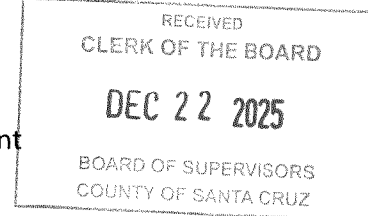


CITY OF SANTA CRUZ 44-12222025-192
Notice of Exemption

161-25

To: ☒ Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Cruz
Governmental Center
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

☒ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814



From: City of Santa Cruz, Planning and Community Development Department
809 Center Street, Room 101, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Project Title: Swanton and Delaware Multi-Use Pathway

Project Address: Not Applicable

Assessor's Parcel No.: 003-151-16, 003-161-56, 003-111-07, 003-111-06, 003-061-15, 003-061-14, 003-061-13, 003-061-09, 003-341-06, 003-321-08, 003-321-09, 003-341-02, 003-341-03, 003-341-01

Project Location: City of: Santa Cruz – see Figure 1 **County of:** Santa Cruz

Project Description: The project consists of a Design Permit, Watercourse Development Permit, and Coastal Permit to construct right-of-way (ROW) improvements that include modifications to five intersections, the creation of a multi-use pathway adjacent to Swanton Boulevard and a portion of Delaware Avenue, and the removal of one heritage-sized tree. The project is located primarily within the existing ROW of Swanton Boulevard and Delaware Avenue. The major improvements include:

- A multi-use trail, sidewalks, and pedestrian striping along the west side of Swanton Boulevard between West Cliff Drive and Delaware Avenue;
- Two protected intersections on Delaware Avenue as it intersects with Swanton Boulevard and Natural Bridges Drive;
- Sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, pedestrian striping, and modified vehicle lanes along the southern side of Delaware Avenue between Swanton Boulevard and Shaffer Road; and
- Reconfiguration of existing unmarked on-street parking along Delaware Avenue to be both marked and unmarked.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Santa Cruz

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Santa Cruz

Exempt Status: (check one)

_____ Ministerial Project (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268).

_____ Statutory Exemption (Code/Section 21083.3).

☒ _____ Categorically Exempt (Section 15301).

_____ Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)).

_____ Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)).

_____ The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (15061(b)(3)).

THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN POSTED AT THE CLERK
OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OFFICE FOR A
PERIOD COMMENCING 12/22/2025
AND ENDING 1/27/2026

Reasons why project is exempt: The project has been determined to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Categorical Exemption, Class 1, Existing Facilities) as explained below.

CEQA provides several “categorical exemptions” which are applicable to categories of projects and activities that the Natural Resource Agency has determined generally do not pose a risk of significant impacts on the environment. The Class 1 categorical exemption allows for minor alterations of existing public or private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use. Examples cited in the CEQA Guidelines include existing highways and streets, sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and similar facilities and alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle lanes, pedestrian crossings, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes. The project would add a multi-use path and sidewalk adjacent to existing streets with minor modifications to existing intersections and reconfiguration of existing parking, but does not provide additional lanes on the existing streets. Therefore, the project can be found exempt under the Class 1 categorical exemption.

The City has further considered whether the project is subject to any of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption found at CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This section prohibits the use of categorical exemptions under the following circumstances:

- (a) for certain classes of categorical exemptions (but not Class 1), due to locations with particularly sensitive environmental conditions;
- (b) when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant;
- (c) where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances;
- (d) where the project 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;
- (e) where the project is located on a state designated hazardous waste site; and
- (f) where the project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a), a categorical exemption for Classes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 is qualified by consideration of where the project is located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. The consideration includes where the project may impact an environmental resource of “hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.” Section 15300.2(a) does not apply to the Class 32 category of projects. The Class 1 exemption is not included in the exemptions qualified by consideration of where the project is located. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project. Furthermore, technical assessments and reviews regarding biological and cultural resources did not identify potentially significant impacts resulting from the project.

There is no evidence of a potential significant cumulative impact (section 15300.2(b)) because successive projects of the same type in the same place are not proposed, and thus, no significant cumulative impacts have been identified as result from other projects in the same place or in the

vicinity of the project. Additionally, there is no evidence to conclude that significant impacts would occur based on past project approvals in the surrounding area or that the proposed project's impacts are cumulatively considerable when evaluating any cumulative impacts evaluated in the General Plan 2030 EIR as a result of other approved projects in the surrounding area. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

The project would not result in any significant effects on the environment due to unusual circumstances (section 15300.2(c)). There are no "unusual circumstances" that differentiate the project and project site from the general class of similarly situated projects and project sites. For example, installation of multi-use paths and sidewalks can be and have been installed in other street ROWs within the City, with the nearby West Cliff Drive multi-use pathway as an example. The project site possesses no unusual features or environmental characteristics that distinguish it from other similar multi-use paths, bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Additionally, as indicated above, there is no substantial evidence that the project would result in a significant impact based on project reviews and technical studies conducted for the project. For these reasons, the project would not result in any significant effects on the environment due to unusual circumstances, and exception (c) does not apply to the project.

The project would not result in damage to scenic resources within a scenic highway (section 15300.2(d)), as the site is not adjacent to or visible from a designated scenic highway. There are no designated state scenic highways within the City, and the project is not adjacent to the highways located in the City. Therefore, the project site is not located within or near a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway and would not result in damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Thus, this exception does not apply to the project.

The site is not a state-designated hazardous waste site, and thus is not subject to the exception set forth in subdivision (e) of section 15300.2.

There is no evidence of historical archaeological resources on the project site based on technical reviews conducted for the project. Therefore, the project would not result in a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic resource. The project is not subject to the exception set forth in subdivision (f) of section 15300.2.

For all of these reasons, the City is able to document that the project qualifies for the Categorical Exemption found at CEQA Guidelines section 15301 for minor alterations to an existing facility, an existing public street, and that none of the potential exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption, as set forth in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2, apply to this project or the project site.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: John Jezek

Phone: (831) 420-5305

Department: Planning & Community Development

Address: 809 Center Street, Room 101
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Signature: 
Title: Associate Planner

Date: 12/18/2025
☒ Signed by Lead Agency
☐ Signed by Applicant

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

Date Received for filing at County Clerk: 12/19/2025

Date Received for filing at OPR:

FIGURE 1 – PROJECT LOCATION

