



Isla Vista Pardall Gardens Renovation Project

CEQA Categorical Exemption Report

prepared by

Isla Vista Recreation and Park District
961 Embarcadero del Mar
Goleta, California 93117

prepared with the assistance of

Rincon Consultants, Inc.
209 East Victoria Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

January 2022



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1 CEQA Exemption Report

This report serves as the technical documentation of an environmental analysis performed for the proposed Isla Vista Pardall Gardens Renovation Project (project) located at 6514 Pardall Road in the unincorporated Santa Barbara County community of Isla Vista. The intent of this analysis is to document and demonstrate the project's eligibility for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption (CE), pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This report provides an introduction, project description, and evaluation of the project's consistency with the requirements for a Class 1 CE. The report concludes that the project is eligible for these exemptions.

1.1 Introduction

Section 15301 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that a Class 1 CE applies to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration to existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use at the time of the lead agency's determination.

CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300.2(a) through (f) list specific exceptions for which a CE shall not be used. These exceptions are as follows:

- a. **Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.
- b. **Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.
- c. **Significant Effect from Unusual Circumstances.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- d. **Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.
- e. **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- f. **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) evaluated the project in relation to the purpose of the Class 1 exemption category and these exceptions to an exemption to confirm the project's eligibility for the

exemptions (Section 2 of this report). None of the exceptions would apply to the project; therefore, the project is eligible for a Class 1 CE.

1.2 Project Site and Existing Conditions

The project site is located at 6514 Pardall Road, near its intersection with Embarcadero del Norte, in the community of Isla Vista in unincorporated Santa Barbara County. Figure 1 shows the regional project location and Figure 2 shows the project location and surrounding land uses. The project site is identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 075-121-008 and measures approximately 0.2 acre in size. The site is currently developed with an existing park (Pardall Gardens) that includes two picnic tables, a bench, and trash receptacles. The site has non-irrigated grasses and vegetation, fewer than five trees, and unpaved paths. Figure 3 presents images of the project site.

The project site is surrounded by multi-family residential development to the north, south, east, and commercial development to the west and southwest (Figure 2). Pardall Gardens is situated on the eastern end of Pardall Road before the road converts to a pedestrian and biking only roadway into the University of California, Santa Barbara campus. The site is approximately 2,000 feet north of the Pacific Ocean.

1.3 Project Description

The project would involve renovating the existing Pardall Gardens facility. Improvements would include the replacement of existing features and the installation of new features to enhance the park. Existing features would be replaced to provide Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility and improve overall site useability. Non-ADA accessible picnic tables and non-ADA accessible trash receptacles would be replaced with similar accessible features. The following park features would also be included:

- Park lighting
- Potential play structure (i.e., swing set)
- Shade structure
- Benches
- Walking paths
- Drought-tolerant landscaping

Figure 4 shows the project site plan.

Figure 1 Regional Location



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★ Project Location N

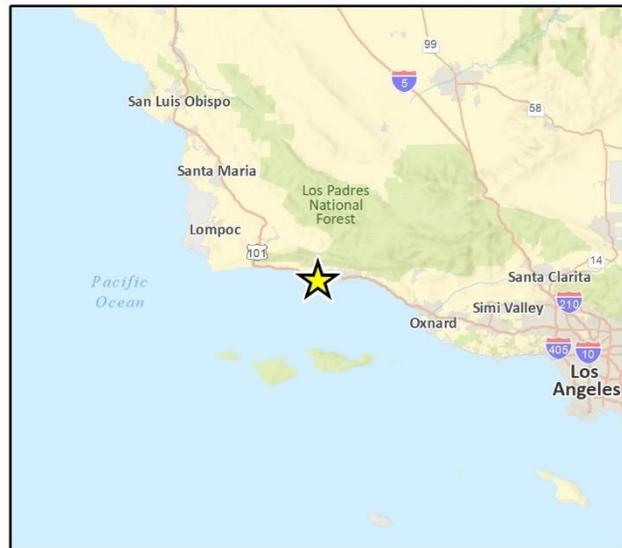


Fig 1 Regional Location

Figure 2 Project Site



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Fig. 2 Project Location

Figure 3 Images of Project Site



Photograph 1: View of project site looking northwest from sidewalk.



Photograph 2: View of project site looking northeast from sidewalk.

Figure 4 Project Site Plan



RECREATION ELEMENTS

Trails or Walking Paths

- P1. Decomposed Granite Path
- P2. Wood Deck
- P3. Wood Bridge

Landscaping or Irrigation

- L1. Existing Acacia
- L2. Drought Tolerant or Xeriscape Shrubs
- L3. Small Tree
- L4. Large Tree
- L5. Drainage/Infiltration Area

Gathering Spaces

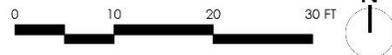
- G1. Picnic Table
- G2. Paver Plaza
- G3. Seat Wall
- G4. Light Pole
- G5. Gathering Pad
- G6. Bench
- G7. Bartop Seating

Other

- O1. Shade Structure



Pardall Gardens Conceptual Design 12-9-2021
 Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



2 Consistency Analysis

2.1 Class I CE Applicability

Section 15301 of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that a Class 1 CE is allowable for projects that involve “the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.” Section 15301(d) includes “restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety.” Section 15301(e) includes “additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than...10,000 square feet if...the project is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the General Plan and the area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive.”

The proposed project includes (1) development of new ADA-accessible paths; (2) minor grading and vegetation removal to improve overall utility of the space; and 3) addition of new park features. The site has no measurable building area and the project proposes no additional square footage. Therefore, the project would be under the 10,000 square feet maximum allowed under the Class I exemption. The project site is in an urbanized area where public services and facilities are available. The existing public services and facilities infrastructure, such as electricity for lighting, are therefore available to meet the maximum development permissible under the Santa Barbara County General Plan. The proposed project would not require wastewater or gas utilities and the minimal electricity needs for lighting would be provided by Southern California Edison.

The project site consists of the property located at 6514 Pardall Road, Isla Vista, Santa Barbara County, which is developed with an urban parklet containing very basic park infrastructure. The small site is surrounded by urban development, and as shown in see Figure 2; there are no wetlands, streams, aquatic or riparian habitat, scenic vistas, or other environmentally sensitive resources on the project site. Accordingly, the project site is not located in an environmentally sensitive area.

The minor additions and alterations to existing structures, as described above, would not be expected to significantly expand the existing use of the park, which would remain at its current size with nominally improved amenities, such as the shade structure. The proposed project would involve the replacement of existing features to meet current standards and increase ADA-accessibility. Therefore, the additions and alterations to existing facilities would meet the applicability requirements for a Class 1 CE pursuant to Section 15301 of the *CEQA Guidelines*.

2.2 Exceptions to CE Applicability

The applicability of CEs is qualified by the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2(a) through (f) of the *CEQA Guidelines*. In the discussion below, each exception (in italics) is followed by an explanation of why the exception does not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(a) ***Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*

The Isla Vista Recreation and Park District does not propose to adopt a Class 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 CE. There are no environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern that are designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies on the project site, such as critical habitat for listed threatened or endangered species (United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2021a). According to a search of the State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker database and the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database conducted in November 2021, there are no active designated hazardous waste sites on or within the project vicinity (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2021, California Department of Toxic Substances Control [DTSC] 2021a). The project site is located in an urbanized area and there are not critical environmental resources, such as wetlands or wildlife, on site (USFWS 2021a, USFWS 2021b). Therefore, this exception to a CE does not apply to the project.

15300.2(b) ***Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*

The proposed project would not result in significant environmental impacts and there are no other successive projects of the same type or scale planned in Isla Vista as the project site is surrounded by existing development. Land to the north, south, east, and west of the site is fully developed with existing residential and commercial uses. The nearest park, Anisq'Oyo Park, has the potential to be renovated at a future date. This park, approximately 400 feet southwest of the project site and is an existing park. Renovations at Anisq'Oyo Park would be similar in scale as existing facilities and would not result in substantial increased use of the park or cumulative impacts. There are no major reasonably foreseeable future projects in the vicinity that would result in significant cumulative impacts. Therefore, no significant cumulative impact would result from successive projects of the same type in the same place over time. This exception to a CE does not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(c) ***Significant Effect from Unusual Circumstances.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

The project consists of the existing Pardall Gardens grounds and is developed with park structures or maintained and landscaped park grounds. There are no wetlands, streams, aquatic or riparian habitat, scenic vistas, geological hazards, hazardous materials, or other unusual circumstances on or adjacent to the project site (please refer to the discussion of 15300.2(a) under *Exceptions to CE Applicability*, above).

The project site is a relatively flat urban parcel and there are no other unusual circumstances that exist. Due to the absence of unusual circumstances on the project site, the project would not have a reasonable possibility for a significant effect on the environment. This exception to a CE does not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(d) Scenic Highways. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*

The project site is not on or near a California Scenic Highway (California Department of Transportation 2021). US Highway 101 is mapped as an eligible state scenic highway on the segment of highway through Goleta and north of Isla Vista, but is not officially designated. US Highway 101 is located approximately 1.7 miles north of the project site, and not visible from it. Therefore, this exception to a CE is not applicable to the proposed project.

15300.2(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*

The project site at 6514 Pardall Road is not included on the DTSC EnviroStor database, DTSC Cortese List, SWRCB GeoTracker database, or U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Envirofacts database (DTSC 2021a, DTSC 2021b, SWRCB 2021, USEPA 2021). The project site is not included on a list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code and this exception to the applicability and use of a CE does not apply to the project.

15300.2(f) Historical Resources. *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

There are no historically significant structures on or adjacent to the project site. The park is not identified in the State register or by Santa Barbara County as historic, nor does the site or surrounding area contain historic resources as defined under California Public Resources Code Section 15064.5 (California State Parks 2021, Santa Barbara County 2010 and 2018). The proposed project would not remove permanent buildings. Therefore, this exception is not applicable to the proposed project.

3 Summary

Based on the above analysis, the Pardall Gardens Renovation Project meets all criteria for a Class 1 Categorical Exemptions pursuant to Section 15301 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. Furthermore, exceptions to the applicability of a CE, as specified in Section 15300.2(a) through (f) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, do not apply to the project. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA.

4 References

California Department of Transportation. 2021. List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways (XLSX). <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways> (accessed November 2021).

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