



**City of Solvang
Notice of Exemption**

TO:

☐ Clerk-Recorder County of Santa Barbara 1100 Anacapa Street Santa Barbara, CA 93101	☒ Office of Planning and Research 1400 Tenth Street, Room 121 Sacramento, CA 95814	☐ Project File
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FROM: City of Solvang, 411 Second Street, Solvang, CA 93463

PROJECT TITLE: Alisal Ranch Event Barn/Meeting Space

PROJECT ADDRESS: 1054 Alisal Road **ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.:** 137-310-010

PROJECT LOCATION: City of Solvang **COUNTY OF:** Santa Barbara

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Development Permit (DP) for the construction and operation of a new event and meeting facility complex at the existing Alisal Ranch Property located at 1054 Alisal Road with a project site totaling 1.66 acres in size. The application also includes a request for a parking modification to allow a reduction in the number of required parking spaces.

The proposed project consists of approximately 14,710 square feet (sf) of new buildings and other improvements and including two event and meeting facilities, associated site improvements, and a parking modification request. The proposed project includes:

- Construction of a small event facility in a barn motif, approximately 2,870 sf
- Construction of a larger event facility in barn motif, approximately 7,380 sf
- Construction of a meeting facility in a barn motif, approximately 2,850 sf
- Construction of an entry pavilion to include restrooms, a bar, and storage, 1,410 sf
- Associated trash enclosures
- Associated site improvements including new landscaping, courtyard, and other frontage improvements
- A parking modification request to allow a reduction in required parking to reduce the required additional parking spaces from 40 spaces to an additional 6 spaces, for a total 208 parking spaces
- Associated landscaping improvements for the proposed development
- Additional parking improvements, driveway, and other associated site improvements to support the event facility.

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Alisal Guest Ranch

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: City of Solvang



EXEMPT STATUS: (check one)

- ☐ Ministerial Project (Section 2180(b)(1); 15268)
- ☒ Categorical Exemption (Section 15332)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- ☐ Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (Code / Section _____)
- ☐ The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (15061(b)(3))

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: CEQA provides several “categorical exemptions” which are applicable to categories of projects and activities that the Lead Agency (the City of Solvang) has determined generally do not pose a risk of significant impacts on the environment.

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15332 (Infill Projects) of the CEQA Guidelines. The project involves the construction of a total of 14,710 sf of new meeting and event space on a developer parcel within the City of Solvang. The Class 32 Infill Project exemption is intended for development projects on already urbanized sites when the project is consistent with local planning rules and would not create significant environmental impacts.

General Plan and Zoning Consistency

The proposed project is consistent with the adopted 2045 Solvang General Plan and supports the City's policies encouraging high-quality development of a well-balanced and functional mix of land uses that preserves and enhances Solvang's community character and tourism. The intent of the Guest Ranch land use designation contains allowed uses such guest lodging, employee housing, restaurants, and recreation and entertainment, while recognizing the existing ranch is a working agriculture ranch. project is located within the Agricultural Tourist (AT) zoning district, which is intended to support continuing agricultural operations and tourism-related uses. The proposed project consists of new meeting and event facilities accessory to the existing Alisal Ranch operations and is consistent with the intent and allowable uses of the AT zoning designation subject to the approval of a conditional use permit. The applicant is requesting approval of a parking modification to reduce the required parking through the conditional use permit process pursuant to section 11-11-13 of the SMC. The applicant has utilized a shared parking model and has provided the City with a parking management plan.

Urban Infill

The proposed project is located within the city of Solvang with a project site less than 5 acres in size (1.66 acres). It is substantially surrounded by urban development and located wholly within the existing Alisal Guest Ranch operation.

Biological Resources

The proposed facilities is proposed within an existing pasture and disturbed agricultural areas more than 150 feet west of the top of bank of Alisal Creek. No trees are proposed for removal. The applicant has



provided a Biological Site Assessment as reviewed by city staff and reports no special-status plants in the site area and no observed roosting bats or Crotch's bumble bees during its May 20, 2025 field survey. The pastures and other agricultural areas lacked the nectar and pollen sources observed near existing landscaping. The assessment identifies sensitive aquatic and riparian habitat along Alisal Creek, including a southwestern pond turtle observed in the creek, and expects those species to occur mainly in the creek corridor rather than in the disturbed development area. The limits of construction is illustrated in the preliminary grading plan. The proposed project includes requirements consistent with the adopted Final EIR of 2045 General Plan, as well as, conditions of approval requiring a second biological survey be conduct prior to grading and site development construction.

Traffic/VMT

Associated Transportation Engineers evaluated project trip generation, intersection and roadway operation, and vehicle miles traveled. Based on the submitted study, the highest trip-generating event is a private party with 242 daily vehicle trips, followed by a wedding with 108. The study estimates 7,000 trips per year, or approximately 19 annual-average daily trips, based on up to 20 weddings, 50 business meetings or corporate retreats, and 20 private parties per year. The study found that analyzed intersections would meet the City's LOS D performance standard with project traffic under existing and cumulative conditions, consistent with the adopted 2045 Solvang General Plan. For its CEQA VMT analysis, the study applied Santa Barbara County's project-size screening criterion of 110 or fewer daily trips to the annualized 19-trip estimate and concluded that VMT impacts would be less than significant.

Noise

The project-specific acoustic study modeled amplified music and speech inside the proposed Big Barn and Small Barn using SoundPLAN analysis. It concluded that events with interior sound levels up to 95 dBA, during the analyzed 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. period, would comply with City noise standards. It also concluded that construction noise and vibration at neighboring sensitive receptors would be temporary and less than significant. The Outdoor Event Noise Operations Plan calls for inward speaker orientation, sound monitoring, prompt complaint response, corrective volume reductions, and an end to amplified sound by 10:00 p.m. The proposed project would not result in a significant noise effect with conditions added in the proposed project approval.

Air Quality

Before issuance of a grading or building permit, the applicant will be required to show all applicable SBCAPCD construction requirements and dust-control measures on the approved plans or in contractor specifications. The permittee and contractors shall comply with all applicable SBCAPCD rules, regulations, permits, and standards in effect during construction, including applicable requirements for fugitive dust, visible emissions, nuisance, architectural coatings, paving materials, and construction equipment. The applicant shall implement the construction dust-control practices identified in the City's 2045 General Plan EIR mitigation measure AQ-1, including wetting active areas as needed, minimizing disturbed ground, limiting speeds on unpaved surfaces, preventing track-out, controlling stockpiles, stabilizing exposed areas, and identifying a person responsible for dust control. These measures shall be maintained throughout grading and construction. Therefore, any proposed impacts are considered less than significant.

Water Quality

The Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan identifies the proposal as a Tier 3 project subject to Central Coast post-construction stormwater requirements. It proposes four above-ground bioretention facilities for



roof runoff and an underground direct-infiltration facility for additional drainage areas, preceded by a hydrodynamic separator. The plan uses the 95th-percentile rainfall event for sizing and reports that each proposed facility has capacity greater than its calculated minimum. Final construction documents and a maintenance program will be required to implement the plan. With those components installed and maintained, the project would not result in a significant water-quality effect.

Public Utilities

The property is already served by the City of Solvang Water and Wastewater Division, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company, and Cox Communications. The proposal therefore uses an existing served ranch property. City staff's review of the proposed project and submit calculations has determined it has sufficient capacity for both water and sewer services. City staff finds that the project site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services and meets section 15332(e).

The City further considered whether the project is subject to any of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption found at CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2. This section prohibits the use of a categorical exemption under the following circumstances:

- a) *Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located -- a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*
- b) *Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*
- c) *Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*
- d) *Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*
- e) *Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*
- f) *Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

The proposed mixed-use conversion project would not result in cumulative impacts or significant environmental effects due to unusual circumstances, would not impact a designated scenic highway, and is not located on a hazardous waste site or within an area containing known historical resources..



LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Rafael Castillo, AICP **PHONE:** (805) 688-5575

DEPARTMENT: Community Development Department

ADDRESS: 411 Second Street
Solvang, CA 93463

SIGNATURE: _____

Date: 10-7-2026

Title: Community Development Director

☒ Signed by Lead Agency



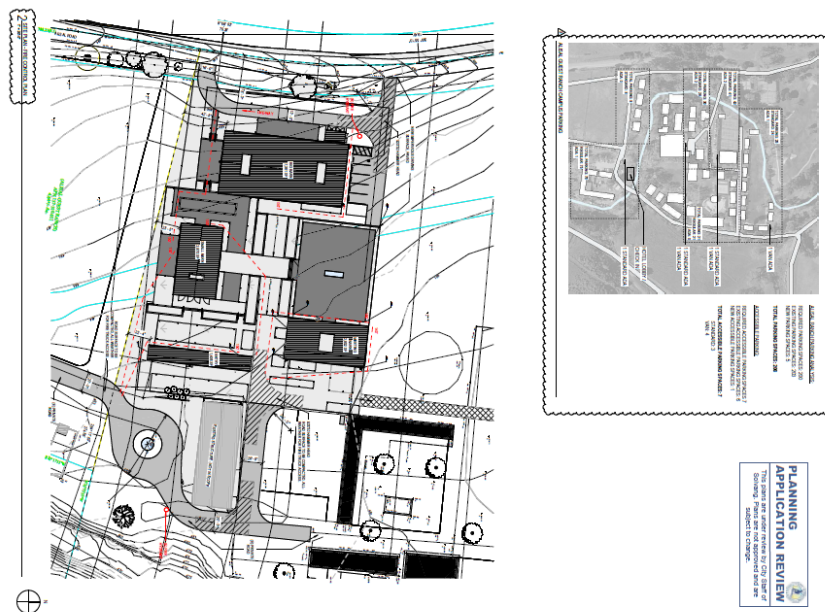
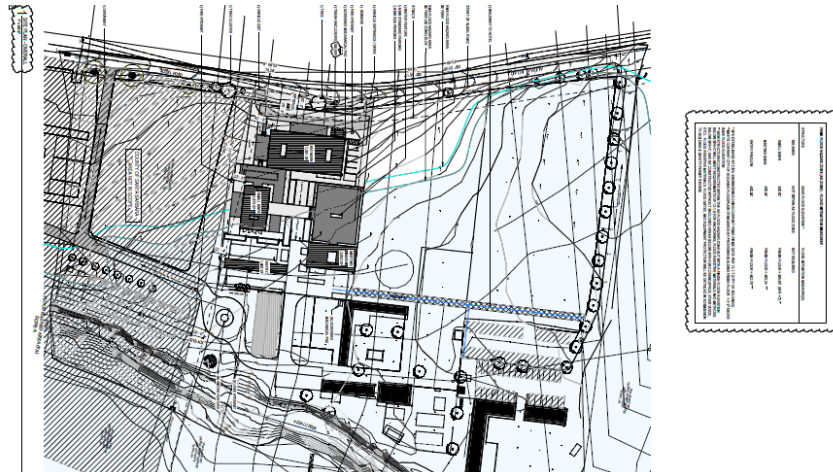
Project Location



City of Solvang
CEQA Exemption – PA 25-055: Alisal Ranch Events Barn/Meeting Space



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A051

DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CUP)

NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (SQ. FT.)	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SITE AREA
1	Building Footprint	10,000	10.0%
2	Parking Area	50,000	50.0%
3	Landscaping Area	10,000	10.0%
4	Other	30,000	30.0%
TOTAL		100,000	100.0%

SITE PLAN

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

PLANNING APPLICATION REVIEW

ALISAL EVENT BARN

Project No. 25-055

City of Solvang, California

Planning Department

08/15/2025