



# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

From: Community Development – Planning Division  
505 Forest Avenue Laguna Beach, California 92651

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1. **APPLICANT:** City of Laguna Beach, 505 Forest Ave. Laguna Beach, CA, 92651
2. **LEAD AGENCY:** City of Laguna Beach, 505 Forest Ave. Laguna Beach, CA, 92651
3. **PROJECT PLANNER:** Louie Lacasella, Senior Administrative Analyst, [llacasella@lagunabeachcity.net](mailto:llacasella@lagunabeachcity.net), (949) 497-0736
4. **PROJECT TITLE:** Design Review 25-0319 and Coastal Development Permit 25-0318 to convert a temporary pedestrian plaza into a more permanent pedestrian plaza at Lower Forest Ave; and Coastal Development Permit 25-0587 to close Lower Forest Ave to vehicular traffic; and a resolution designating Lower Forest Ave as a slow street and authorizing the City Manager or designee to take certain actions to close Lower Forest Ave to vehicular traffic.
5. **PROJECT LOCATION:** Lower Forest Avenue, between the Forest Avenue/South Coast Highway intersection and the Forest Avenue/Glenneyre Street intersection
6. **DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT:**  
On March 25, 2025, City Council of Laguna Beach approved the Promenade on Forest Project ("Project") to convert a temporary pedestrian plaza occupying a portion of Forest Avenue into a permanent pedestrian plaza. As part of that March 25th approval, the City Council determined the Project was statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.25(b), and a Notice of Exemption was filed within five working days of the March 25th approval. As part of that Project, design review, a coastal development permit, and a resolution designating Lower Forest Avenue as a slow street are necessary to further implement this Project.

## ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

On June 11, 2025, the City Council upheld the Planning Commission's approval of Design Review 25-0319 and Coastal Development Permit 25-0318 and the Community Development Director's approval of Coastal Development Permit 25-0587, and found the actions statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.25(b). At the same meeting, the City Council adopted a resolution designating Lower Forest Ave as a slow street and authorizing the City Manager or designee to take certain actions to close Lower Forest Ave to vehicular traffic, and found the action statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.25(b). The upholding of the Commission Approval and Director Approval by the City Council and the adoption of a resolution by the City Council designating Lower Forest Ave as a slow street and authorizing the City Manager to take certain actions to close Lower Forest Ave to vehicular traffic, implement the Project that the City Council previously approved on March 25, 2025. Thus, these actions are statutorily exempt under Senate Bill (SB) 922/Public Resources Code Section 21080.25(b)(1), for the same reasons set forth in the CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) that was filed within five working days after the March 25<sup>th</sup> City Council approval. There have been no changes to the Project, no changed circumstances, and no new information that could not previously have been known, that would trigger the need for subsequent CEQA review.

- The project is not subject to CEQA because it "does not involve the exercise of discretionary power," or "will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment," or, "is not a project as defined in Section 15378 of the CEQA guidelines." (Sections 15060(c)(1), (2) & (3)); or,
- "The activity is covered by the commonsense exemption 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" (Section 15061(b)(3)); or,
- The project is statutorily exempt pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 21080.25(b)(1); or,
- The project is categorically exempt per State CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15304 and 15301.

7. Was a public hearing held by the Lead Agency to consider the exemption?

Yes  No  If yes, the date of the public hearing was: June 11, 2025.

*Louie Lacasella*

Louie Lacasella, Senior Administrative Analyst

June 12, 2025