

Notice of Exemption

TO: County Clerk, County of Orange

FROM: County of Orange
O.C. Public Works

Project Title: Open Space and Conservation Element Update

Project Location: City of Fullerton

Description, Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: See attached.

Name of Public Agency approving Project: City of Fullerton- Community and Economic Development Department

Applicant or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Fullerton- Community and Economic Development Department

Exempt Status: (Check One)

- Ministerial (Sec. 15268)
 Declared Emergency (Sec. 15269 (a))
 Emergency Project (Sec. 15269 (a) and (b))
 General rule (Sec. 15061(b) (3))
 Statutory Exemption: State Code number:
 Categorical Exemption: State class and section number

Reasons why project is exempt: See attached.

Project Contact Person: Yan Gao Phone: (714) 738-6854

CEQA Contact Person: Valerie Clarke Phone: (949) 330-4228

Signature: _____ Title: _____

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project is the update to the City of Fullerton's Open Space and Conservation Element, a required component of the General Plan pursuant to California Government Code Sections 65302(d) and 65302(e), which address the conservation of natural resources and the long-term preservation of open space lands. Additionally, Senate Bill 1425 requires cities and counties to update their Open Space Elements by 01/01/2026 to include an action-oriented framework that advances equitable access, climate resilience, and ecological restoration (rewilding) through integrated policies and programs.

The Open Space and Conservation Element establishes goals, policies, and implementation programs to guide the protection, management, and enhancement of the City's natural resources and open space network. The Element addresses a range of resource areas, including climate resilience, habitat conservation, and equitable access to open space. It emphasizes strategies such as protecting natural systems, improving watershed health, expanding urban greening, and ensuring all residents have access to safe and functional open space. The project does not propose or approve any specific development or physical improvements. Instead, it provides a policy framework to guide future decision-making related to land use, resource conservation, and open space planning. Future development projects and site-specific improvements would be subject to separate environmental review, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Open Space and Conservation Element is part of "The Fullerton Plan," the City's comprehensive General Plan, and is coordinated with other elements, including the Environmental Justice Element, to ensure consistency with broader City goals related to sustainability, equity, and environmental protection.

The beneficiaries of the Open Space and Conservation Element include residents, businesses, and visitors within the City of Fullerton, as well as regional users of the City's parks, trails, and open space network. The Element supports the protection and enhancement of open space lands and natural resources, which contribute to overall quality of life, environmental health, and community well-being. The project provides particular benefits to communities with limited access to parks, open space, and tree canopy, consistent with State requirements to promote equitable access to open space and reduce disparities across neighborhoods. Additional beneficiaries include sensitive environmental resources and ecosystems, such as habitat areas, watersheds, and open space corridors, through policies that support conservation, restoration, and long-term stewardship of natural systems. The Element also benefits future residents and generations, as it establishes a long-term framework for sustainable resource management, climate resilience, and environmental protection.

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines (Common Sense Exemption), which states that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The proposed project consists of the adoption of a policy-level planning document that does not authorize or result in any direct physical changes to the environment or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes. Accordingly, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

The project is also exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(2) and (b)(5), which define as not a "project" the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal or administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment, and organizational or administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The Open Space and Conservation Element establishes policies and programs that will guide future actions but does not commit the City to any specific development or physical improvements.