



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Certificate of Determination EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Case No.: 2011.1141E  
 Project Title: Glen Canyon Park Renovation  
 Zoning: P (Public) Use District  
 OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk District  
 Block/Lot: 7560/002  
 Project Sponsor: Karen Mauney-Brodek, Recreation and Park Department (RPD)  
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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is the renovation of Glen Canyon Park, located in the Glen Park and Diamond Heights neighborhood. The Glen Canyon Park encompasses approximately 70 acres situated in a canyon that runs from Portola Drive to Bosworth Street on an entire city block. The park currently has a rolling terrain with flat areas programmed for various uses, including the 14,675 square-foot (sf) Glen Canyon Recreation Center, a children’s play area, two tennis courts, two baseball fields, and open pathways with various paths and trails. The rolling terrain of the park is designated as the Glen Canyon Park Natural Area under the RPD Significant Natural Resources Area Management Plan (SNRAMP) and encompasses 60 acres of the 70-acre park. The proposed project would be located on the flat programmed area of the park and would not involve any work in the Glen Canyon Park Natural Area.

### EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption, Class 1, 3, and 4 [State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, 15303, and 15304]

### DETERMINATION:

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and Local requirements.

BILL WYCKO  
 Environmental Review Officer

June 4, 2012  
 Date

cc: Karen Mauney-Brodek, Recreation and Park Department  
 Supervisor Scott Wiener, District 8  
 Historic Preservation Distribution List

Bulletin Board  
 V. Byrd, M.D.F

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):**

The proposed renovations of Glen Canyon Park include: 1) new entry pathways; 2) a new entry plaza drop-off/loading area along Elk Street; 3) sidewalk and pedestrian improvements to Elk Street; 4) improved trails; 5) tennis court relocation and renovations; 6) replacement and relocation of the children's playground equipment; 7) installation of landscaping and seating; 8) removal of 49-61 trees and replanting of 80-100<sup>1</sup> new trees; 9) improving the road surface of Bosworth Street and Alms Road leading to the Glen Park Recreation Center and Silver Tree facility<sup>2</sup> to meet fire department access requirements; and 10) renovations to the Glen Canyon Park Recreation Center including installation of accessible bathrooms, repair/replacement of the buildings heating system, and repair of the gymnasium floor. No modifications would be made to the exterior of the Glen Canyon Park Recreation Center.

Project construction would take approximately 12 months and would require standard earth-moving equipment for grading and large trucks for hauling.

**REMARKS:**Historic Architectural Resources:

In evaluating whether the proposed project would be exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Planning Department determined that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on historic resources.<sup>3</sup> In making its determination, the Planning Department reviewed a consultant-prepared Historic Resource Evaluation (HIRE) provided by the project sponsor.<sup>4</sup>

The Department determined that the Glen Canyon Recreation Center, completed in 1938, is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources as an individual resource under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture) for its association with the San Francisco Recreation Commission's 1930s expansion of the City's recreation facilities and implementation of New Deal programs. The clubhouse is also the work of master architect William G. Merchant. The Recreation Center has undergone few modifications and appears to retain its integrity. No other historic resources have been identified within Glen Canyon Park.

Since the Glen Canyon Recreation Center was determined to be a historic resource, the Planning Department assessed whether the proposed project would materially impair the resource. The Planning Department determined that the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the resource such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired. Overall, the project appears to be

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<sup>1</sup> The amount of trees to be removed and replanted will be determined after further evaluation of the tree conditions and site plans are further developed.

<sup>2</sup> The Silver Tree facility is an outdoor recreation day camp facility within Glen Canyon Park.

<sup>3</sup> Glen Canyon Park Renovation Memorandum, by Shelley Caltagirone, Preservation Planner, April 19, 2012

<sup>4</sup> Carey & Company, *Historic Resources Evaluation, Glen Park Recreation Center*, August 29, 2011, on file and available for public review at the San Francisco Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Fourth Floor, as part of Historic Preservation Address Files.

in keeping with the *Secretary of the Interior Standard's for Rehabilitation for Historic Resources* (Standards). Moreover, it does not appear that the proposed alteration would have a significant adverse impact on any off-site historic resources as no known resources are located in the immediate area. The proposed repairs to the Recreation Center include installation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant bathrooms, repair/replacement of the buildings heating system, and repair of the gymnasium floor. The repair of the gymnasium floor would be in-kind to match the materials, in terms of design, color, texture, and materials. Likewise, repair and replacement of the heating system would have no impact to character-defining building features. The installation of ADA bathrooms would not impact any character-defining features and the work would be differentiated as a contemporary alteration and would not create a false sense of history. The proposed landscape work would have no adverse affect on the setting of the historic resource as it would create minimal change that is in keeping with the historic evolution of the park. For these reasons, the Glen Canyon Park Renovation project would have no adverse impact on historic resources.

#### Biological Resources:

In evaluating whether the proposed project would be exempt from environmental review under CEQA, the Planning Department also determined that the proposed project would not have a significant impact on biological resources, as described below.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted legislation that amended the City's Urban Forestry Ordinance, Public Works Code Sections 801 et. seq., to require a permit from the Department of Public Works (DPW) to remove any protected trees, except when they are within properties under the jurisdiction of RPD, in which case they are exempt from the requirement.<sup>5</sup> Protected trees include landmark trees, significant trees, or street trees located on private or public property anywhere within the territorial limits of the City and County of San Francisco. Article 16 of the San Francisco Public Works Code, the Urban Forestry Ordinance, provides for the protection of "landmark" trees, "significant" trees, and street trees. Landmark trees are designated by the Board of Supervisors upon the recommendation of the Urban Forestry Council, which determines whether a nominated tree meets the qualification for landmark designations by using established criteria (Section 810). Significant trees are those trees within the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works, or trees on private property within 10 feet of the public right-of-way, that meet certain size criteria. To be considered significant, a tree must have a diameter at breast height of more than 12 inches, a height of more than 20 feet, or a canopy of more than 15 feet (Section 810(A)(a)).

The project site is under the jurisdiction of the RPD, and the project is therefore exempt from the above provisions. Nonetheless, RPD commissioned an assessment of all trees within the project boundaries. The proposed project would result in removal of 49-61 trees on the project site and planting of 80-100 new

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<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, Director's Bulletin No. 2006-01, May 5, 2006, Planning Department Implementation of Tree Protection Legislation, page 2, [http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/projects\\_reports/db2006\\_01treedisclosuredirector.pdf](http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/planning/projects_reports/db2006_01treedisclosuredirector.pdf).

trees. The tree assessment for proposed project identified that there are no significant, landmark, or street trees on the project site.<sup>6</sup>

Hortscience conducted a tree assessment for the proposed project which included the following: a survey of 627 trees within Glen Canyon Park; description of the trees; an assessment of the suitability for preservation of each tree; a tree risk assessment; evaluation of the project impacts and proposed actions; and guidelines for tree preservation during the design, construction, and maintenance phases of development.<sup>7</sup> Of the 627 trees surveyed; approximately 275 would be within or immediately adjacent to the project area.

All of the 275 trees surveyed for the proposed Glen Canyon Park renovation project were installed as landscaping and none are native to the project site. The results of this survey are summarized below.

The tree survey evaluated 275 trees, which represented 10 different tree species. The most frequently occurring tree species were Blue Gum, Eucalyptus, Monterey Pine, Monterey cypress, and Blackwood acacia. The overall tree health was good to fair with 121 trees in each category, and 154 trees in poor condition. The tree survey rated each of the 275 trees for suitability for preservation based upon their health, structural integrity, species response, tree age and longevity, and species invasiveness. Additionally, a tree risk assessment was conducted to determine the potential for a tree or one of its parts to fail, and in doing so, injure people or damage property.

Based on the results of the tree risk assessment, tree survey, and the location of the proposed project, it was recommended that 60 trees should be preserved and 190 trees should be removed. The tree assessment recommends removal of 176 trees as a result of poor suitability for preservation and removal of 14 trees due to the fact that they would be impacted by the proposed project. However, the project sponsor is proposing the removal of 49-61 trees for the proposed project. The majority of tree species to be removed would include Bailey acacia, Blackwood Acacia, Blue gum eucalyptus, Lawson's Cypress, Monterey Pine, and Siberian Elm. Additionally, RPD would replant 80-100 new trees with the following proposed species: California Buckeye, Western Redbug, Red Osier Dogwood, Silk Oak, Pacifica Wax Myrtle, Mediterranean Olive, Plum, Coast Live Oak, and Coffeeberry.

The tree assessment also includes tree preservation guidelines that would be implemented during construction activities. These tree preservation guidelines includes establishment of a tree protection zone, installing protective fencing around all trees to be preserved, and providing a consulting arborist during all construction activities including grading, utilities, drainage, and landscape plans.<sup>8</sup>

The only potential for adverse effect on biological resources is the loss or destruction of active bird nests. Bird nesting, protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), may occur in the project area. Migratory birds include geese, ducks, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, and seabirds. As described

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<sup>6</sup> Tree Assessment and Preservation Plan, Glen Canyon Park, San Francisco, CA, Prepared by Hort Sciences Inc. for the Recreation and Park Department, City of San Francisco, January 2012. This document is available for review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, as part of Case File No. 2011.1141E.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, HortSciences

above, a number of non-native trees would be removed from the project. To reduce potential for effects on nesting birds from non-native tree removal, construction should occur outside the bird nesting season (January 15 to August 15). Bird nesting season is generally recognized to be from March 15 to August 15 in most areas of California, but can begin as early as January 15 in the San Francisco area. If construction during the bird nesting season cannot be fully avoided, preconstruction nesting surveys should be conducted prior to work in order to comply with the MBTA. The MBTA makes it unlawfully to “take” (kill, harm, harass, shoot, etc.) any migratory bird listed in 50CFR 10, including their nests, eggs, or young. Pursuant to the MBTA, the project sponsor will conduct preconstruction bird nesting surveys within seven days of the start of construction (i.e., active ground disturbance). If active nests are located during the preconstruction bird nesting survey, the project sponsor is required to contact the California Department of Fish and Game for guidance on obtaining and complying with a Section 1081 Agreement, which may include setting up and maintaining a line-of-site buffer area around the active nest and prohibiting construction activities within the buffer; modifying construction activities; and/or removing or relocating active nests.

As described above, the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources; affect any rare, threatened, or endangered species; diminish habitat; or conflict with any policies or ordinances protecting trees. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in any impact to biological resources.

#### Cumulative Impacts:

In addition to the proposed project, there are two other separate proposed projects within Glen Canyon Park. The Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan (SNRAMP)<sup>9</sup> has proposed management action plans for the Glen Canyon Park Natural Area. These proposed management actions include trail improvements, erosion control projects, maintenance of sediment dams, habitat restoration, removal of 120 blue gum eucalyptus, and restoration of native plant species. Additionally, the 2012 Recreation and Park Department (RPD) General Obligation Bond<sup>10</sup> has proposed improvements to Glen Canyon Park including landscaping, replacement of the park’s natural turf fields and lawn areas with replaced seed and/ or sod, renovations to the Glen Canyon Recreation Center, and construction of a 4,500-sf addition to the existing Recreation Center. The environmental review for the General Obligation Bond project determined that the proposed improvements to the Glen Canyon Recreation Center would not have an impact on historic or biological resources; therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to any cumulative historic or biological resources impacts.<sup>11</sup> The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the SNRAMP project found that the biological resources impacts to the Glen Canyon Park Natural Area would be less than significant; therefore, it is not anticipated that the proposed project combined with the SNRAMP project would result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant impact on

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<sup>9</sup> Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan DEIR, available for review at <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1828>

<sup>10</sup> Recreation & Park Department 2012 General Obligation Bond Certificate of Determination Exemption from Environmental Review. City of San Francisco, April 2012. This document is available for review at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, as part of Case File No. 2011.1359E.

<sup>11</sup> Recreation & Park Department 2012 General Obligation Bond Certificate of Determination Exemption from Environmental Review, Ibid.

biological resources. Additionally, the construction of the proposed project would not occur within the same time period as SNRAMP or the General Obligation Bond project, and would therefore not result in any cumulative impacts associated with construction activities. Construction and operation of the proposed project, when combined with these two projects, would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant impact on cultural or biological resources or any other environmental resources.

**EXEMPT STATUS:**

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15301, or Class 1, provides an exemption for existing facilities, which consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alterations of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipments, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. Additionally, Class 1(c) provides an exemption for the repair and maintenance of existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities. The proposed Glen Canyon Park Renovation project includes minor renovations to the Glen Canyon Park Recreation Center. Additionally, the project would include new entry plaza drop-off/loading area along Elk Street, sidewalk and pedestrian improvements to Elk Street, and improving the road surface of Bosworth Street and Alms Road. Therefore, the proposed project meets the criteria for exemption under Class 1.

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15303, or Class 3, provides an exemption from environmental review for the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. Class 3 also provides an exemption for accessory structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences. The proposed project includes replacement and reconstruction of the tennis court and replacement the children's playground equipment. Therefore, the proposed project meets the criteria for exemption under Class 3.

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15304, or Class 4(b), provides an exemption for new gardening, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water-efficient or fire-resistant landscaping. Landscaping under a Class 4 exemption includes walls, fences, walkways, irrigation systems, as well as plant materials. The project would require minor alterations of the land and vegetation, including removal of 49-61 trees and replanting of 80-100 new trees, installation of new entry pathways and trails, and installation of landscaping and seating. Therefore, the proposed project meets the criteria for exemption under Class 4.

**CONCLUSION:**

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15300.2 states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. As described above, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on cultural resources or biological resources. There are no unusual circumstances surrounding the current proposal that would suggest a reasonable possibility of a significant environmental effect. The project would be exempt under each of the above-cited classifications. For all of the above reasons, the proposed project is appropriately exempt from environmental review.