

SEP 06 2024

MARK CHURCH, County Clerk
MARIA GALLARDO
By _____
Deputy Clerk

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: San Mateo County Clerk-Recorder
555 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

From: City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

Project Title: Gateway Park Pedestrian Bridge Replacement Project

Project Location: 2nd Avenue/South Grant Street

Project Location – City: San Mateo

Project Location – County: San Mateo

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of San Mateo

Description of Project: The proposed project would remove and replace the existing pedestrian bridge in Gateway Park and replace it with new steel bridge of the same size and design (including a tubular steel frame and continuous metal deck). The existing walkway adjacent to the south side of the bridge would be replaced to meet ADA requirements and minor concrete repairs would be made to the curb, stairs, and abutment at the north of the bridge.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of San Mateo

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption, Class 2, Replacement or Repair, Section 15302

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would replace an existing bridge and concrete walkway, curb, stairs, and abutments in a City park with new facilities of the same size and serving the same purpose as the existing ones. Therefore, the proposed project would be a replacement or reconstruction in the same location and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. Per section 15300.2 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, it has been determined that the Gateway Park is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (i.e., Cortese List), the project would not result in a significant impact due to unusual circumstances, damage scenic resources, affect a historic resource, or result in a cumulative impact. For these reasons and those stated above, the project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Karen Cornejo Phone Number: (650) 522-7576

Signature: 
Signed by Lead Agency

Date: 9-6-2024 Title: Assistant Engineer



MEMORANDUM

Date September 5, 2024

To Karen Cornejo, Assistant Engineer, City of San Mateo

From Carolyn Mogollon, Project Manager
Will Burns, Principal Project Manager

Subject Gateway Park Pedestrian Bridge Replacement – CEQA Categorical Exemption Qualification

I. Introduction to Categorical Exemptions

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines contain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and are, therefore, exempt from the provisions of CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 – 15333 constitute the list of categorically exempt projects and contain specific criteria that must be met in order for a project to be found exempt. CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction sets forth conditions for replacement or reconstruction activities that may be found categorically exempt. Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 includes a list of exceptions to exemptions, none of which may apply to a project in order for it to qualify for a categorical exemption (i.e., if an exception applies, a project is precluded from being found categorically exempt).

The City of San Mateo, serving as the Lead Agency, is completing environmental review for the Gateway Park Pedestrian Bridge Replacement project (“project”) in compliance with CEQA, the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et. seq.), and the regulations and policies of the City of San Mateo. This Memorandum describes the proposed project and provides analysis and evidence to support a determination by the City of San Mateo that the project would be eligible for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA.

II. Existing Conditions

The project site is currently developed as a City park (Gateway Park). Existing park facilities include paved walking paths, picnic tables, lawns, playground, and a pedestrian bridge over San Mateo Creek. The existing bridge is a single-span, prefabricated painted steel bridge with a cast-in-place concrete deck. The existing structure is approximately 75-feet long and nine-feet wide, with a clear

width of eight-feet that consists of a tubular steel truss on each side, tubular steel floor beams beneath the trusses and painted metal deck on the floor beams.

The existing bridge structure is supported by reinforced concrete abutments. Each abutment is on three, 18-inch diameter reinforced concrete drilled piles.

III. Project Description

Overview

Under the proposed project, the existing bridge would be removed and replaced with new steel bridge of the same size and design (including a tubular steel frame and continuous metal deck), the walkway adjacent to the south side of the bridge would be replaced to meet ADA requirements, and minor concrete repairs would be made to the curb, stairs, and abutment at the north of the bridge.

Construction activities on the project site would begin in July 2026 and take two months to complete.

Bridge Replacement

The existing abutments would be preserved in place and reused for the new bridge. The existing bridge would be lifted out in one piece by crane and set down on South Grant Road south of 2nd Avenue where the concrete deck would be broken up and the steel bridge would be cut into pieces and off-hauled for recycling. The crane would be staged on 2nd Avenue.

The new bridge superstructure would be fully fabricated off-site and delivered to the project site in two pieces. Once the old bridge is removed and the new one has been delivered to the site, a crane would be used to lift the two pieces and set them temporarily on the roadway while they are bolted together. The bridge would then be lifted into place and set on the existing concrete abutments. New anchor bolts would be installed in drilled holes in the abutments to secure the bridge. Plastic sheeting would be installed along the inside faces of the steel bridge to prevent debris from falling into the creek. Concrete would then be poured onto the metal deck to provide the concrete walking surface.

Walkway Replacement and Repairs

The proposed project would include removal of the top six inches of concrete on the south abutment and replacement of the existing concrete walkway south of the bridge to meet ADA requirements, as well as minor concrete repairs to the curb, stairs, and abutment at the north of the bridge. Removal of the existing walkway south of the bridge would consist of breaking up and off hauling the existing concrete sidewalk, approximately six-inches of fill and a 12-inch wide by four-foot-long portion of the existing playground surface to accommodate the new walkway. A new

aggregate base would be installed and compacted, and new curbs and concrete walkway would be poured.

Activities within San Mateo Creek

No structures or permanent improvements are proposed within San Mateo Creek channel or below top of bank. During construction of the project, workers may stand on the ground near the bridge abutments. The project will include installation of a silt fence or temporary construction fence near the abutments to prevent construction workers from entering the creek area.

Standard Construction Measures

The project proposes to conform to all existing regulations including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, California Fish and Game Code, and Regional Water Quality Control Board's Waste Discharge Requirements. The project includes the following standard measures to avoid and minimize construction-related impacts to nesting birds and water quality. The below measures are standard measures required to comply with existing regulations and/or are typically implemented by urban, bridge replacement projects.

Nesting Birds

- If work is scheduled to occur during nesting season (typically considered to occur from February 1 to September 15), a pre-construction nesting bird survey shall be conducted not more than 7 days prior to start of work to confirm the absence of active nests. If an active nest is located during pre-construction surveys, construction activities shall be restricted as necessary to avoid disturbance of the nest until the young have fledged. Restrictions may include establishment of exclusion zones (no ingress of personnel or equipment at an appropriate radius around an active bird nest depending on the species and disturbance level, as determined by a qualified Biologist).

Water Quality

- No substances toxic to fish and wildlife shall be allowed to discharge, leak, spill or otherwise make their way into San Mateo Creek. Prior to the concrete pour, plastic sheeting shall be installed along the inside faces of the steel bridge to ensure no debris or concrete drips can fall into the creek. Additional reasonable precautions to protect aquatic habitats of San Mateo Creek from pollution with harmful materials (e.g., concrete, fuels, oils, lubricants, and solvents) shall be implemented. Specifically, all potentially hazardous materials will be controlled, cleaned up, and properly disposed of. Materials deleterious or toxic to fish and wildlife including, but not limited to, asphalt, tires, concrete, construction materials, trash, treated wood, and creosote-containing materials shall be stockpiled only on hardscaped areas such as the roadway of 2nd Avenue. Refueling and maintenance areas for equipment shall occur only on paved roadways, such as 2nd Avenue.

- Work shall comply with the requirements defined in CDFW's Streambed Alteration Agreement and RWQCB's Waste Discharge Requirements for the Project.
- Work shall be conducted during dry conditions.
- At no time shall silt-laden runoff be allowed to enter San Mateo Creek. Erosion-control measures shall be utilized throughout all phases of operation where sediment runoff from the project may enter San Mateo Creek. Best management practices to avoid erosion, uncontrolled stormwater runoff, and bank deterioration shall be implemented, following the requirements of the Streambed Alteration Agreement, and typically include silt fencing, coir rolls, and/or straw bale dikes.
- No activities that threaten the bank stability of San Mateo Creek shall be conducted. This includes avoiding heavy machinery near TOB, and no removal of trees rooted along or below TOB shall be allowed. Portions of the canopy of one pear tree (up to approximately 100 square feet) overlapping the bridge deck on the northwest side of the bridge shall be trimmed before lifting of the old bridge deck in order to avoid substantially damaging the tree.

IV. Environmental Review

The purpose of this section is to document whether any of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the project and assess the project's eligibility for a Categorical Exemption from CEQA under Section 15302 (Class 2) Replacement or Reconstruction.

Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

(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.

This exception only applies to Class 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 exemptions. The proposed project is categorically exempt under Class 2; therefore, this exception is not applicable to the project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a).

(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.

The proposed project involves the removal and replacement of an existing pedestrian bridge and concrete walkway, and repairs to the curb, stairs, and abutments in a City park. The project would not expand the size of the bridge. Therefore, the project would not result in an expansion of the existing use. Upon approval of the project, construction and operation of the project would occur

with no additional comparable uses proposed or anticipated to be developed in the future. For these reasons, a significant cumulative impact from successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time would not occur.

(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.

There are no unusual circumstances associated with the proposed project. The replacement of an existing pedestrian bridge and walkway would occur within an existing City park in an urban area surrounded by existing development. Pedestrian bridges and walkways are commonly located in City parks and require replacement when these facilities reach the end of their useful life. Construction activities associated with the proposed bridge and walkway replacement are typical for these improvements.

Consistent with other bridge projects, the project would cross over a creek and would require trimming of trees to allow for removal and installation of the replacement bridge. San Mateo Creek has potential to support Central California coast steelhead (a special status species) during spawning season (December to June) and on-site trees could support nesting birds (protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code) during the nesting season (February 1 to August 31). As noted in Section III. Project Description, project construction would begin in July 2026 and take two months to complete. Therefore, construction would occur outside of the spawning season for steelhead and within the nesting season for birds.

Due to the timing of construction, outside of the spawning season for Central California steelhead, and the location of work above top of bank of San Mateo Creek, impacts to steelhead would be less than significant. Additionally, the project would comply with California Fish and Wildlife preconstruction nesting bird survey requirements which would ensure impacts to nesting birds would be less than significant.

For these reasons, the proposed project would not result in a significant effect on the environment due to an unusual circumstance.

(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.

There are no officially designated state scenic highways in the project area. The nearest officially designated state highway is Interstate 280, which is located approximately three miles west of the

project site and is not visible from the project site.¹ The project, therefore, would not damage scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway, and no exception to the exemption applies under 15300.2(d).

(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.*

The project site is not included on any lists compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; therefore, no exception to the exemption applies under 15300.2.²

(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 project site does not contain historic structures.^{3, 4, 5} The nearest historic resource to the project site is the residence at 510 South Grant Avenue, approximately 824 feet south of Gateway Park. However, the proposed project would not be visible from this residence and would, therefore, not impact nearby historic resources.

Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The project would remove and replace an existing pedestrian bridge and concrete walkway, curb, stairs, and abutments in a City park. The project would bring the existing bridge, walkway and stairs up to current safety and accessibility standards and serve the same purpose as the replaced facilities. All of the proposed improvements would occur in the same location as the previous structures with no expansion of these facilities or their use.

V. Conclusion

As documented in Section IV. Environmental Review, none of the exceptions contained in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the project and the project is consistent with the criteria in

¹ California Department of Transportation. "California State Scenic Highway System Map". Accessed July 30, 2024. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>.

² California Environmental Protection Agency. "Cortese List Data Resources". Accessed July 30, 2024. <https://calepa.ca.gov/sitcleanup/corteselist/>.

³ National Parks Service. "National Register Database and Research". Accessed July 30, 2024. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>.

⁴ California Office of Historic Preservation. "California Historic Resources". Accessed July 30, 2024. <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov>ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=43>.

⁵ City of San Mateo. Historic Building Survey. 1989. <https://www.cityofsannmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/47850/Historic-Building-Survey-1989?bidId=>

CEQA Guidelines Section 15302. The project would consist of replacement of an existing bridge and concrete walkway, curb, stairs, and abutments in a City park with new facilities of the same size and serving the same purpose as the existing ones. The project, therefore, qualifies as exempt from the provisions of CEQA under Class 2 of the CEQA Guidelines.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Biological Resources Evaluation