

## CHAPTER 10. REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR COUNTY PROJECTS

The SEA Program is a component of the County's General Plan, which provides the policy framework for how and where the unincorporated Los Angeles County will grow through the year 2035. As a leader in sustainability, the County will assess infrastructure projects that may have impacts to SEA resources when the development is located partially or entirely within a mapped SEA. This SEA assessment process for County projects within SEAs will ensure that the proposed activities sustain species populations and ecological services into the future through environmentally sensitive site design. This process will allow for the appropriate level of compliance with the least amount of impacts to the maintenance, operation, and future development of those facilities.

### GENERAL COUNTY DEPARTMENT SEA ASSESSMENT PROCESS

County Departments that propose activities defined as development within a mapped SEA are encouraged to participate in the SEA assessment process. Similar to private development, SEA review for County Departments is intended to assist in avoiding or minimizing impacts to SEA Resources. Development that is covered under a County master plan that is undertaken by private entities, such as construction of County master planned highways and master planned trails, should be submitted by the appropriate County Department for review as a County Project.

#### GENERAL REVIEW PROCESS

The County Department may use Regional Planning's online GIS application, or contact Regional Planning staff, to determine if a proposed ground disturbing activity will be within a mapped SEA. If so, the project manager at the County Department should contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation of the proposed activity.

At the end of the initial review of the proposed activity, the County Biologist will issue a recommendation letter which determines the following:

- a. need for any additional biological surveys to identify SEA Resources or evaluate the full extent of impacts;
- b. need for SEATAC consultation regarding impacts of proposed activities and/or appropriateness of proposed mitigation;
- c. ability of the proposed activity to maintain prescribed setbacks as described within the SEA Development Standards; and
- d. compatibility of the proposed activity with the SEA Program.

#### REVIEW OF EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ground disturbing activities in response to an emergency or for hazard management should be documented and communicated to Regional Planning. Following an emergency or hazard management activity, additional consultations may be initiated between County departments to address how to better coordinate and approach future similar activities or situations, or to discuss appropriate mitigation of impacts to SEA Resources, if needed. In these instances, the County Biologist will issue a recommendation letter, which may include recommendations for:

- a. additional consultations with SEATAC to determine appropriate mitigation for impacts to SEA Resources; or
- b. actions that could be taken in a future similar situation to avoid or minimize impacts to SEA Resources.

### NOTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

In addition to the general County Department SEA assessment process, County Departments may notify Regional Planning regarding activity within a mapped SEA on a project by project basis. The purpose of reporting development which may not need further review is to understand and disclose regular maintenance projects by County Departments that are in or adjacent to natural portions of the SEA which may potentially impact the SEAs, and to gain an understanding of this development. It is anticipated that development in this category could be moved to Activities Exempt from Review and Notification in future iterations of this guide.

### DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR)

Unless constructing new structures or grading within natural portions of a SEA, all maintenance, construction and other regular activities necessary to meet the standard operational needs at DPR facilities shall be exempt from SEA assessment. When a development project does involve significant removal of natural vegetation within a SEA, the DPR project manager will contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation, providing the following information:

1. project location
2. project scope or description
3. site plan
4. any photographs of the site.

If necessary, a site visit meeting with the County Biologist will be scheduled.

In response to this review, the County Biologist will issue a letter which determines the following:

- ❖ The compatibility of the proposed development activity with the SEA Development Standards and Findings, if applicable.
- ❖ Whether additional review through SEATAC is recommended to determine appropriate SEA Resource mitigation, when needed.
- ❖ Whether additional biological information is needed to provide further recommendations.

### DPR ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM SEA ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION

DPR will not need to notify Regional Planning of the following types of activities: 1) those that occur within already disturbed areas and will not result in expanded environmental impacts to the natural portions of SEAs, 2) those that are for the maintenance and operation of existing facilities, or 3) those that are for emergency or hazard management response.

Maintenance and operational activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. maintenance of existing landscaping including mowing and tree trimming;
- b. new landscaping and related irrigation;

- c. brush clearance;
- d. parking lot repair;
- e. health and safety related work such as slope repair and hazard removal;
- f. ADA compliance (path of travel, parking lot, restroom upgrades, etc.);
- g. Irrigation, plumbing, mechanical (HVAC) and electrical repairs;
- h. concessionaire maintenance and operational activities;
- i. temporary events (renaissance Faire, concerts);
- j. lake maintenance and remediation;
- k. ongoing upkeep, repair, rehabilitation, or reconstruction (in kind) of existing structures and facilities (park offices, gymnasiums, storage, restrooms, visitor centers, community centers, nature centers, sports fields, aquatic centers, etc.);
- l. addition to existing buildings and structures;
- m. installation of accessory structures, such as shade structures, picnic tables and benches, BBQ grills, play structures, fitness equipment, outdoor classroom, lighting, signage, fencing, etc.;
- n. grading that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas;
- o. vegetation control that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas; and
- p. trail maintenance.

### EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Activities which are for either emergency response or hazard management (such as fire, flood, or earthquake damage, etc.) are also exempt from prior notification and review, if time constraints would not allow for such review. These types of activities shall be reported to Regional Planning after they have taken place. Additional discussion may take place, if needed, to identify proper mitigation of impacts when needed.

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)

DPW development activities such as construction of new facilities or roads located in undeveloped portion of SEAs, which are not exempt under emergency activities, will be submitted for a SEA assessment by Regional Planning during the preliminary planning stages. Maintenance projects or other cash contracts, which occur within a SEA and require the discretionary action of the Board of Supervisors, will also be submitted to Regional Planning for SEA assessment. The DPW project manager will contact Regional Planning at [sea@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sea@planning.lacounty.gov) to initiate a consultation, providing the following information:

- a. project location map,
- b. project scope of work,
- c. environmental documents, if available,
- d. regulatory permit requirements, and
- e. any photographs of the site.

If necessary, a site visit meeting with the County Biologist will be scheduled.

In response to this review, the County Biologist will issue a letter which determines the following:

- ❖ The compatibility of the proposed development activity with the SEA Development Standards and Findings, if applicable.

- ❖ Whether additional review through SEATAC is recommended to determine appropriate SEA Resource mitigation, when needed.
- ❖ Whether additional biological information is needed to provide further recommendations.

### **DPW ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM SEA ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION**

DPW will not need to notify Regional Planning for the following types of activities, which are exempt from SEA assessment and notification: 1) development required immediately in emergency situations to protect buildings, infrastructure or human life, 2) development that occurs at the site of manmade areas that are already disturbed and will not constitute expanded environmental impacts to the natural portions of the SEA, and 3) activities that are for the maintenance and operation of existing facilities,

Maintenance and operational activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. replacement of headwalls at culvert entrance/exit,
- b. replacement of rock rip-rap along the bank of a stream to protect/prevent roadway from erosion/failure,
- c. removal of accumulated sediment and/or vegetation as preventative maintenance on streams at bridges or culverts,
- d. shoulder grading that extends beyond the public right-of-way,
- e. vegetation control that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas or the public right-of-way,
- f. removal of sloughage, slide material, and debris,
- g. repair and reconstruction (in kind) of existing retaining walls,
- h. inspection, repair, and replacement (in kind) of existing bridge elements,
- i. proactive sediment, rock, and vegetation removals under bridges as preventative maintenance,
- j. repair, reconstruction, or construction of new rail and timber walls,
- k. repair, reconstruction, or construction of new retaining walls

Other projects which may be exempt from initial review are Non-emergency activities routinely carried out by Public Works to maintain operational capabilities of Public Works' and Flood Control District's facilities. Unless an existing facility will be constructing new structures in natural portions of the SEA, all the maintenance, construction and all other regular operational needs at Public Works and Flood Control District facilities shall be exempt from initial review. This exemption also includes activities in the right-of-ways for roads and floodways. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. pavement maintenance (crack sealing, chip sealing, slurry seal, patching, resurfacing),
- b. shoulder grading that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas,
- c. vegetation control that does not extend beyond previously disturbed areas,
- d. tree trimming,
- e. repair or replace existing guardrail,
- f. inspection and cleaning of drainage facilities,
- g. cleaning beach drains and clearing existing access roads,
- h. repair and reconstruction (in kind) of existing retaining walls if within previously disturbed areas,
- i. inspection, repair, and replacement (in kind) of existing bridge elements that do not require encroachment into the streambed,
- j. repair and reconstruction of rail and timber walls that does not extend beyond previously disturbed area, and

- k. ongoing upkeep and repair at structures and facilities within SEAs, as marked on the SEA Development Map.

#### EMERGENCY AND HAZARD MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Ground disturbing activities which are for either emergency response or hazard management are also exempt from prior notification and review, if time would not allow for such review. These types of activities shall be notified to Regional Planning after they have taken place. Additional discussion may take place, if needed, to identify proper mitigation of impacts when needed. Mitigation of these areas disturbed will be treated as “Development subject to notification and review”.

An emergency activity may be defined as any activity necessary to restore operational capabilities of public facilities or activities necessary to protect human lives and properties after a major disaster event, such as earthquakes, flooding, fires, etc. In the event that emergency activities include construction of new facilities, a brief project scope of work and location map will be shared with Regional Planning after the fact. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- a. replacement of failed culvert pipe,
- b. construction of corrugated metal pipe risers after wildfires,
- c. restoration of failed road segment following a flood,
- d. removal of accumulated sediment, rock, and/or vegetation on streams under/at bridges or culverts if causing stream to flow on roadway,
- e. construction of debris trash racks, or
- f. placement of rock rip-rap along the bank of a stream to protect the roadway from erosion/failure.

#### NOTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT IN SEAS:

DPW will notify Regional Planning of any proposed development within or partially within a mapped SEA on a project by project basis. Further communication between DPW and Regional Planning may also include discussion of appropriate best practices for regular activities in SEAs, recommendations from SEATAC, and overall development activity within SEAs.

DPW's notification shall consist of:

- ❖ An Assessor's Property Number (APN) for the parcel or parcels affected
- ❖ A brief description or name of the type of development (for example: tree removal, construction of a storage building, road maintenance, etc.)
- ❖ The anticipated completion date for the development.
- ❖ The person or division to contact for information about the development.

This information shall be maintained in an excel table or GIS shapefile, and submitted to Regional Planning.