CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. Caltrans determines whether the activity is a “project.”
   - Yes: STOP: No further action required under CEQA
   - No: Proceed to the next step.

2. Is the project ministerial?
   - No: Proceed to the next step.

3. Is the project exempt from CEQA?
   - Yes: Statutory Exemption or Categorical Exemption.
   - No: Proceed to the next step.

4. Is it clear that the project will have NO significant effect on the environment?
   - Yes: General Rule Exemption
   - No: Proceed to the next step.

5. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment? (No further action required if NO)
   - Yes: Caltrans prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.
   - No: Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.

6. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
   - Yes: Caltrans prepares a Negative Declaration (ND). See SER Chapter 35.
   - No: Caltrans determines from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.

7. Caltrans determined from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.
   - Caltrans prepares Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations, as applicable, and files a Notice of Determination (NOD).

8. File the Notice of Exemption (NOE). This is required for all projects on the SHS. See the policy memo “Mandatory Filing of Notices of Exemption for Projects Subject to CEQA.”

9. Complete the Categorical Exemption/Categorical Exclusion (CE/CE) Form. See SER Chapter 34.

10. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
    - Yes: Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.
    - No: Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.

11. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
    - Yes: Caltrans prepares a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). See SER Chapter 35.
    - No: Proceed to the next step.

12. Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.

13. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
    - Yes: Caltrans prepares a Negative Declaration (ND). See SER Chapter 35.
    - No: Caltrans determines from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.

14. Caltrans determined from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.
    - Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.
    - No: Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.

15. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
    - Yes: Caltrans prepares a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). See SER Chapter 35.
    - No: Proceed to the next step.

16. Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.

17. Did Caltrans determine from the Initial Study that there will be NO significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation?
    - Yes: Caltrans prepares a Negative Declaration (ND). See SER Chapter 35.
    - No: Caltrans determines from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.

18. Caltrans determined from the Initial Study that there may be a significant direct or indirect impact on the environment, after mitigation.
    - Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.
    - No: Caltrans Prepares Initial Study (IS). See SER Chapter 35. If it is clear that an EIR will be required, it is not necessary to prepare an Initial Study first.