



Planning for Success.

July 10, 2023

Todd Young, RLA
Senior Project Manager
Verde Design
2455 The Alameda
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Re: Ramsay Park Renaissance Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) Evaluation of Changes to the Project Description

Dear Todd,

The *Ramsay Park Renaissance Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)* was available for public review between September 30 and October 31, 2022. After the IS/MND was released for public review, changes were made to the project description to address comments from Caltrans, which are further explained below.

EMC Planning Group staff have reviewed the proposed changes to the proposed project, located at Ramsay Park in the City of Watsonville. The following discussion provides a brief summary of the proposed project changes and addresses how the proposed changes do not alter conclusions in the IS/MND.

Original Main Street Parking Lot Design

As discussed in Section A. Background, under “Description of Project” and “Parking Lot Improvements (page 5) of the initial study, the City of Watsonville (City) previously proposed a new Main Street Parking Lot to be located along the northeastern corner of Ramsay Park and was to be accessed directly from Main Street (State Route 152). The new parking lot was to include 30 parking spaces to add parking capacity to replace capacity lost by the addition of the multi-use field. This new parking lot was also going to require the redesign of the multi-use path off Main Street to provide a pedestrian

connection to the new parking lot. A copy of the original illustrative design for the Main Street parking lot is included as [Attachment A](#).

Caltrans (District 5) submitted a comment letter in response to the IS/MND on October 31, 2022, which stated that access to Main Street (State Route 152) will not be allowed for the project including for the new proposed parking lot on the northeast side of the park. According to Caltrans staff, the new access locations would create additional conflict points on Main Street which is against Caltrans' current access management strategy of reducing conflict points. In addition, Caltrans staff expressed concern over diagonal parking on State highway right-of-way (Main Street).

Revised Project Description

Based upon the information provided, EMC Planning Group staff understands the following project description changes have been made to the proposed project in order to address Caltrans' comments.

The intent is to provide overflow parking for Ramsay Park at the Longview Drive parcel, to replace the previously proposed new parking lot on Main Street at the park. The Longview Drive parcel is currently a 375-foot long by 80-foot wide vacant, curbed grassy median area with ten (10) blue gum eucalyptus trees and a Pacific Gas & Electric power line running through the approximate middle of the site. An existing conditions illustrative plan of the Longview Drive parcel is included as [Attachment B](#). An illustrative site plan for the Longview Drive parking area, is included as an [Attachment C](#). In addition, the following improvements and project features will be added or amended from the original project description:

- Exiting utilities will be protected in place within the Longview Drive parking area;
- A new gravel parking lot with geosynthetic reinforcement surface (geosynthetic BodPave85 with pea gravel to fill each cell) will allow for approximately 26 standard parking stalls and two handicap stalls;
- A walkway will be provided to lead users to the adjacent sidewalks that connect to the City pedestrian circulation and crosswalks across Main Street to Ramsay Park;

- Storm water will be treated on site and minimal impervious surfacing will be added to the parcel; and
- No existing trees will need to be removed for this improvement at Longview Drive.

A copy of the revised illustrative design for the Main Street frontage is included as [Attachment D](#). An updated tree disposition illustrative plan of the Main Street frontage is included as [Attachment E](#).

IS/MND Impacts Analysis Review

The following is a brief discussion of each of the previously identified significant, but mitigatable, impacts from the IS/MND and how the revised project description does not alter the conclusions of the IS/MND.

Aesthetics

The proposed changes eliminate the proposed Main Street parking lot but retain the proposed walking path and move the proposed parking to Longview Drive. The previously-proposed Main Street parking did include parking lot lighting, and the proposed walking path still includes lighting appropriate for the path. The proposed parking lot on Longview Drive will not include lighting. Therefore, there will be a reduction in lighting associated with the project.

Therefore, the visual analysis prepared for the IS/MND would not substantially change and the level of impact and mitigation measures identified would still apply to the proposed project, and no further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The level of construction and operational emissions would generally remain the same as a result of the proposed project changes. Therefore, the air quality and greenhouse impacts analysis prepared for the IS/MND would still be adequate and the level of impact and mitigation measures identified would also apply to the Longview Drive parking area. No further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Biological Resources

The proposed changes would result in changes to the proposed Main Street park frontage by moving a proposed parking area to the Longview Drive location. A survey of the proposed parking area was conducted on December 28, 2022. No known sensitive biological resources are known to exist within the Longview Drive parking lot area and no trees will be removed. Therefore, the biological analysis prepared for the IS/MND would not substantially change and the level of impact and mitigation measures identified would also apply to the Longview Drive parking area, and no further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Monarch Butterfly Survey

Mitigation measure BIO-6 identified the need for a late fall/early winter survey of trees on the project site for use as monarch butterfly overwintering habitat. EMC Planning Group senior biologist Patrick Furtado conducted a monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) survey on December 28, 2022 to determine presence/absence for overwintering monarch butterflies at the project site and proposed parking area on Longview Drive.

As detailed in the *Monarch Butterfly Overwintering Survey Results for the Ramsay Park Renaissance Project* (EMC Planning Group 2023), all trees on the project site were visually scanned using binoculars for the presence/absence of monarch butterfly, with the most attention placed on the potentially impacted trees. Only one individual monarch butterfly was observed flying out of a coast redwood adjacent to the softball field. No other individuals or group clusters were observed leading to the conclusion that the project site is not used as overwintering habitat for monarch butterflies. No further actions are required to comply with measure BIO-6.

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Cultural and tribal cultural resource impacts associated with the proposed project and identified in the IS/MND would not be increased or decreased as a result of the project description changes. Cultural and tribal cultural resource impacts identified in the IS/MND are associated with largely associated with known archaeological sites located near Watsonville Slough, which is approximately 1,300 feet east of the proposed Longview Drive parking area. No known archaeological or other cultural resources are known to exist within the Longview Drive parking lot area. All applicable cultural and tribal cultural mitigation measures identified in the IS/MND would also apply to the

Longview Drive parking area. Therefore, the cultural and tribal cultural resource impact analysis prepared for the IS/MND would still be adequate and no further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Geology and Soils

Geology and soils impacts associated with the proposed project and identified in the IS/MND would not be increased or decreased as a result of the project description changes. Geology and soils impacts identified in the IS/MND are associated with the potential unearthing of paleontological resources. The geology and soils mitigation measure (GEO-1) identified in the IS/MND would also apply to the Longview Drive parking area and would mitigate the potential discovery of any paleontological resources in the Longview Drive parking area. Therefore, the geology and soils analysis prepared for the IS/MND would still be adequate and no further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Noise

Noise impacts associated with the proposed project and identified in the IS/MND would not be increased or decreased as a result of the project description changes. Construction noise best management practices into all applicable project bid, design, and engineering documents as identified in mitigation measure N-1 would also apply to the Longview Drive parking area to mitigate construction noise impacts. Therefore, the noise analysis prepared for the IS/MND would still be adequate and no further environmental analysis for the project with the proposed changes would be required.

Other Initial Study Topic Area

All of the other initial study topic areas (agriculture and forestry resources, energy, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, utilities and service systems, and wildfire) were also reviewed. The proposed changes to the project description would not change the conclusions in each of those sections of the IS.

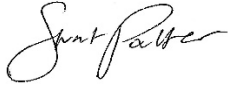
Conclusion

Based on our review of the proposed project changes, the conclusions, impact determinations, and mitigation measures identified in the IS/MND are still applicable

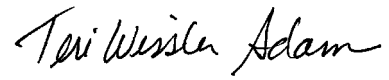
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and adequate, and would also apply to the Longview Drive parking area. No changes to the IS/MND are required and no additional environmental analysis associated with the proposed project will be required.

Sincerely,



Stuart Poulter, AICP, MRCP
Senior Planner



Teri Wissler Adam
Senior Principal

Attachments:

Attachment A - Illustrative of Main Street Parking Lot (original approach)

Attachment B – Existing Conditions of Longview Drive parcel

Attachment C - Illustrative of Longview Drive Parking Area (new approach)

Attachment D - Illustrative of Ramsay Park with new multiuse trail and landscaping along Main Street (new approach)

Attachment E - Changes to the tree disposition to Main Street frontage

Illustrative of Main Street Parking Lot
(Original Approach)



ATTACHMENT

Ramsay Park



Original overflow parking lot would have removed 25 existing trees while adding 31 additional Parking spots.

Parking Concept at Main Street

Existing Conditions of Longview Drive Parcel

B

ATTACHMENT

Existing Conditions at Proposed Location



Existing Conditions at proposed Longview parking lot location



Proposed Longview overflow parking lot

Original location of overflow parking lot

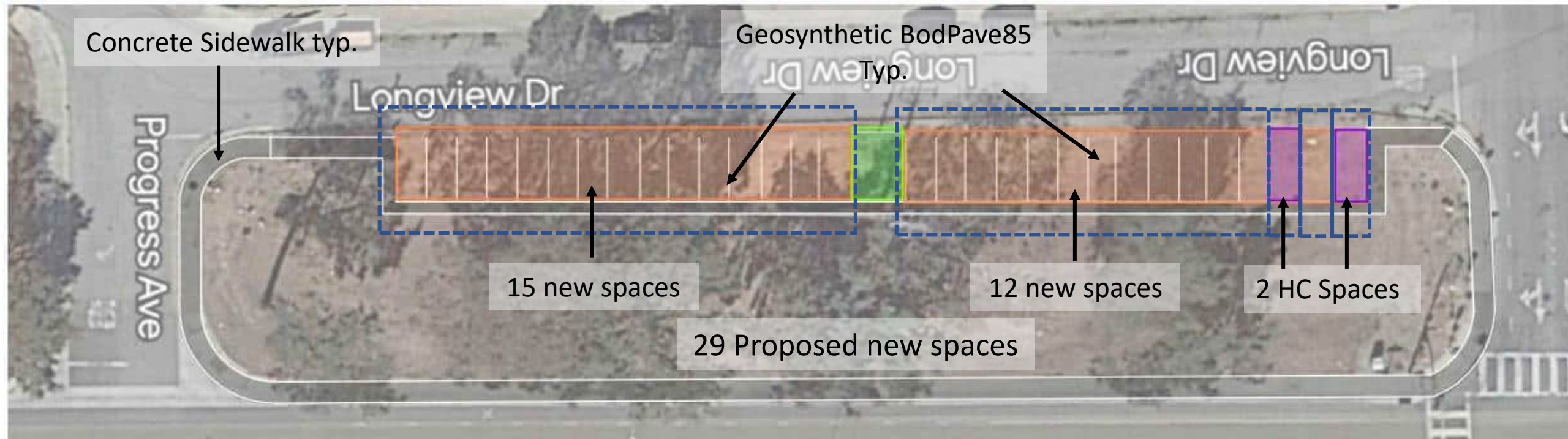
Watsonville Ramsay Park

Illustrative of Longview Drive Parking Area
(New Approach)

C

ATTACHMENT

Long View Drive Overflow Parking Lot



29 new spaces to be added in proposed Longview parking lot. 0 Existing trees to be removed.

Longview Parking Concept

Illustrative of Ramsay Park with New Multiuse Trail and
Landscaping Along Main Street (New Approach)



Ramsay Park



Proposed multi use path will remove 3 existing trees and save 22.

Multi Use Path at Main Street





Changes to the Tree Disposition to Main Street Frontage



Trees Saved Design outcome Comparison



Legend

-  22 trees to be saved by eliminating the original parking lot design
-  3 trees to be removed for proposed multiuse trail
-  Proposed multi use trail
-  Original parking lot design