

2019 Environmental Document Annotated Outlines Update: Summary of Changes and “Grandfathering” Guidelines

General Changes

Small corrections and updates have been added throughout the Environmental Document Annotated Outlines (AOs) as described below.

- The annotated table of contents (TOC) has been removed and an automatically generated TOC has been added. The information contained in the annotated TOC was moved to corresponding sections in the AO.
- A new section on “Access to Navigable Rivers” has been added to the “Project Alternatives” section in the joint CEQA/NEPA AOs.
- The “Topics Considered but Determined Not to be Relevant” section has been updated to include more details about the information required if a topic is included in this section.
- Header levels were adjusted in the Land Use and Community Impact sections to help with formatting for ADA compliance.
- “Regulatory Setting,” “Affected Environment,” “Environmental Consequences,” and “Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation” headers have been added to the “Parks and Recreational Facilities” discussion. Sample language for Section 4(f) resources was also added to this section.
- Additional information was added to the “Community Character and Cohesion” section regarding economic impacts and addressing homeless individuals.
- The “Environmental Justice” section has been updated to include instructions for addressing tolling projects.
- The “Visual/Aesthetics” section of the joint CEQA/NEPA AOs was updated to include information about using drought-resistant landscaping and recycled water when feasible, and incorporating native wildflowers and native and climate-appropriate vegetation into the planting design when appropriate.
- The “Cultural Resources” section has been updated to include regulatory language that can be used when the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement does not apply. Sample language for Section 4(f) resources was also added to this section.
- The “Air Quality” section was updated to reflect the June 1, 2018 Transportation Conformity requirements and additional information was added to the mobile source air toxics (MSAT) construction impacts guidance.
- The “Noise” section was updated to remove references to the 2006 Noise Protocol.
- The 0.5-mile radius required for analyzing Section 4(f) resources has been updated. The new Section 4(f) study area for parks, recreational facilities, and wildlife/waterfowl refuges should include properties within and immediately adjacent to the project limits and nearby properties to ensure that proximity impacts can be considered.

2019 Environmental Document Annotated Outlines Update: Summary of Changes and “Grandfathering” Guidelines

- Additional information about Section 6(f) resources has been added to Appendix A, “Section 4(f).”

Changes Related to the Updated CEQA Statute and Guidelines

- Additional information was added to the “General Information about This Document” pages to clarify that public notices shall specify the manner in which comments will be received and describe where documents incorporated by reference can be viewed in the joint CEQA/NEPA AOs.
- Additional information about defining baseline under CEQA has been added to the “No-Build Alternative” section.
- Additional information was added about the formulation of mitigation measures in the joint CEQA/NEPA AOs.
- Very minor updates were made to the Senate Bill (SB) 743 guidance in the “Traffic and Transportation” section regarding the use of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a metric for analyzing transportation impacts. This section will receive further updates upon completion of Caltrans guidance documents for the implementation of SB 743.
- The “Energy” section was re-written to reflect changes made to the CEQA Guidelines.
- The CEQA Checklist has been updated to reflect changes made to the CEQA Guidelines, including the addition of new questions for energy and wildfire.
- A new section on “Wildfire” has been added to address projects located in or near a state responsibility area or land classified as very high fire hazard severity zone.
- The “Climate Change” section has been extensively updated, including information about making a significance determination under CEQA. This section is now posted separately on the Standard Environmental Reference (SER) Forms and Templates webpage.

“Grandfathering” Guidelines

The Division of Environmental Analysis normally does not allow “grandfathering” when new AOs are released. A Fact Sheet summarizing the changes to CEQA was posted on February 1, 2019 and the new CEQA sections of the AOs were provided to Headquarters’ Environmental Coordinators earlier this year. Draft environmental documents that have not yet circulated must contain any relevant changes related to the updates to the CEQA statute and Guidelines. In recognition of the fact that this AO update is being posted near the end of the second delivery quarter, all other changes will take effect for draft environmental documents circulated after January 1, 2020, although Districts are encouraged to incorporate as many of the changes as possible prior to that date.