

2.8 Structuring Tiered Documents

The CEQA Concept of Tiering

The concept of tiering is addressed in *CEQA Guidelines Sections 15152* http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines/art10.html, and *15168(c)* http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines/art11.html and in *CEQA Statutes Section 21094* http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/stat/chap2_6.html.

"Tiering" refers to the coverage of general environmental matters in broad, program-level EIRs, such as a LRDP EIR, with subsequent focused environmental documents for individual projects that implement the program. The project environmental document incorporates by reference the broader discussions in the Program EIR and concentrates on project-specific issues. CEQA Statutes and the Guidelines encourage the use of tiered environmental documents to reduce delays and excessive paperwork in the environmental review process. This is accomplished in tiered documents by eliminating repetitive analyses of issues that were adequately addressed in the Program EIR and by incorporating those analyses by reference.

The *CEQA Guidelines Section 15152(f)(3)* http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines/art10.html provide that “[s]ignificant environmental effects have been ‘adequately addressed’ in a previous program EIR if the lead agency (in this case the University) determines that such effects:

- Have been mitigated or avoided as a result of the prior environmental impact report and findings adopted in connection with that prior environmental report; or
- Have been examined at a sufficient level of detail in the prior environmental impact report to enable those effects to be mitigated or avoided by site specific revisions, the imposition of conditions, or by other means in connection with the approval of the later project.”

Practical Considerations

Tiering allows subsequent environmental review to rely on the LRDP EIR for the following:

- A discussion of general background and setting information for environmental topic areas;
- Overall growth-related issues;
- Issues that were evaluated in sufficient detail in the LRDP EIR and for which there is no significant new information or change in circumstances that would require further analysis; and
- Long-term cumulative impacts.

Subsequent tiered environmental documents should describe the ways in which the project is consistent with the LRDP and LRDP EIR. In order to determine consistency with the LRDP and LRDP EIR, and the appropriateness and legal sufficiency of tiering for the specific project, the following questions should be answered:

- Is the proposed project included in the scope of the development projected in the LRDP?
- Is the proposed location of the project in an area designated for this type of use in the LRDP?
- Are changes to campus population that would result from the proposed project included within the scope of the LRDP population projections?
- Is the proposed project within the scope of the cumulative analysis in the LRDP EIR?
- Are the objectives of the proposed project consistent with the adopted objectives for the LRDP?

Subsequent tiered environmental documents should incorporate relevant information from the LRDP EIR including:

- A summary of background (setting information);
- Identification of applicable standards of significance; and
- Identification of applicable impacts and mitigation measures.

Refer to *UC CEQA Handbook Section 2.1.4* for a discussion of the type of subsequent tiered documents (Tiered Initial Study, Tiered Negative Declaration, Tiered Mitigated Negative Declaration, and Tiered EIR). Refer also to *Section 2.1.6* for a discussion of tiering and determination of significance. *Section 2.7* describes the structure of LRDP EIRs.