

CEQA NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: County Clerk
County of Humboldt
825 5th 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: Grace Martin Memorial Park and Waterfront Trail Improvements Project

PROJECT APPLICANT: City of Eureka Community Services Department

PROJECT LOCATION: Halvorsen Park, 1101 Waterfront Drive; adjacent to, and directly north of, the Sacco Amphitheater, directly east of the Adorni Center Parking lot, and south of the Bonnie Gool Guest Dock (APNs 001-161-015, and 002-241-006 and -015)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City proposes improvements to 3.5-acre, City-owned, Halvorsen Park, including the development of a waterfront-themed playground/recreational facility (Grace Marton Memorial Park), realignment of a portion of the existing Waterfront Trail around the new playground/recreational facility, and maintenance of approximately one-half mile of existing trail extending east of the new playground/recreational facility. The playground/recreational facility project site is surrounded by existing improvements, including the Adorni Center parking lot to the west, the Sacco Amphitheater to the south, and the Bonnie Gool Guest Dock to the north. A large lawn area used for events is located east of the project site. The project site is comprised of lawn, pavement, and a retaining wall associated with (and providing a backdrop to) the Sacco Amphitheater.

Proposed playground/recreational facility improvements include: an ADA-accessible themed playground, lunch and game tables, landscaping, and retrofitting the existing Sacco Amphitheater as a primary seating and watching area, which will also act as the main point of entry to the playground; other entry points to the playground will be from the parking lot, the Waterfront Trail, and the Bonnie Gool Dock. The playground itself is 4,900 square feet in size, and the project would result in 6,630 square feet (0.14 acres) of new impervious surface.

Proposed Waterfront Trail improvements include: new ten-foot-wide pavement, with two-foot decorative concrete shoulders on each side. In addition, an approximately eight-foot-wide landscape buffer strip comprised of rock and native plants will be added to separate the playground from the realigned portion of the trail from the dock to the parking lot.

Stormwater management:

A construction-phase Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and a post-construction Stormwater Control Plan consistent with the applicable standards of the City's Phase II Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) Permit and the Humboldt Low Impact Development (LID) Stormwater Manual for Regulated Projects will be prepared and implemented. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used for the duration of the project to protect environmentally sensitive habitat areas associated with the surrounding environment and Humboldt Bay from construction runoff or debris including: inlet protection, straw wattles, construction fencing, covering of stockpiled materials, and proper disposal of any waste materials.

The overall stormwater design approach includes mimicking the site's predevelopment hydrology by using techniques to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to the source of rainfall with non-structural controls and conservation design measures as much as possible. Vegetated bioretention/infiltration swales, LID facilities, and subsurface infiltration piping to capture and infiltrate the stormwater runoff will also be incorporated into the stormwater design, and excess stormwater will be routed offsite through stormwater piping and connect to an existing drainage inlet located in the adjacent Adorni Center parking lot to the west.

Site work:

Ground disturbing activities include removal of existing pavement and a retaining wall (located between the amphitheater and the proposed playground) and removal of the top 4-6 inches of sod and roots for general clearing and grading. Similarly, fill would be placed and compacted within portions of the project construction footprint as needed to accommodate the project elements and ADA accessibility, such as raising the elevation of the playground and its entry points, and to accommodate drainage facilities. Additional ground disturbing activities include installation of footings for play equipment, sculpture, entry arch, ramps and retaining walls (using formwork), irrigation mains, and drainage inlets and pipes leading to a stormwater management area. Rockwork would be installed and integrated as needed into formwork, and new electrical conduit, if needed, will be laid in protective casings. The maximum depth of ground disturbance for the play equipment footings is anticipated to be two feet below the finished grade.

The play area will be surfaced in gunite, overlaid by resilient surfacing (composed of materials that provide a buffer, or shock absorber, that reduces the risk of injury if children accidentally fall from the equipment). Resilient surfacing will be installed in a multi-step process, which includes a curing period to properly seal the resilient materials. Pavement areas will be prepared with base aggregate or drain rock. Decorative concrete may include special unit pavers, integral concrete color, or sandblasting or other decorative treatment. The existing amphitheater seating will be modified to accommodate a ground level wheelchair space. Site amenities (tables, waste receptacles, etc.) will be bolted to finished pavement, and fencing around the playground may be installed if needed for security purposes. Native plantings, and potentially some non-invasive, non-

native ornamentals, will be installed in planter beds.

Construction operations:

Construction equipment includes: sod cutters, a skid-steer, mini- or midi-excavator or backhoe, dump trucks, formwork, cement and poured-in-place resilient surface mixers and hoses, pavers, forklifts, and a boom truck or crane. Concrete work will also entail the use of vibrating plates as needed, and sandblasting templates and equipment.

Equipment will be staged in the Adorni Center parking lot, in a row of parking adjoining the park, and the priority stockpiling area will be located approximately 320 feet southeast from the project site, at a paved parking lot located at the northeast corner of L and 2nd Streets. Additional stockpiling, if needed, will be on the large lawn area east of the project site, which is accessed via an existing driveway from Waterfront Drive, east of the Sacco Amphitheater (less than 300 feet from the project site). All stockpiling and staging areas will implement BMPs to prevent any materials and hazardous materials from impacting any environmentally sensitive habitat area associated with Humboldt Bay. Excess soils, aggregate road base, and construction materials will be stored within these designated stockpiling and staging areas. Excess materials may be re-used onsite for backfill and finished grading or transported off-site for reuse, recycling, or legal disposal.

Construction is anticipated to occur within one construction season, commencing in approximately 2024, and traffic control measures will be provided throughout the project area as needed during construction activities.

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 that the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the following categorical exemptions: Class 1 Existing Facilities (Section 15301), Class 2 Replacement or Reconstruction (Section 15302), Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Section 15303), and Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land (Section 15304).

The Waterfront Trail realignment and maintenance portion of the project qualifies for the Class 1 Existing Facilities and the Class 2 Replacement or Reconstruction exemptions because the trail is existing and deteriorated portions will be rehabilitated and widened to increase safety, and the portion of the trail to be re-routed around the new playground is also necessary for safety, which are negligible expansions of the existing trail use, are located on the same site as the existing trail, and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the existing trail being replaced and improved. The new playground/recreational facility qualifies for the Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures because it is accessory and appurtenant to other improvements in Halvorsen Park (such as the adjoining Sacco Amphitheater); and, the associated landscaping work qualifies for the Class 4 Minor Alterations to Land because grading will not occur within a wetland or on slopes greater than 10%, vegetation removal will not involve the removal of healthy mature trees, and new landscaping will be native, or non-invasive and replace existing non-native grass species.

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 because implementation of BMPs and a construction-phase Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, and a post-construction Stormwater Control Plan, will ensure the protection of any environmentally

sensitive habitat associated with Humboldt Bay.

The material supporting the above finding is on file with the City of Eureka Development Services – Planning and Community Services. 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
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June 16, 2023

Date