economic and social benefits far outweigh the environmental consequences.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

Mitigation measures may be imposed on the Negative Declaration or the final EIR to eliminate any adverse effects. When this is the case, a monitoring/reporting program is also adopted to ensure all mitigations are being implemented.

## NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

Once a project is approved for which an EIR was prepared, a Notice of Determination must be filed with the County Clerk's Office. This is to allow the public to review the decision and make challenges within 30 days.