



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

- PROJECT TITLE:** 520 Sand Hill Road Playground Renovation
- PROJECT LOCATION:** 520 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto, CA 94304 (APN #142-02-025)
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The proposed project would involve modifications to the existing landscape, hardscape, and at grade play structures at the existing Ronald McDonald House. These modifications include new native landscaping, surface level hardscape walkways, and at grade play structures.
- NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING THE PROJECT:** City of Palo Alto
- NAME OF PERSON OR GROUP CARRYING OUT PROJECT:** Thomas Klope Associates – ATTN: Tom Klope
1580 W. El Camino Real, Suite 13
Mountain View, CA 94040
- EXEMPT STATUS** (check one)
- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)
 - Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
 - Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
 - Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines §15301 (Existing Facilities); 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction)
 - Statutory Exemptions.
-

**REASONS WHY
PROJECT IS EXEMPT:**

See Attachment A

PROJECT CONTACT:

Garrett Sauls
Planner, Department of Planning and Development Services
Garrett.Sauls@CityofPaloAlto.org; (650) 329-2471

IF FILED BY APPLICANT:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Declare if a Notice of Exemption has been filed by the public agency approving the project

Yes

N/A

Garrett Sauls
Signature (Public Agency)

Planner
Title

2/6/2024
Date

ATTACHMENT A: Documentation of Project's Eligibility for Class 1 and 2 Exemptions Under CEQA

The City has determined that the proposed Playground Renovation at 520 Sand Hill Road Project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the Class 1 (Existing Facilities) and Class 2 (Replacement or Reconstruction) Exemptions.

CEQA Guidelines §15301 reads: "Class 1 consists of 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."

CEQA Guidelines §15302 reads: "Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, including but not limited to: (b) *Replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity.*"

The information herein documents the project's compliance with these exemptions in addition to confirming that no exceptions to the exemptions, as outlined in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2, apply to the project.

Eligibility for Exemption

The Project is eligible for a Class 1 (15301) and Class 2 (15302) exemption because it consists of the renovation of an existing play area by removing and replacing the existing landscaping and hardscaping on site. An existing play structure will be removed and a water fountain and play streetlight will be installed in the play area. There are no other physical changes proposed to the site, therefore, the replacement of the existing play area would be consistent with both the Class 1 and Class 2 exemptions.

Exceptions to the Exemptions

The City is aware that there are six categories or exceptions that preclude the use of Categorical Exemptions, as listed in CEQA Guidelines 15300.2. These categories, followed by the reason(s) the City believes they are not applicable to this project, are as follows:

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 may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant

The proposed project would be located on an existing developed site, most of which is currently utilized as an overnight care home. The project site is located within a developed area; while the Steelhead Trout and Northern Harrier are known to occur nearby the project site, the project only seeks to remove existing play structures, artificial turf, and concrete pavement outside of the creek. No trees are proposed for removal that might affect nesting birds and the project will not modify the stream bank area.

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 project is a stand-alone renovation project that would not be completed in multiple phases that could result in a cumulative impact over time.

15300.2(c) Significant Effect. There are no unusual circumstances creating the possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment pursuant to CEQA.

There is nothing unique about the project that would qualify as an unusual circumstance as the project modifies an existing playground. Although the site has known archeological and tribal cultural resources, there are many sites along San Francisquito Creek known to be sensitive for archeological and tribal cultural resources. The project includes surface level work at a maximum depth of 3 feet. Known resources have been found in other areas of the site at a depth of 4 feet or greater. As part of the project, the applicant proposes to have an archeological and native American monitor on site and to prepare a monitoring plan prior to construction. With these proposed project features incorporated into the project, the project would not have a significant impact due to an unusual circumstance.

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, with 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 visible from a scenic highway. I-280 and Skyline Blvd (HWY 35) are the only State scenic highways in Palo Alto and they are not visible from the project site.

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 site is not listed as a Hazardous Waste generating site nor does it have a remedial action order to clean up existing waste on site. Therefore, this provision does not apply.

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 an historical resource.

There are no historic resources listed or that are known to be eligible for listing within the work area. See also the discussion above under unusual circumstances regarding archeological and tribal cultural resources.