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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: Laguna Channel 2024 Tide Gate Emergency Project

Project Applicant: City of Santa Barbara, Public Works Engineering

MST Number: N/A

Assessor's Parcel Number: 017-191-004

Land Use Zone: P-R/SD-3

Projection Location (Specific): 236 E Cabrillo Boulevard

Project Location: City of Santa Barbara

Project Description:

The emergency work was focused on the channel from the bike path, west to the tide gates, and to the lagoon. The tide gates were isolated with a coastal coffer dam and dewatered. The coffer dam was driven into the sand using an excavator (Caterpillar 420 or similar) with a sheet pile driver attachment. The coffer dam was constructed in a straight line across the Laguna channel where the distance between the banks is the shortest. The area between the tide gates and the coffer dam was dewatered with a pump appropriate for the volume of water. The pump intake had a screen mesh and secondary system to prevent the take of tidewater gobies. The area immediately adjacent to the tide gates was cleared of sediment and debris and disposed of legally. The tide gates were exercised by opening and closing several times. Operators and mechanics observed the two of the three tide gates being exercised and appropriate adjustments were made to ensure they are in proper operating condition. These adjustments included small parts replacement, greasing the drive shaft, and cleaning the gate tracks. Grease was applied with secondary containment in place and care was taken to prevent the spread of grease to the channel. The site was cleaned up and ready for the storm season.

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

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Exempt Status: Exempt under CEQA Section § 15269

Reason Why Project is Exempt:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15269 Emergency Projects. The Project meets the 15269 Emergency Projects statutory exemption, because the emergency exercising of the tide gates prior to this year's rain season was essential to maintain service essential to the public health, safety and welfare.

Biology. The Project is within 200' of a biologically sensitive habitat area, however, the Project had biological monitors onsite during construction and complied with all regulatory permit requirements, therefore the Project resulted in a less than significant impact on biological resources.

Creeks. The Project is within Laguna Channel/Creek; however, the emergency work is essential to maintain critical flood conveyance. The Project complied with all regulatory permit requirements; therefore, the Project resulted in a less than significant impact on creek resources.

Coastal Zone. The project is within the Appeal Jurisdiction and the Permit Jurisdiction of the Coastal Zone. The emergency action has been considered consistent with the Waiver already issued to the City by the Coastal Commission. The Project complied with all applicable regulations, therefore, the impact on coastal resources is considered less than significant.

Floodway. The Laguna Channel/tide gates are located within a floodway and are within an AE FEMA zone (high-risk area.). The tide gates play a critical role in flood management of the area, and it is anticipated that exercising the tide gates ahead of the 2024-2025 storm season, in compliance with regulatory permit conditions, will ensure that the equipment is functional during the storm season, therefore resulting in a beneficial impact on floodway resources.

Geology. The liquefaction potential, expansive soils, and erosion potential are slight to very high and groundwater is potentially shallow. Work occurred in the wetted channel and there is potentially shallow groundwater, therefore, dewatering was conducted during construction. Given the temporary and short-term nature of the emergency work, the effect on geological resources is considered less than significant.


Parks and Recreation. The Project is within the Parks Recreation (P-R) zone and is located on East Beach, which is utilized as a public recreation area. Beach access and use of the Multi Use Path was continued during construction. This emergency work was anticipated to be completed within two weeks and would therefore have a less than significant impact on recreation.

Noise. The Project is within an area with ambient noise levels greater than 65 dBA. Construction activities may have contributed to short-term noise impacts, however, the work adhered to the noise control requirements under General Conditions §7.20 (Noise Control) and the Noise Ordinance (Chapter 9.16 of the SBMC) which governs short-term or periodic noise, such as construction noise, operation of motorized equipment or amplified sound, or other sources of nuisance noise. The ordinance establishes limitations on hours of construction (7AM to 5PM) and motorized equipment operations and provides criteria for defining nuisance noise in general. Adhering to the noise control requirements ensured the short-term construction-related noise effects are considered less than significant.

Visual. The Project site contains a visual shoreline; however, the temporary emergency construction did not result in a permanent change to the visual shoreline. The short-term emergency construction is therefore considered to have a less than significant impact on visual resources.

In conclusion, the Project was for emergency exercising of the tide gates prior to the 2024-2025 rainy season to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare. The Project did not result in any significant impacts towards environmental resources, therefore, the Public Works Department recommends that the Case Planner consider this Project as exempt, as defined in the CEQA review process classified under the 15269 Emergency Projects statutory exemption of the CEQA Guidelines.

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Environmental Analyst Signature: 

Date: 1/15/2025