

Notice of Exemption

21-2023 - 225

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk County of: Marin
Marin Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Dr., Suite 234,
San Rafael, CA 94903

From (Public Agency):
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

FILED

OCT 05 2023

SHELLY SCOTT
MARIN COUNTY CLERK
BY: [Signature], Deputy

Project Title: Treatment Method Augmentation for the San Rafael Zone Open Space Management and Evacuation Route Projects

Project Applicant: City of San Rafael

Project Location – Specific: Roads and open spaces within the San Rafael Zone

Project Location – City:
City of San Rafael

Project Location – County:
Marin County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The purpose of the proposed project is to incorporate herbicide application as a treatment method for invasive and non-native plant species to support ongoing fuel reduction projects within the San Rafael Zone. The proposed project aims to facilitate reduction of fuel loads along evacuation routes and within City of Rafael-owned open space with the intention of increasing defensible space for habitable structures and roadways, and providing better access for first responders and emergency vehicles.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of San Rafael

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

Exempt Status (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Common Sense Exemption (Sec. 15061(b)(3));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304(i). Minor alterations to land for fuel management activities. 15301. Existing facilities maintenance and minor alterations for vegetation removal along roadways.
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is categorically exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4 for Minor Alterations to Land and Section 15301, Class 1, for Existing Facilities. A Class 4 exempt project consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. A Class 1 exempt project consists of the

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operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The proposed project would incorporate herbicide application as a potential treatment method for invasive and non-native plant species for two existing and approved fuel reduction projects within the San Rafael Zone. A Notice of Exemption (NOE) was filed in November 2022 for the San Rafael Zone Evacuation Route Core Project 2022/2023 that approved the treatment of vegetation along approximately 360 miles of roadways within the San Rafael Zone. An NOE for the San Rafael Zone Open Space Management Project was filed in November 2021 to reduce fuel loads across 78 acres of City of San Rafael-owned open space parcels. The application of herbicides would assist in vegetation treatment activities where other treatment methods (e.g., mechanical) are not well-suited or inefficient. The scope of the proposed project shown in Figure 1 is consistent with the minor alteration to the condition of the vegetation along evacuation routes and open space lands.

Additionally, no healthy, mature, scenic trees would be removed; no work would take place within sensitive habitat, including wetlands or waterways; and no ground disturbance, such as excavation, would take place. There are no facts or circumstances specific to this project that would support an exception to the categorical exemption. No exceptions listed under Section 15300.2 apply.

Lead Agency Contact Person:

Alicia Giudice, City of San Rafael

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

(415) 485-3092

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?
Yes No

Signature: *Alicia M. Giudice* Date: 10-2-23 Title: Community Development Director

Signed by Lead Agency

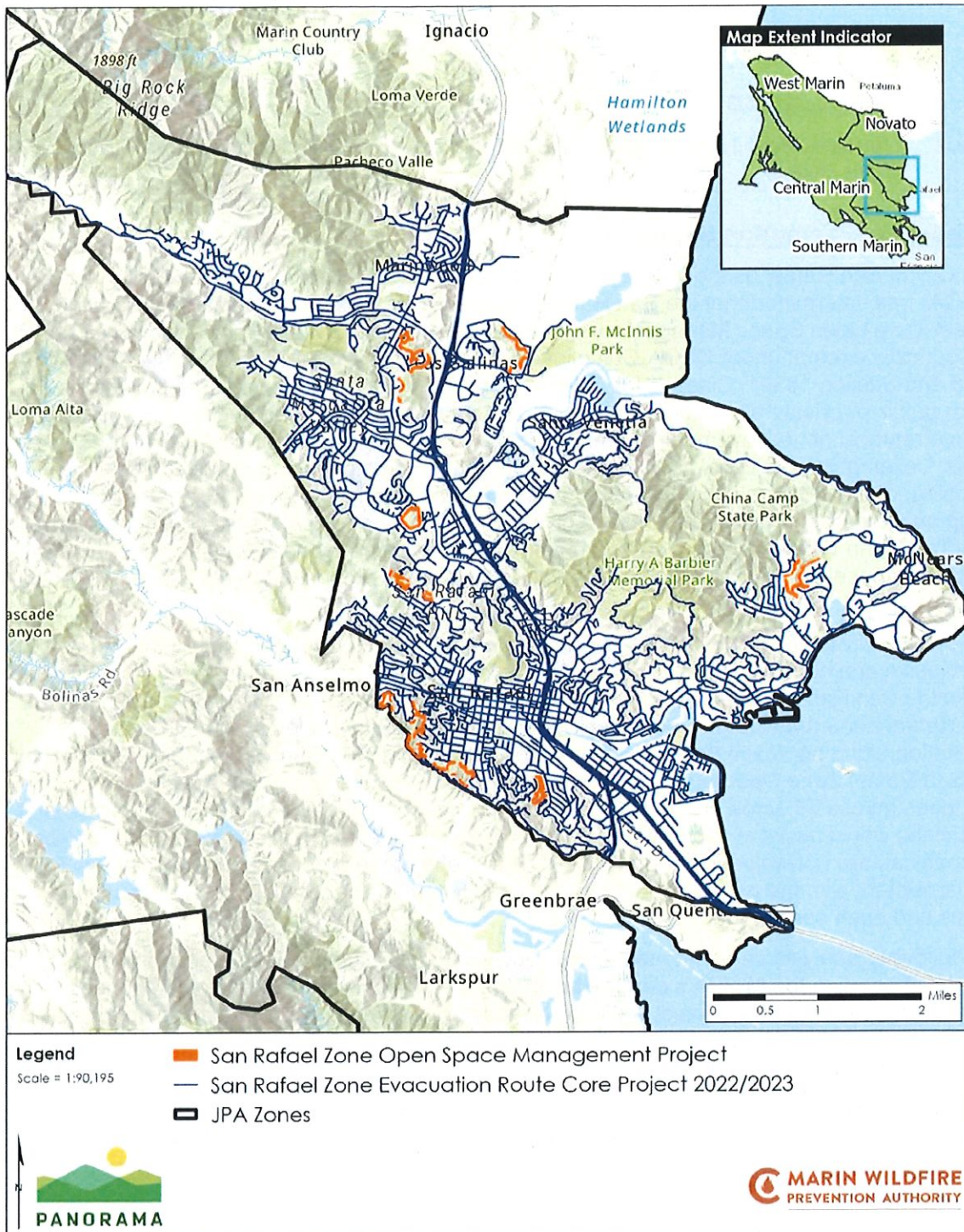
Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Figure 1 Project Location



Date: September 21, 2023

Project: Treatment Method Augmentation for the San Rafael Zone Open Space Management and Evacuation Route Projects

Categorical Exemption Summary

The City of San Rafael as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has determined that the San Rafael Zone Treatment Method Augmentation for the San Rafael Zone Open Space Management and Evacuation Route Projects (proposed project) is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4 for Minor Alterations to Land and Section 15301, Class 1, for Existing Facilities. A Class 4 exempt project consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. A Class 1 exempt project consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) as the responsible agency under CEQA concurs with the City of San Rafael's determination that the proposed project is exempt under CEQA.

The proposed project would incorporate herbicide application as a potential treatment method for invasive and non-native plant species for two existing and approved fuel reduction projects within the San Rafael Zone. A Notice of Exemption (NOE) was filed in November 2022 for the San Rafael Zone Evacuation Route Core Project 2022/2023 that approved the treatment of vegetation along approximately 360 miles of roadways within the San Rafael Zone. An NOE for the San Rafael Zone Open Space Management Project was filed in November 2021 to reduce fuel loads across 78 acres of City of San Rafael-owned open space parcels. The application of herbicides would assist in vegetation treatment activities where other treatment methods (e.g., mechanical) are not well-suited or inefficient. The scope of the proposed project shown in Figure 1 is consistent with the minor alteration to the condition of the vegetation along evacuation routes and open space lands.

The following analysis demonstrates the project would not result in adverse environmental effects, supporting the MWPA's determination that the proposed activities are categorically exempt under CEQA. The project would be conducted in compliance with applicable federal, State, and local regulations and under contractual provisions prohibiting work in violation of applicable regulations and plans.

Information regarding the purpose and need for the proposed project, a description of proposed activities, a discussion of why the potential exceptions to a categorical exemption do not apply here, and an assessment of the potential for environmental effects are provided below.