

## CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:** County Clerk  
County of Humboldt  
825 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

Office of Planning Research  
State Clearinghouse

**FROM:** City of Eureka, Lead Agency  
Development Services - Planning  
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**PROJECT TITLE:** Herrick Avenue “Welcome to Eureka” Monument Sign and Wildflower Planting

**PROJECT APPLICANT:** City of Eureka Economic Development and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

**PROJECT LOCATION:** At the southern gateway to the City on Highway 101, within the southeast Herrick Avenue gore area between Highway 101 and the Herrick Avenue exit ramp.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The City of Eureka, in conjunction with Caltrans, is proposing to install a gateway monument sign reading “Welcome to Eureka” and plant wildflowers within the southeast Herrick Avenue gore area (i.e. the space between a through roadway and an exit ramp) between Highway 101 and the Herrick Avenue exit ramp. The proposed project is indented to complement the recently completed Herrick Overpass Murals project and further beautify the infrastructure and provide a sense of place while entering the City of Eureka from the south.

Specific improvements include installing a free-standing monument sign, which will be approximately 4.2 feet (50 inches) tall by 10.6 feet (127.5 inches) long and 8 inches wide, totaling 44.52 square feet (sf) in sign area, and surrounding it with rock mulch, and clearing and preparing 9,700 square feet of land (surrounding the sign and rock mulch) for native wildflower planting. No existing trees will be removed for the project.

Preparation and installation of the monument sign, rock mulch, and wildflower planting will require pickup trucks, power operated tools, outdoor lighting and necessary hand tools. An appropriate traffic control plan will be employed to provide access through and around the work area when necessary. Public service announcements will advise the public of the planned

construction via Caltrans Public Information Officer; no long duration road closures will occur. Traffic will likely shift lanes, but will continue through the work areas.

The project is located near the Elk River and Swain Slough, an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (EHSA). Therefore, the following Best Management Practices (BMP's) will be employed during construction activities to minimize any potential negative impacts to, and ensure protection of, the nearby ESHAs:

1. All ground-disturbing activities shall occur during dry weather only.
2. All on-site stockpiles of construction materials and other materials shall be contained at all times and shall be covered during storm events to minimize discharge of sediments and other pollutants.
3. All spoils will be handled, stockpiled, and stored as if the spoils are contaminated and will be transported to an approved permitted location to be identified by the contractor and approved by the City prior to use.
4. To ensure construction occurs in designated areas and does not impact an ESHA, the boundaries of the work area adjacent to the wetlands and other sensitive habitat shall be physically demarcated such as with fencing or flagging.
5. For any location adjacent to a wetland/ESHA, straw waddles or other appropriate barriers to control/prevent unanticipated runoff or erosion will be placed between the work area and the wetland/ESHA.
6. No construction materials, debris, or waste will be placed or stored where it may be subject to entering coastal waters or wetlands.
7. If work is performed at night, lighting will be the minimum required to illuminate the work area, will be shielded to avoid glare, and directed downward onto only the roadway prism.
8. Staging and storage of construction equipment and materials will occur on paved or gravel surfaces at least 50 feet from coastal wetlands, drainage courses, and storm drain inlets.
9. Fuels, lubricants, and solvents will not be allowed to enter coastal waters or wetlands. All equipment used during construction will be free of oil and fuel leaks at all times. Any fueling, equipment maintenance, concrete washout, and washing of construction equipment will occur at least 100 feet away from coastal waters.
10. Hazardous materials management equipment including oil containment booms and absorbent pads will be available immediately on-hand at each work area. Any accidental spill will be immediately contained and cleaned up.

**EXEMPTION FINDINGS:** The City of Eureka as Lead Agency has determined that the above described activity is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Lead Agency has further determined the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the following categorical exemption: Class I Existing Facilities (Section 15301), Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Section 15303), and Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land (Section 15304).

The project qualifies for Class I exemption because it involves the minor alteration to topographical features within an existing Caltrans public facility (gore area) to install the monument sign and new native wildflower landscaping, which is a negligible expansion of use. The proposed 44.52-sf monument sign is considered a small accessory structure to the existing Caltrans roadway facility, therefore it is also exempt pursuant a Class 3 exemption. Additionally,

the project qualifies for the Class 4 exemption because minor grading is proposed to install the monument sign and new native wildflower landscaping within an existing Caltrans facility without the removal of the existing healthy and mature trees. Further, the Lead Agency has determined that use of the categorical exemption is not barred by one of the exceptions set forth in Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines.

The material supporting the above finding is on file with the City of Eureka's Development Services Planning Division. Copies of the documents related to the evaluation of this project are available for review upon request at the City of Eureka, 531 K Street, Eureka, CA 95501.

  
Caitlin Castellano, Senior Planner, City of Eureka

December 5, 2023  
Date