

Environmental impact guidelines explained

By Bruce Anderson

Valley Press Managing Editor

The state requirements for environmental impact reports (EIR) for construction projects which will have significant impact on the environment will add reams of paperwork to the current administrative procedures of the county planning department.

Planning Director Walter Monasch told the board of supervisors last week that EIR's will not necessarily be required of all building projects. Citing the construction of a single family residence as an example, Monasch indicated that some would require EIR's, while most others would not.

Who will determine the need for an EIR? Monasch explains it this way. All persons planning building projects will be required to complete a questionnaire regarding the effect of their project on the environment.

These questionnaires will be examined and if it is determined the project will have significant effect on the environment an environmental impact report will be required.

If examination of the questionnaire indicates the project will not have a significant effect on the environment, the action will be recommended for routine processing.

The questionnaire presented to the board of supervisors last week listed 20 questions which will be asked of applicants. They are listed at the end of this article.

Monasch points out that significant environmental effects can be either positive or negative. But, if the project is determined to have a major effect on the environment, then it must be processed through the environmental review committee.

The major factor in determining whether effects to the environment will be significant or not will be determined by checking the application against a list of presumptive exemptions.

These exemptions have been determined to have no significant effect on the environment unless a special situation exists.

The list of presumptive exemption includes the following items;

--Accessory structures such as awnings, patios, carports, garages, storage buildings, swimming pools and fences under six feet in height.

--All exterior and interior alterations to existing buildings providing the dimensions of the building do not change.

--Work required to be done as a result of code enforcement efforts of the county.

--Restoration of existing buildings which have been damaged by fire, explosion or vandalism.

--One-family, two-family, and three-family dwellings and minor structures to such dwellings provided the neighborhood is already developed similarly.

--Clearing of land by removing structures from the land, other than those with historical or archeological significance.

--Flat wall signs less than 100 square feet.

--Landscaping not involving any alteration in the natural contour of hillside land.

If the questionnaire filled out by the applicant indicated no effects on the environment other than those in the preceding list, then no EIR will be required.

If an EIR is required, then a complex procedure of evaluation and study will be undertaken. The result of this study will be the environmental impact report and a recommendation for final approval or disapproval by the committee.

If the committee recommends approval, the request would go to the board of supervisors, planning commission or other appropriate agency for the final decision.

Planning Director Monasch admits there will

very likely be changes to this procedure as time passes. It is a new task, for the planning department and problems are certain to develop.

"It will take patience on the part of applicants, the supervisors and my department," Monasch told the board, "until these procedures work smoothly."

Assessment questionnaire

The following questions will be on the questionnaire which applicants for building requests will be required to fill out.

1. Will the proposed project significantly change the present use of the project site or its immediate vicinity?

2. Will the proposed project result in the displacement of people?

3. Does the proposed project affect an historical or archeological site?

4. Is the project site, either in whole or in part, a habitat, food source, nesting place, or source of water for rare or endangered wildlife or fish?

5. Will the proposed project significantly affect fish life, wildlife, or plant life at the project site or in the immediate vicinity?

6. Could the proposed project materially change topography or existing features of baylands, shorelines, tidelands, aquifers or natural water courses?

7. Could the proposed project cause significant erosion?

8. Could the proposed project encourage development of neighboring undeveloped areas or intensify development of already developed areas?

9. Will the proposed project require a variance from standards or plans adopted by any agencies?

10. Does the proposed project involve the application, use, or disposal of potentially hazardous materials not normally in accepted use by the community?

11. Is the proposed project in a location where average ground slope is 30 percent or steeper?

12. Is the proposed project in a recognized flood plain?

13. Is the proposed project within 100 feet of a known fault trace?

14. Will the proposed project use cause the generation of sound energy levels at the property line of more than 3db. above average daytime noise levels in the immediate vicinity?

15. Will the proposed project use generate significant amounts of dust not now occurring in the community?

16. Does the proposed project significantly change the quality of air, water, or other natural resources of the county?

17. Could the proposed project overburden existing public utilities relating to sanitation, water supply, waste disposal, or storm water disposal?

18. Is the proposed project consistent with the County General Plan and its planning policies relating to the environmental and physical resources of the County?

19. Will the proposed project eliminate an existing recreational use at the project site?

20. Does the proposed project decrease public access to any public body of water or recreational area?



Football winners

San Lorenzo Elementary School fall intramural league winners in boys fifth and boys sixth grade football shown above are as follows: Chris Mehling, Jeff Maxwell, Casey Hogan, Tim Boynton, Scott Sayban, Courtney Standish, Paul Hady, Doug Wilson, John Andersen, Keith Baker, Mike Hudson, and Tom Anderson; Frank Baskins, Mike Stewart, Steve Bartels, Jimmy Barnes, Carry Standish, Jeff Wegener, Steve Anderson, Joe Tenkate, Don Peter, Ron Richardson, Tony Peretti, Kevin McClish, Jeff Graham, Bob Hensley, Ken Andersen, Andy Aubert, Jerry Davis, and Mark Keenig.

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