

Reasons why project is exempt

Prior to the Commission's public hearing on the Project, LA County Planning staff determined that Project qualified for 15311, Class 11, Accessory Structures; 15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; 15304, Class 4 Exemption, Minor Alterations to Land; and 15305, Class 5, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations categorical exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000, et seq.) ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines for the County, because the Project involves a request to authorize the establishment of an accessory parking lot containing 138 parking spaces, the encroachment into the protected zones of three oak trees, including one heritage-sized tree, and an over height fence/wall along the southern end of the Project Site. As the Project requests the construction of accessory structures in the form of a small parking lot with associated perimeter fencing, light poles, and utility connections all accessory to an existing church qualifies for Class 11 and Class 3 exemptions. Further, the encroachments into the protected zones of three oak trees qualifies for a Class 4 exemption while the request to allow permitted fencing above standard height requirements qualifies for a Class 5 exemption.

No exceptions to the Categorical Exemptions are found to apply to the Project per section 15300.2 of the California Code of Regulations. The Project is not on a scenic highway or a hazardous waste site and is not known to contain historic resources. The surrounding area is an urbanized residential neighborhood developed with roadways, driveways, utility poles and lines, buildings, ornamental landscaping, and other infrastructure. No significant effect due to "unusual circumstances" and no cumulative impacts are anticipated. Therefore, there are no exceptions to the identified Categorical Exemption.

Location

The Project Site does not contain any identified environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern as designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Cumulative Impacts

The Project mainly involves the church land use on the vacant side of a R-1 zoned parcel and the encroachment into the protected zone of three oak trees, including a heritage-sized one, for the accessory parking use.

"Unusual Circumstances" or Significant Effects

The purpose of the Project is to relocated off-site parking and eliminate on-street parking needs associated with the operation of the existing church. Separately, the Project is to authorize encroachment into the protected zone of one heritage-sized oak tree and two non-heritage sized trees. A parking lot, perimeter fencing, landscaping, exterior lighting fixtures and water and electrical utility extensions are proposed across two previously developed single-family residences. No environmentally sensitive areas will be impacted by the Project.

Scenic Highways

According to California's Scenic Highway Program, which is administered by Caltrans, the Project Site is not located within or near an officially designated state scenic highway.

Hazardous Waste Sites

The Project Site is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. According to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's ("DTSC's") EnviroStor and State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker web databases, no active or open hazardous waste sites were identified at the Project Site. A review of the Hazardous Waste and Substances Site List–Site Cleanup database also shows no records on the Project Site. Finally, the Project Site is not included in any Water Board's list of solid waste disposal sites, list of "active" orders where necessary actions have not yet been completed (known as Cease-and-Desist Orders and Cleanup and Abatement Orders).

Historical Resources

The Project Site does not contain any historical resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources or included in a local register of historical resources. According to the County's Historic Resources Sites Policy mapping, there is no historic or cultural resource site on the Project Site. The County also does not consider the Project Site to be a discretionary historical resource per Public Resources Code Section 21084.1.

While the Project Site does not contain known historic resources, it is in proximity to one. Across the street on Rosemead Boulevard, the residential neighborhood known as "Chapman Woods" has been identified as a historic resource. However, the Project does not occur within the boundaries of this historic resource and the proposed parking lot is located behind the church thus not impacting Chapman Woods.

Oak Trees

The Project Site and the surrounding properties have been altered from their natural conditions and exist in a fully developed part of the East Pasadena – East San Gabriel community. The Project Site is currently occupied by a church, a community center, two small parking lots, and a large undeveloped dirt area. The three affected oak trees do not constitute an intact oak woodland and are part of a severely degraded oak woodland due to decades of development on the Project Site and the surrounding residential community. The proposed parking lot with perimeter fencing and security gate will have minimal impacts due to the scale of development activities and no new ground disturbance since the two vacant dirt areas have corresponding single-family residences and detached garages. The proposed corrective pruning shall be under the supervision of a consulting arborist.

The requested encroachment is considered a minor impact that would not result in further loss of an ecosystem. Further, the County Forester ("Forester") reviewed the Project for the requested encroachment. The arborist's recommendations to ensure the continued

survival of the three oak trees will be conditioned as part of the OTP. Future inspections by the Forester will ensure tree survival; if the trees do not survive, the Forester will ensure that such trees are appropriately replaced. If an oak tree should die from prior and/or future construction impacts, the applicant will be required to replace a dead heritage-sized oak tree at 10:1, and a non-heritage one at 2:1 on the property. Follow-up monitoring will continue to be required to ensure survival. These recommended conditions of approval by the Forester and the recommendations provided in the oak tree report are incorporated by reference in the OTP. They have been determined by the Forester to be sufficient to recover any losses to trees.

Conclusion

The subject property and its surroundings are developed with roadways, driveways, utility poles, lines and connections, buildings, landscaping, and other infrastructure. No significant effect due to unusual circumstances and no cumulative impacts are anticipated. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission determine that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA.