

General Information about the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA can be confusing; so we hope the following general information about the process will help Commissioners by clarifying the decision-making process for considering the proposed Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Corn Palace Residential Development Project.

CEQA was enacted in 1970 and requires local government agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a project, prior to taking action on the project. An EIR is the most comprehensive form of environmental documentation identified in CEQA.

Environmental Impact

Reports (EIR) are intended to provide an objective analysis of the environmental impacts of a project, and help inform decision-makers and the public. During the public comment period of the Draft EIR (DEIR), it is helpful to staff to receive comments regarding the adequacy of the DEIR. For instance, have the potential impacts been adequately considered? Is the data used in the analysis accurate? Is a reasonable range of alternatives to the project considered?

After this 45-day public comment period, public and the Commission's comment received will be compiled and responses will be prepared. Responses to comments will become part of the Final EIR for this project.

Public hearings to consider the Final Program EIR will then be held with a public hearing body (for this project it is the Planning Commission) for final certification of the EIR. It is important to note that an EIR does not recommend approval or disapproval of a project, but rather helps to support informed decision-making. Separate actions to consider the Corn Palace Residential Development Project itself will also be required in the future. In these future actions, other non-CEQA related impacts will be discussed.