

ATTACHMENT 3

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Julie Harris, Planner, Planning and Development, Long Range Planning Division

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

APN: Not applicable **Case No.:** Not applicable

Location: A ¾-mile long, two-lane road starting at the intersection of Laguna Street and East Los Olivos Street in the City of Santa Barbara and ending at the intersection of Mission Canyon Road and Foothill Road in the unincorporated Mission Canyon area in the County of Santa Barbara.

Project Title: Mission Park to Mission Canyon Multimodal Improvements Plan

Project Applicant: Not applicable

Project Description: The project consists of the Mission Park to Mission Canyon Multimodal Improvements Plan (plan), a grant-funded partnership between the County of Santa Barbara (County) and the City of Santa Barbara (City) to prepare concept level plans for pedestrian, bicyclist, and motor vehicle improvements in this historic and highly scenic corridor.

No continuous sidewalk or pedestrian facility exists through this busy corridor. Although a few facilities exist at various points, they do not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The lack of continuous facilities makes walking and biking in the area difficult and hazardous for residents and visitors.

The concept plans for multimodal improvements along the plan corridor include the following:

- Continuous pedestrian path on the west side of the corridor. The path must comply with the ADA and be consistent with the historical setting.
- Landscape buffers between path and roadway, where feasible.
- New detached pedestrian bridge parallel and west of the existing stone bridge over Mission Creek.
- Bike lanes extending north to Puesta del Sol transitioning into bike routes in the County's jurisdiction where the road narrows.
- Relocation of several crosswalks.
- Left-turn pocket from Mission Canyon Road to Las Encinas Lane.

The project also includes adoption of a Board of Supervisors resolution to direct County staff to work collaboratively with City of Santa Barbara staff to pursue funding opportunities to implement the plan.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Santa Barbara County (The County will receive and refer the plan to the Public Works Department. It will not approve or fund the improvements at this time.)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Santa Barbara County and City of Santa Barbara

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- ☐ Ministerial
☒ Statutory Exemption
☐ Categorical Exemption
☐ Emergency Project
☒ General Rule, Section 15061(b)(3)

Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guideline Section: Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies for receipt and referral of the plan, and Section 15061(b)(3) for adoption of a resolution.

Reasons to support exemption findings: A statutory exemption pursuant to Section 15262 states that a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency has not approved or funded does not required preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. Consistent with this exemption, the plan is limited to preparation of concept plans for possible future actions which Santa Barbara County and the City of Santa Barbara have not approved, adopted, or funded. The plan recognizes various environmental factors in the area, such as aesthetic, historic, and biological resources. The concept plans were developed to avoid or minimize potential impacts on the environment. Future work to implement the plan may require an initial study to identify potentially significant effects on the environment. A negative declaration or environmental impact report may also be required along with consideration of designs or alternatives that would avoid or minimize any potential effects on the environment.

The project is the first step toward implementing one component of the County's recently adopted Mission Canyon Community Plan and policies within the City's Circulation Element and Pedestrian Master Plan. The plan does not have a legally binding effect on later activities. The plan was funded by grants that limit the project to concept plans only and do not allow the preparation of design engineered plans. Therefore, the plan qualifies for this exemption.

Section 15061(b)(3) states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The adoption of a resolution by the Board of Supervisors directing County staff to work collaboratively with City staff to pursue funding opportunities to implement the plan has no possibility of creating an effect on the environment because the resolution only directs County and City staffs to work collaboratively to pursue funding. Adoption of the resolution does not commit the County to later activities or any specific project. Should funding be pursued and obtained, site specific studies would be required to develop detailed designs beyond the conceptual level, which would at that time require complete environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

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Department/Division Representative: _____

Date: _____

Acceptance Date: _____

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff

Date Filed by County Clerk: _____