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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: COUNTY CLERK OF THE BOARD
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
105 E. ANAPAMU STREET
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101

FROM: CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING DIVISION
P.O. BOX 1990
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93102-1990

Project Title: Cater Water Treatment Plant's Finished Water Reservoir Resiliency Project
Project Applicant: City of Santa Barbara
PLN Number: N/A
Assessor's Parcel Number: 055-171-007, 055-172-028, 055-172-030
Land Use Zone: RS-1A
Projection Location (Specific): Project is located at 1150 San Roque Road in the City of Santa Barbara.

Project Location: City of Santa Barbara

Project Description:

The Project consists of the replacement of the existing sludge drying bed with a more efficient 2.5-million-gallon (MG) chlorine contact basin at the Cater Water Treatment Plant, along with upgrades to the plant's existing finished water reservoir and sludge drying bed. The replaced equipment is located within the existing developed area, therefore, there is no change to the footprint. The Project is expected to affect Cater's parcel Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 055-171-007, along with two additional parcels south of the Cater Water Treatment Plant and San Roque Road as a proposed staging area APNs 055-172-028 and 055-172-030. The existing finished water reservoir will be modified to connect the proposed contact basin to the plant hydraulically and to strengthen the existing reservoir's structure. The upgrades to the finished water reservoir will bring this component to meet modern standards, there is no change in facility capacity. The existing Solids Recovery Basin (SRB) # 3 and retaining wall adjacent to the reservoir will be demolished to make space for a chlorine contact basin. The existing gravel road along the west edge of the water treatment plant will be extended to connect the road to the south portion of the plant. The existing roadway will be improved to allow for internal site access with heavier vehicles while still maintaining the permeability characteristics of the roadway. The new portion of the roadway will have the same characteristics. The minor roadway improvements are ancillary to the primary use, and do not expand or increase capacity of the primary use. Additionally, electrical conduits and two pipes located under the existing paved accessway will be rerouted to avoid interference with the proposed contact basin and placed under the improved road. The existing sludge drying bed will be modified to improve access for solids storage and removal. A new biofiltration basin and associated stormwater piping will be installed to manage stormwater in the project area. The Project also includes the installation of ground mounted solar panels with approximately 600 kilowatts (kW) production area to offset roughly half of the power

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demand of the Plant and improve energy efficiency. The solar panels will be installed in a ballasted racking system where concrete blocks are placed in the system to weigh down the solar array.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Santa Barbara
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Santa Barbara
Lead Agency Contact: Kaitlin Mamulski Telephone: (805) 897-2685

Exempt Status: Exempt under CEQA Sections § 15301 (b) and (d), and 15302 (c)

Reason Why Project is Exempt:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (b) and (d), Existing Facilities. This Project meets the Section 15301 Existing Facilities Class 1 (b) categorical exemption, because the Project includes replacement of existing publicly owned facilities used to provide public utility services. The Project meets Section 15301 Existing Facilities Class 1 (d) categorical exemption, because the Project involves upgrades to facilities and equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (c), Replacement or Reconstruction. This project meets Section 15302 Minor Alterations to Land Class 2 (c) categorical exemption, because the Project includes replacement of existing utility systems and facilities which does not result in an expansion of capacity.

Construction is anticipated to last longer than 18 months and an Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memo was prepared for the project. Project-generated construction emissions would not exceed SBCAPCD's emission-based significance thresholds for ROC, NOx, CO, SO2, PM10, or PM 2.5. Based on the considerations in the technical memo, the project would not result in a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions of nonattainment pollutants, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

The Master Environmental Assessment (MEA) Report states the site is located within a prehistoric watercourse buffer. As such a Cultural and Archaeological Resources Assessment Report has been prepared by Dudek. The recommendations included in the report such as Workers Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) Training, On-Call and Conditional Archaeological Construction Monitoring, and Inadvertent Discovery of Archaeological Resources Standards have been incorporated into the project. These measures would ensure the proper treatment of any cultural resources and human remains encountered during ground disturbing activities. With the proper implementation of the prescribed measures, the potential impact to cultural resources is considered less than significant.

The City's MEA shows that various biological resources of concern may be located within or adjacent to the project site, including riparian habitats, wildlife movement corridors, and sensitive vegetation communities. No tree removal is proposed. A Biological Resources Assessment Report has been prepared by Dudek dated May 2022. The report provides a site-specific biological assessment for this project site. The project site contains minimal sensitive biological resources, with the following resources of most particular concern: protected nesting birds, jurisdictional aquatic resources along San Roque Creek, and sensitive vegetation communities (e.g., coastal sage scrub, oak woodlands) outside the fenced treatment plant. The report contains the following impact minimization measures: Arborists Assessment, Delimiting Construction Area, Worker Education Awareness Program, Biological Monitoring and Reporting, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, and Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Surveys and Buffers. With the proper implementation of the minimization measures, the potential impact to biological resources is considered less than significant.

The project boundary is 200 feet from the San Roque Creek's top of bank. Coast Live Oak woodland separates the project boundary from the creek. No sensitive vegetation communities are anticipated to be impacted, and no trimming or removal of riparian habitat associated with San Roque Creek is proposed. Inadvertent temporary impacts to sensitive communities may occur if construction activities accidentally trim vegetation or impact tree root zones. The City's

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General Plan and Municipal Code includes policies for protecting riparian woodlands, native trees, and oaks. An approximately 6-foot buffer from tree driplines are recommended to avoid impacts to the root zone. Any inadvertent ground disturbance occurring under the driplines of individual oaks may result in damage to roots and result in injury or mortality to these plant species. Therefore, MM BIO-1 (Arborist Assessment), MM BIO-2 (Delimiting Construction Area), MM BIO-3 (Worker Education Awareness Program), and MM BIO-4 (Biological Monitoring and Reporting) will be incorporated to avoid potential direct impacts to sensitive vegetation communities and individual oak trees.

The project boundary is approximately 600 feet from a mapped front country trail. Existing structures, trees, and fencing block the view of the project from the trail. The project boundary is approximately 200 feet from an unmapped trail, and approximately 80 feet higher in elevation. Topography and vegetation block the view of the project from the trail. The project would not impede the use of either trail.

A portion of parcel 055-171-007 contains a fault hazard zone "Apparently Active – Holocene age", however, it is not within the project area and is not anticipated to be risk.

The project is in a fire risk zone (the Foothill Zone). The nearest fire station (Fire Station No. 4). is 1.4 mi from the facility. The project presents a low probability of ignition and would not increase the fire risk for the surrounding areas.

There are no sensitive noise receptors within 200 feet of the project and the site is not located in an area with ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA, however, per the Noise and Vibration Memorandum it is anticipated that there will be short-term construction related noise. Temporary construction noise associated with the project will be louder than the pre-existing ambient sound levels during daytime hours, however, predicted project construction noise levels for each phase of onsite activities would still be compliant with the 80dBA 8-hour threshold and construction activities would take place within the allowable hours of 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. As such, construction noise impacts are anticipated to be less than significant, and no mitigation measures are required.

The project's aboveground features, such as the solar panels and chlorine contact basin, would not be visible from the nearest road (San Roque Road) and trail (Jesusita trail). Although a portion of the parcel 055-171-007 contains a visual hillside, the project area is outside of the visual hillside area and will not have any impacts on visual resources. Existing vegetation, topography, access restrictions, and fencing obscure the project.

In conclusion, the proposed modernization Project is not anticipated to result in any significant impacts towards the environmental resources, therefore, the Public Works Department recommends that the Project Planner consider this Project as exempt, as defined in the CEQA review process classified under the Repair and Maintenance and Replacement of Existing Facilities exemptions per Section 15301 Existing Facilities Class I (b) and (d) and 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction Class 2 (c) per the State CEQA Guidelines.

Kaitlin Mamulski

Environmental Analyst Signature:

Date: 2/15/2023