Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration

A notice, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code 21,000, et seq.) that the following project when implemented will not have a significant impact on the environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File</th>
<th>APN(s)</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>627-03-035</td>
<td>1/17/2014</td>
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<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equestrian Group Campground</td>
<td>Rural Recreation – Retrofit of existing Use Area</td>
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<tr>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County of Santa Clara</td>
<td>County of Santa Clara, Parks and Recreation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 West Hedding Street</td>
<td>298 Garden Hill Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose, CA 95110</td>
<td>Los Gatos, CA 95032</td>
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<tr>
<th>Project Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph D. Grant Ranch County Park,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18405 Mt. Hamilton Road</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose CA 95140</td>
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Project Description:
The proposed project will retrofit an existing 5.4 acre use area at the intersection of Mt. Hamilton Road and Quimby Road in Grant Ranch County Park, from defunct public boarding stables formally known as the Grant Ranch Equestrian Stables, to an equestrian group campground (map attached).

**Background:** Joseph D. Grant Ranch County Park is a 10,000+ acre regional park, located in Halls Valley, in the foothills east of Santa Clara Valley. Characterized by rolling hills, the vegetation is primarily oak woodland and annual grasslands. The park offers over 50 miles of hiking, riding, and biking trails, and rustic campgrounds for individuals and organized groups. In 1992, a Master Plan and Environmental Impact Report were approved for Grant Ranch County Park. The Master Plan identified areas in the park appropriate for individual and group camping sites. At that time, the Master Plan envisioned that the Grant Ranch Equestrian Stables would continue to be operated as a park concession but recommended that the program of offerings at the stables be expanded to complement park uses and include equestrian group camping on the premises. The lease with the stables concessionaire ended in 1994 and attempts to secure a new concessionaire have been unsuccessful. Since the approval of the park’s Master Plan, 37 individual family campsites, one group campground, one youth group campground, and eight individual equestrian campsites have been developed in the park. An equestrian group campground has yet to be developed. Currently, equestrian camping events at Grant Ranch County Park are hosted in the open field adjacent to the San Felipe Group Picnic Area.

A feasibility study was conducted in 2009 to evaluate potential sites for a new a commercial stables facility. The small size of the Grant Ranch Stables site and distance from potential users did not meet the criteria established for new commercial stables on Santa Clara County parklands. However, the study documented the desire among equestrians for increased access to overnight group camping facilities. A group campground would benefit a large portion of this user group who regularly trailer their horses to County Parks to use the park trails. The Grant Ranch Stables site met the criteria established for an equestrian group campground. Conversion of the old stables site to an equestrian group campground will also implement a component of the park’s Master Plan program.
Detailed Project Description: Project will retrofit an existing use area in Grant Ranch County Park, formally known as the Grant Ranch Equestrian Stables, from defunct stables facilities to a group campground to accommodate equestrian group events containing up to 35 "vehicle + equestrian trailer" units or general group events of up 70 vehicles. Limits of the project will be confined to the existing use area (5.4 acres) of the former commercial stables site. The project will include:

- fencing off all unused structures formerly associated with stables operation
- repairs and expansion of perimeter fencing
- grading, rockin and compaction of a 940 linear feet of 12' wide travel way to improve and define internal circulation on the site,
- minor repairs to existing parking lot to seal cracks, install new asphalt overlay, and restripe
- repairs and ADA upgrades to existing restroom,
- repairs to existing water lines
- installation of additional hose bibs and drinking water troughs,
- refurbishment of existing covered arena and associated electrical service, as needed
- refurbishment of existing picnic area with new tables, barbecue pit, and prep table
- tree pruning and stump removal of non-native trees,
- disking and fencing of future paddock area,
- installation of new gate on entry road to replace existing one
- installation of concrete pad for manure disposal
- minor trail work as needed on existing Grant Trail that connects area to other park trails
- installation of park information and regulation signs, as needed
- Installation of additional site furnishing such as benches and interpretive signs, as needed.

It is anticipated that the area will be renamed under the policies of the Parks Naming Policy prior to availability for public use.

When retrofit is complete, the use area will be available for use by reservation in compliance with Parks policies for group campground facilities throughout the County Parks system.

Purpose of Notice

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that the County of Santa Clara Parks & Recreation Department staff has recommended that a Mitigated Negative Declaration be adopted for this project. Action is tentatively scheduled on this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration before the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors on April 15, 2014 in the Board Chambers, 70 W. Hedding Street, San Jose. It should be noted that the adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration does not constitute approval of the project under consideration. The decision to approve or deny the project will be made separately. Meeting information will be posted on the County of Santa Clara’s website at www.sccgov.org under Board Agendas or contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board at (408) 299-5001.

Review Period

The 20 day public review period for this document begins January 24, 2014 and ends February 12, 2014 at 5 pm. Public comments regarding the correctness, completeness, or adequacy of this Mitigated Negative Declaration are invited. Such comments should be based on specific environmental concerns. Written comments must be received on or before the close of the public review period and should be addressed to the County of Santa Clara, Department of Parks and Recreation, Planning and Development Section, 298 Garden Hill Drive, Los Gatos, CA 95032, Tel (408) 255-2236, Attention: Elish Ryan, Park Planner or via email at Elish.Ryan@prk.sccgov.org. A file containing all information on this project may be reviewed at the Department of Parks and Recreation. When requesting to view this file, please refer to the project title appearing at the top of this form.

Responsible Agencies sent copy of this document

none
Basis for Negative Declaration Recommendation

The Planning and Development Section of the Department of Parks and Recreation has prepared an Initial Study for the project and, based upon substantial evidence in the record, finds that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, or although the proposed project could initially have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect on the environment because of mitigation measures that have been incorporated into the project.

This finding is based on the following considerations (See Note below):

The Initial Study indicates that the proposed project has the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to Cultural / Historical / Archaeological Resources. However, the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole that the project, with mitigation measures incorporated, may have a significant effect on the environment.

The following project-specific conditions (mitigation and avoidance) measures include:

E. Cultural / Historic / Archaeological Resources

Potential Impacts: The site and surrounding area has known and listed archaeological and historical sites. A site specific archaeological evaluation of the project area was conducted by Archaeological Resource Management (ARM) in February 2012 to determine the presence or absence of any significant cultural resources on the project site that could potentially be impacted by the project. The resultant report, dated February 18, 2012, included integration of previous archival research from State records and a surface reconnaissance survey of the project area. The report concluded that the proposed project area is partially located within the boundaries of a recorded prehistoric archaeological site which was previously tested in 1991 and found to contain habitation remains. As a result, implementation of the project may impact un-documented or unknown prehistoric resources. The impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

Mitigation CR-1: The County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department will retain a qualified professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in archaeology to monitor all earthmoving activities, as defined in the Archaeological Investigation.

Mitigation CR-2: If prehistoric archaeological resources (including but not limited to dark soil containing shellfish or ground stone) are discovered during construction, work within the immediate vicinity of the find will be halted and the area will be staked off. County of Santa Clara, Parks and Recreation Department will then determine if it is feasible to relocate improvements or alter earthmoving to avoid and/or minimize impacts. If improvements cannot be rerouted or earthmoving avoided, then work will cease in the area until the archaeological evaluation has been completed. The County of Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department will retain a qualified professional archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications in archaeology to evaluate and determine the significance of the find. If the find is determined to be significant, appropriate mitigation measures will be formulated and implemented in accordance with applicable State Public Resources Codes (Section 5097 et al) and the County Parks policy (Policy 5-532) on the protection of cultural and archaeological resources in County Parks.
Mitigation CR-3: In the event of an accidental discovery or recognition of any human remains, the following procedures will be followed in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5(e):

If human remains are found during construction there will be no further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains until the Office of the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner contacted to determine that no investigation of the cause of death is required and procedures outlined in the County Ordinance Relating to Indian Burial Grounds (County Ordinance No. B6-18) and State Public Resources Code can be implemented. If the County Medical Examiner determines the remains to be Native American the coroner will contact the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours.

The Native American Heritage Commission will identify the person or persons it believes to be the most likely descendent from the deceased Native American. The most likely descendent may then make recommendations to County of Santa Clara or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of, with appropriate dignity, the human remains and associated grave goods as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. The County of Santa Clara or its authorized representative will rebury the Native American human remains and associated grave goods with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further disturbance if: a) the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a likely descendent or the likely descendent failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission; b) the descendent identified fails to make a recommendation; or c) the County or its authorized representative rejects the recommendation of the descendent, and the mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission fails to provide measures acceptable to the landowner.

Note: A reporting or monitoring program must be adopted for measures to mitigate significant impacts at the time the Mitigated Negative Declaration is adopted or the project is approved, in accord with the requirements of Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code.

Prepared by:
Elish Ryan, Park Planner
Santa Clara County Parks

signature

January 17, 2014

date

Approved by:
Julie Mark, Deputy Director
Santa Clara County Parks

signature

1.22.14

date