

**CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
AND
SUPPLEMENTAL CEQA ANALYSIS**

FOR THE

**HOWE COMMUNITY PARK BRIDGE
RENOVATION PROJECTS**

FULTON-EL CAMINO RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

2201 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825

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CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION AND SUPPLEMENTAL CEQA ANALYSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District (FECRPD), as Lead Agency, proposes to renovate two existing bridges, Howe Park West Bridge and Middle Bridge, that span Chicken Ranch Slough at the Howe Community Park in Sacramento. The project entails replacement of each bridge's beams, joists and decks only; no additional construction is proposed. The existing concrete footings and paved pathway approaches to the two bridges would not be modified. Implementation of the project would not result in the removal of vegetation, nor would any modifications be made to the stream channel.

Because the project involves rehabilitation of existing deteriorated or damaged structures to meet current standards of public health and safety, the project would be exempt under CEQA Section 15301(c) and (d). A single Notice of Exemption will be prepared to cover replacement of both bridges.

This report serves as the technical documentation of an environmental analysis performed by Environmental Planning Partners Inc. for the Howe Park Bridges Replacement (project) in Howe Community Park, Sacramento. The intent of the analysis is to document whether the project is eligible for a Class 2 Categorical Exemption (CE) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15300. The report provides an introduction, project description, and an evaluation of the project's consistency with CEQA requirements for a Class 2 exemption. The report concludes that the project is eligible for a Class 2 CE.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title:	Howe Park Bridges Renovation
Project Location:	Howe Community Park 2201 Cottage Way Sacramento, CA 95825
Assessor Parcel Number:	278-0112-001(33 acres) and 278-0112-002 (4.34 acres)
Lead Agency Name and Address:	Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District 2201 Cottage Way Sacramento, CA 95825
Contact Person / Phone Number:	Emily Ballus Phone: (916) 927-3802
General Plan Designation:	Low Density Residential (Sacramento County General Plan)
Zoning:	O (Recreation)

LOCATION

The existing bridges are located within Howe Community Park at 2201 Howe Way in an unincorporated area of Sacramento County. The park is located to the north and east of the intersection of Cottage Way and Howe Avenue. The project site is located on Sacramento County Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 278-0112-001 (33 acres) and 278-0112-002 (4.34 acres), in the USGS Sacramento East 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle map (see Attachment A).

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The existing Howe Community Park Westerly Bridge and Middle Bridge were operated as pedestrian bridges crossing over Chicken Ranch Slough. However, due to the deterioration of the bridges, they have been deemed to be unsafe for pedestrian use. The bridges are now closed to traffic, and fencing is installed at each end of the bridges to prevent their use.

The park and the bridges are located at 2201 Cottage Way, north and east of the intersection of Cottage Way and Howe Avenue within the unincorporated Arden-Arcade community of Sacramento County. The topography of the site consists of undulating terrain, with surface elevations ranging from approximately 40 feet mean sea level (MSL) to 53 feet MSL. The section of Chicken Ranch Slough within the park is unchannelized, but throughout most of the suburban Arden-Arcade area it is confined to concrete or gunite channels or pipes. Vegetation in the park consists of irrigated lawns, large ornamental shade trees, oaks and other native trees, and riparian vegetation adjacent to the slough.

Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

Howe Community Park is situated in an area that includes residential housing and commercial uses. A Home Depot store is located across Cottage Way to the south. Howe Avenue Elementary School is located north of the northwest corner of the park.

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The FECRPD proposes to replace two existing deteriorated pedestrian bridges that cross Chicken Ranch Slough in the Park. The existing bridge beams, joists, and decking would be disassembled by hand and removed. The current concrete bridge footings would be retained and incorporated into the new bridges. As the existing bridge is disassembled, a backhoe and/or small crane would lift the existing bridge pieces out, and the resulting debris would be removed from the park and trucked off-site to a landfill.

The existing wood bridges would be replaced by new bridges using similar wood material. Additionally, the new bridges would be constructed with the same geometry, bridge style and soffit elevations as the old bridges. Because the soffit elevations would match those of the existing bridges, installation of the replacement bridges on the existing footings would not result in any changes in the flow capacity of Chicken Ranch Slough or modifications to its existing floodway area.

The new bridges, including beams, joists, and decking, would be constructed and installed on site using the existing footings; protective tie rods would be re-installed. The backhoes and/or small cranes to be used during construction would remain on the paved pathway and bridge apron.

Renovation of the two bridges would not require any new excavation, would not result in modifications to the stream channel, and would not involve any vegetation removal.

In the interest of public safety, a temporary fence would be installed surrounding the work zone at each of the bridges as well as the southeast parking lot of Howe Park that would be used to provide a marshalling yard for the storage of equipment and new materials.

Construction is expected to begin in January 2023, dependent on weather, and would last no longer than 90 days.

OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE REVIEW/APPROVAL IS REQUIRED

There are no agencies whose review and/or approval would be required.

3. CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

APPLICABILITY OF THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Approval of the Howe Park Bridges Replacement project would replace the bridge decks on two existing commercial structures with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity. It would not involve an expansion of the existing use at the project site - there would be no increased capacity for pedestrians or recreation in the Park. Further, as discussed below, none of the CE exceptions apply. Therefore, the proposed project meets the applicability requirements for a Class 2 CE pursuant to Section 15302 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

EXCEPTIONS TO APPLICABILITY OF THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) through (f) list exceptions to the applicability of the Categorical Exemption. The discussion below explains why each exception is inapplicable 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 FECRPD does not propose to adopt a Class 3, 4, 5, 6, or 11 CE, and these classes of CEs are not applicable to the proposed project. Because the FECRPD proposes to adopt a Class 2 CE, this exception to a CE does not apply to the Howe Park Bridges Renovation Project.

The project site is not included on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (DTSC 2022; SWRCB Geotracker 2022).

A records search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was conducted to assess biological resources, and to determine the likelihood of occurrence for special-status species or sensitive and regulated habitats on the project site. Results of the CNDDDB inquiry showed three species that could be present at the project site: 1) western ridged mussel, 2) western yellow-billed cuckoo, and the song sparrow

(“Modesto” population). The western ridged mussel is presumed extant, and would not occur in existing habitat at Howe Park. The song sparrow (“Modesto” population) is also presumed extant. Since no vegetation would be disturbed by the proposed bridge replacement project, no potential habitat for this species would be affected. The western yellow-billed cuckoo is determined by the CNDDDB to be extirpated. No sensitive or regulated habitats for these species are present on the project site.

There are no environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern in the project area or on the project site that are designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies, such as critical habitat for listed threatened or endangered species. The project site is located in a city park situated in an urban area featuring commercial and residential uses, and there are no critical environmental resources, such as wetlands or wildlife, on the site. Because there are no environmental resources of concern on or near the project site, and no contamination has been recorded on the project site (DTSC 2022, SWRCB Geotracker 2022), this exception to a CE does not apply to the Howe Park Bridges Renovation 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.

Cumulative impacts are defined in the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(b) as “successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.” In the case of the Howe Park Bridges Renovation project, the only successive project of the same type in the same place, over time would be the existing pedestrian bridges that would be renovated by the proposed project. However, with replacement of the bridges, the pedestrian bridges would have substantially the same purpose, design or capacity as the existing structures, and implementation of the replacement project would not result in any significant environmental effects. Therefore, the overall impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time would not be significant.

15300.2(c) Significant Effect. 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 proposed project involves the replacement of two existing pedestrian bridges; it would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The circumstances of the proposed project are not considered unusual because the project site is currently operating with existing pedestrian bridges, and the replacement bridge decks will not be larger than the existing bridges, nor would the replacement bridges be outside of the existing bridge or connecting pathway footprints. Therefore, there would be no significant impacts to natural resources or habitat with replacement of the pedestrian bridges. The proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. This exception would 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.

There are no state or locally designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the proposed project. (Caltrans 2022). Therefore, this exception would not apply 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 Department of Toxic Substances Control's Envirostor database and the State Water Resources Control Board's Geotracker databases were queried to identify any sites in proximity to the proposed project at Howe Community Park. The project site is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (DTSC 2022; SWRCB Geotracker 2022). Therefore, this exception would not apply to the proposed 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.

A record search of the files of the California Historical Resources Information System, Northern California Information Center was requested to assess potential historical and prehistoric resources on the project site. The resulting report disclosed that there are no known cultural or historic resources on or near the project site (NCIC 2022). Further, the proposed project involves no excavation, and would take place within the footprint of the existing bridges and pedestrian paths; no additional ground disturbance would be required.

Because there would be no ground disturbance associated with the project, no known cultural resources would be adversely affected. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or cultural resource.

4. LITERATURE CITED

California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), North Central Information Center. Records Search Results for Howe Park Bridges Restoration Project, October 13, 2022.

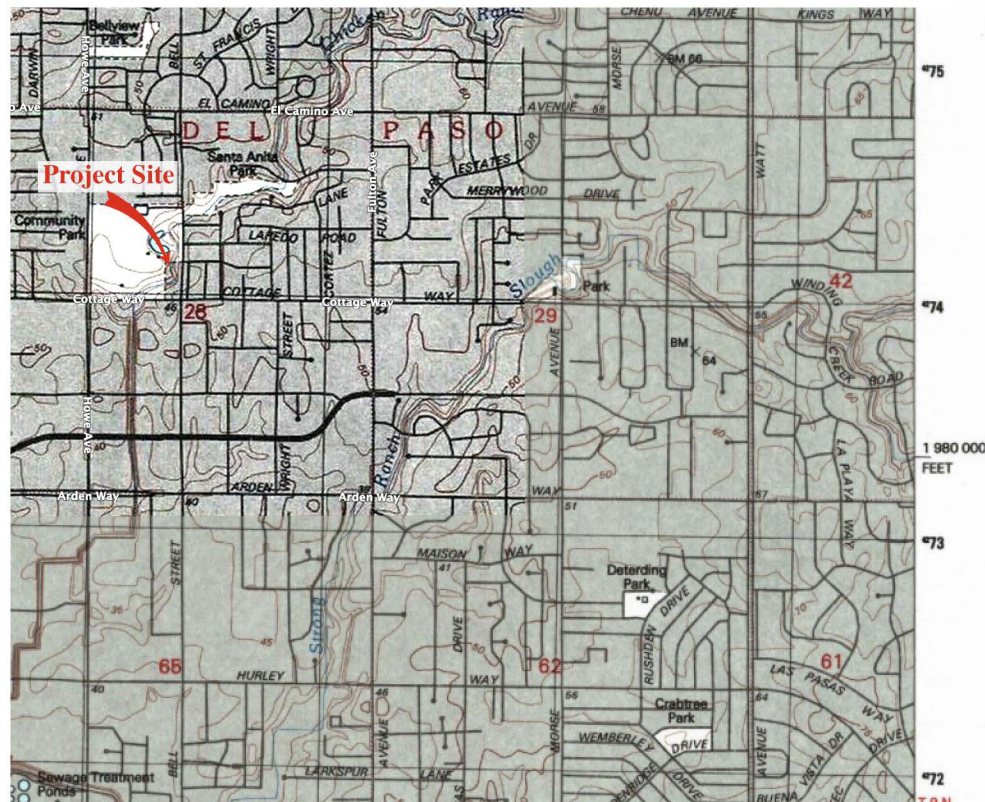
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Produced by the United States Geological Survey

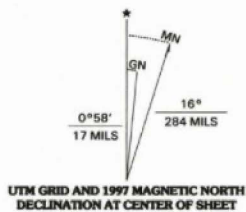
Topography compiled 1948. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1992. Public Land Survey System current as of 1967 Survey Control current as of 1948. Contours that conflict with updated major features are dashed

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 10 10 000-foot ticks: California Coordinate System of 1983 (zone 2)

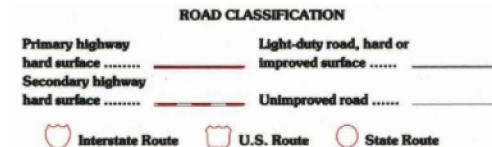
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

Dotted land lines established by private survey

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048



SACRAMENTO EAST, CA

1992

DMA 1761 III SW-SERIES V895

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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