

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
LUEG DISCRETIONARY LAND USE PERMIT PROCESS
BPR**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q. What is the Discretionary Land Use Permit Process BPR?

A. The primary goal of the Land Use and Environment Group's (LUEG) Discretionary Land Use Permit Process Business Process Reengineering (BPR) effort was to substantially reduce the time it takes to process discretionary land use projects (e.g., the subdivision of land, major land use permits). Additional goals of the program included improving the quality of final work products (EIRs and technical studies), increasing the transparency of the process for both the public and project applicants, and decreasing overall processing costs. Changes were implemented without requiring substantive changes to existing land use and environmental regulations.

Q. What were the Major Components of the BPR?

A. In August of 2005, a BPR team met to thoroughly review the discretionary land use permit process and provided recommendations of the changes necessary to meet the BPR goals. An 18-month work plan was developed to implement these goals. The work plan required funding and necessitated changes to County policies that guide the administrative processing of discretionary land use projects. The work plan was vetted in multiple hearings of the San Diego County Planning Commission and ultimately approved for implementation on February 28, 2006 by the Board of Supervisors. The work plan was implemented in a three-phase, 18-month long process. The major components of the BPR work program included:

- Mandatory Major Project Pre- Application Process
- Development of Guidelines for Determining Significance for several environmental subject areas
- Development of Report Format and Content Requirements for several environmental subject areas
- Replacement of the Department of Planning and Land Use's (DPLU) pre-existing Environmental Consultant's List process with a new Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process that approves the most qualified Consultants to complete work on behalf of DPLU
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) requirement that defines the relationships between County staff, Consultants and Project Applicants
- Ongoing Training Program for CEQA Consultants
- Several process changes

Q. Is my project a “BPR” project?

A. Any discretionary project application submitted for a project on or after July 30, 2007 is subject to all components of BPR, however components of BPR may apply for projects submitted prior to July 30, 2007 as detailed below:

- As of January 1, 2007, a Major Pre-Application Meeting is required for applicable projects.
- Compliance with the new Guidelines for Determining Significance and/or Report Format & Content Requirements is required as detailed below.
- The requirement for submittal of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required for all projects submitted after July 1, 2006.

Q. What is the Major Pre-Application Process and for what projects does it apply?

A. As of January 1, 2007, any permit types that require decisions from either the Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors must complete the Major Pre-Application Process prior to submittal of a discretionary permit application. Mandatory pre-application consultations are expected to set reasonable expectations and identify major issues early in the process avoiding redesign, rewrites and additional work later in the process. Furthermore, better direction can be provided on policy interpretations at the beginning of the process, instead of the end. This should ultimately lead to shorter review times once a formal project submittal is made. For more information read the [Major Pre-Application FAQ Sheet](#) or contact the Zoning Counter at (858) 565-5981.

Q. When do the new Guidelines for Determining Significance and/or Report Format & Content Requirements for EIRs and technical studies apply to projects?

A. Technical studies and EIRs requested by the County after the original approval or subsequent update of any of the new subject area Guidelines for Determining Significance and/or Report Format & Content Requirements must use the guidelines and report format requirements when preparing technical studies. The original approval dates are detailed below:

Subject Area & Date Approved
Agricultural Resources 03/19/07
Air Quality 03/19/07
Airport Hazards 07/30/07
Biological Resources 09/26/06
Cultural Resources 09/26/06
Dark Skies & Glare 07/30/07
EIR Format & Content Requirements
09/26/06
Emergency Response 07/30/07
Geologic Hazards 07/30/07
Groundwater Resources 03/19/07
Hazardous Materials
& Existing Contamination 07/30/07

Subject Area & Date Approved
Hydrology 07/30/07
Mineral Resources 07/30/07
Noise 03/19/07
Revegetation Planning 07/30/07
Transportation & Traffic 09/26/06
Unique Geology 07/30/07
Vectors 07/30/07
Visual Resources 07/30/07
Water Quality 07/30/07
Wildland Fire and Fire Protection 03/19/07

Q. *When was the requirement to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) implemented and when does an MOU need to be executed?*

A. The MOU was implemented on July 1, 2006. All projects scoped on or after July 1, 2006, require an MOU to be executed for each technical study (does not apply to Fire Short Forms and *minor* stormwater management plans). MOUs are to be signed by both the applicant and the applicable consultant(s), and submitted with the first iteration review. County staff is also party to the MOU and provides all parties with the final signed copies.

Q. *Do I have to change my existing technical studies to incorporate the new Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format & Content Requirements?*

A. If the technical studies were requested prior to approval of applicable guidelines, the County currently will not require that the studies be updated. In the future, the County may reconsider the requirement to have old technical studies updated for projects that have shown little or poor progress.

Nonetheless, applicants are encouraged to consider using the new Guidelines and Report Format & Content Requirements because our experience has shown that reports in the new format are usually found to be adequate with fewer review cycles.

Q. *I have a project with DPLU and existing consultant(s) working on technical studies. A new list of consultants has been released; do I need to change to a consultant on the new CEQA Consultant List for Privately Initiated Projects?*

A. Consultants working on technical studies and EIRs requested by the County prior to the establishment of the new subject area consultant list may finish the work on those technical studies/EIRs for that project. For newly requested technical studies and EIRs, consultants must be chosen from the currently applicable [consultant list](#).

Q. *I am a consultant who is currently not on the CEQA Consultant List for Privately Initiated Projects. Can I still work on technical studies submitted to the County of San Diego for privately initiated projects requested after the release date of the new subject area lists?*

A. Consultants not on the list may only complete work for DPLU if a consultant who is listed approves, signs and takes responsibility for the overall quality of the work product.

Q. *When will the County post another Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the CEQA Consultant Lists for Privately Initiated Projects?*

A. The DPLU in conjunction with the Department of Public Works (DPW) will abolish and re-establish the lists for each subject area approximately every 4 years. The Departments will consider reopening lists (without abolishing) for new applications on an approximate annual basis. These RFQs will be posted on the DPLU website (http://www.sdcdplu.org/bpr_index.html), notices will be placed in a local newspaper and distributed to professional organizations associated with the subject area. Those interested in receiving an e-mail notice about upcoming RFQs should send an e-mail to dplu@sdcounty.ca.gov requesting to be placed on the RFQ Notification List.