

Attachment of Notice of Exemption from CEQA

Project Description

The City of Patterson is proposing to conduct routine maintenance within Salado Creek to address overgrown vegetation, including woody and herbaceous vegetation; removal of flood-deposited vegetation that substantially obstructs (or could obstruct) water flow or poses as a potential safety hazard; trash/debris removal; erosion control; and managing sediment accumulation. The objective of the ongoing routine maintenance is to help maintain low-growing vegetation for fire suppression purposes and to maintain a constant flow of water during the rainy season to prevent flooding. The routine maintenance plan would include year-round vegetation removal, including a mix of manual and mechanical weed abatement from the top of bank, working downward into the creek bed. Vegetation removal will take place in all reaches of the creek.

The routine maintenance plan would include dredging one reach of Salado Creek, between Highway 33 and the inflow trash rack at Ramos Storage. Dredging associated with the routine maintenance plan would include removal of silt that builds up during the year which increases the potential for flooding and overflowing onto the adjacent Highway 33. Dredging within the reach would occur once per year and utilize a 65-foot boom excavator to remove excess sediment and vegetation. Maintenance activities associated with dredging would occur on one day and are proposed between September through December.

Justification for CEQA Exemption (Class 1, Category 15301 Existing Facilities) (Class 8, Category 15308 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for the Protection of the Environment)

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, exempts actions that consist of maintenance of topographic features involving negligible or no expansion of existing former use. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use.

Separately, CEQA Guidelines Section 15308, exempts actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by State or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.

The proposed project would conduct routine maintenance for the protection of the environment, specifically related to fire fuel load management and flood management. Maintenance would be conducted within Salado Creek to address overgrown vegetation, including woody and herbaceous vegetation; removal of flood-deposited vegetation that substantially obstructs (or could obstruct) water flow or poses as a potential safety hazard; trash/debris removal; erosion control; and managing sediment accumulation. The proposed project would not result in any adverse environmental impacts to Salado Creek. The project includes only maintenance at existing facilities and involves no expansion of, or change to, the existing use.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, none of the exceptions to qualifying for a Categorical Exemption apply. The project site does not authorize any construction projects, and thus would not result in a construction project having a significant effect or unusual circumstance, or affect scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, or historical resources. Also, the proposed project does not authorize any new uses that are not already allowed by the underlying zone, as the proposed project would only conduct routine maintenance within Salado Creek.

Accordingly, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and, separately and independently, also exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15308.