

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

(Article III, Section 3, City CEQA Guidelines)

FORM RP 1-1-91

Submission of this form is optional. This form shall be filed with the County Clerk, 12400 East Imperial Highway, Norwalk, California 90650, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21152(b). Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21168(d), the filing of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitation on Court challenges to the approval of the project. Failure to file this notice with the County Clerk results in the statute of limitation being extended to 180 days.

LEAD CITY AGENCY AND ADDRESS: City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, 221 N. Figueroa Street, Suite 400, Los Angeles, CA 90012	COUNCIL DISTRICT: 11
PROJECT TITLE: Palisades Park Rebuild Project – Replacement of gym and park improvements following the 2025 Palisades Fire	LOG REFERENCE: BR 26-017
PROJECT LOCATION: 851 Alma Real Dr, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272	
DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT: The proposed project consists of replacing certain structures destroyed by the Palisades Fire at Palisades Recreation Center and improvements to the structures partially affected by the fire. The Palisades Fire severely damaged the gymnasium built in 2000 (new gym), and destroyed a small building in the maintenance yard and the tennis pro building. It also destroyed all perimeter fencing, corresponding landscaping and irreparably damaged 22 trees. The fire partially damaged the roof of the older gym (small gym) and lightly damaged the existing playground and the veterans garden (which includes the bocce field). The tennis courts and the basketball courts suffered minimal damage. The proposed Project (see project description) includes the replacement of the new gym and the small gym, the tennis pro shop and maintenance yard building. It also includes improvements to the lawn areas to the east and west of the access road, the playground and the basketball courts (which will be relocated) as well as the internal pathways network and the basketball courts. It also adds a outdoor community meeting area, and a multipurpose field. On January 15 2026, the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners determined that the project was statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(3) and CEQA Guidelines 15269(a) and approved the proposed project.	

CONTACT PERSON: ELENA MAGGIONI	AREA CODE 213	TELEPHONE NUMBER: 482-6980	EXT.
--	-------------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check One)		CITY CEQA GUIDELINES	STATE CEQA GUIDELINES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DECLARED EMERGENCY	Art. II, Sec. 2a(1)	ART. 18, Sec. 15269(a)
<input type="checkbox"/>	EMERGENCY PROJECT	Art. II, Sec. 2(a)(2)(3)	ART. 18, Sec. 15269(b)(c)
<input type="checkbox"/>	MINISTERIAL PROJECT	Art. II, Sec. 2b	ART. 18, Sec. 15268
<input type="checkbox"/>	CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION	Art. II, Sec. 2(c) See Below	ART. 19, Sec. 15300 -15333
<input type="checkbox"/>	GENERAL EXEMPTION	Art. II, Sec. 2(d)	ART. 18, Sec. 15262
<input type="checkbox"/>	STATUTORY EXEMPTION	Art. II, Sec. 2(i)	ART. 18, Sec. 15282
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (See Public Resources Code Sect. 21080(b) and set forth in state & city guidelines provisions)			

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION: The proposed project consists of the replacement of certain buildings destroyed by the Palisades Fire on January 7 2025, improvements to elements of the park that have been minimally affected by the fire and installation of new improvement. California Public Resources Code (PRC) section 21080(b)(3) provides that CEQA does not apply to "Projects undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8550) of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code". Section 15269(a) of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Title XIV, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations) specifies that the statutory exemption includes projects that will remove, destroy, or significantly alter an historical resource when that resource represents an imminent threat to the public of bodily harm or of damage to adjacent property. On January 7, 2025, the Governor of California declared the state of emergency in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties due to the Palisades Fire and windstorm conditions, pursuant to Section 8625 of California Government Code. As the proposed project replaces elements of the Palisades RC destroyed by the fire and improves those that have been minimally affected, and none of the structures involve in the project are an historic resource, it is statutorily exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080(b)(3) and Section 15269(a) of the CEQA Guidelines (see attached justification).			
--	--	--	--

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT OF EXEMPTION FINDING			
--	--	--	--

SIGNATURE: ELENA MAGGIONI Environmental Supervisor			DATE:
FEE \$75.00	RECEIPT NO.	REC'D. BY:	DATE:

Project Description

The proposed Project, the Palisades Park Rebuild Project, consists of an agreement between the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and PPRC Development Project, LLC to accept the donation of a new gymnasium and other improvements at Palisades Recreation Center damaged by the 2025 Palisades Fire.

The Palisades Recreation Center is located at 851 Alma Real Drive in the Pacific Palisades community of the City. Before the 2025 Palisades Fire, this 17-acre facility provided two recreation centers, tennis courts with tennis pro shop, 2 basketball courts, a bocce court, a maintenance yard, a children's play area, lawns and picnic areas and a baseball field for the use of the surrounding community (Exhibit 1 (Palisades RC – Pre-fire Existing Conditions, Fire Damage and Replacement Elements), Figure 1). Due to the facilities, features, programs, and services it provides, Palisades Recreation Center meets the standard for a Community Park, as defined in the City's Public Recreation Plan.

As illustrated in Exhibit 1, the 2025 Palisades Fire destroyed the largest recreation center, the tennis pro shop, the maintenance yard, the perimeter fencing and 22 trees. It caused minor damages to the smaller recreation center, the baseball field, the tennis courts, the basketball courts, and the veterans' garden. The fire also affected 76 additional trees, the access road and the parking lots. The two lawns on the east and west side of the access road and the fitness area were minimally affected.

The Palisades Park Rebuild Project by Steadfast (Project) includes only a portion of the total area of the Recreation Center and excludes the baseball fields, the bocce field and the tennis courts. The Project will demolish the smaller recreation center and replace the two recreation centers, whose footprint amounted to 18,000 sqft, with a new, 28,000 sqft recreation center which will include two basketball courts with bleachers, 2 indoor pickleball courts, a lobby, a multipurpose room, office space, storage rooms and restrooms. It will also replace the tennis pro shop and the maintenance yard buildings with new structures with the same footprint.

The Project includes the relocation and enhancement of other features of the park affected by the fire and the installation of new amenities. The playground and the 2 outdoor basketball courts will be relocated and rebuilt. New amenities include an outdoor community meeting area, new shaded outdoor community pods, a new multipurpose field and terraced seating west of the tennis courts and north of the baseball fields.

The proposed Project will regrade the lawns east and west of the access road and upgrade the internal pathway network, installing security and safety lighting. The access road and the parking spaces will be repaired and the parking capacity will remain the same.

A tree assessment conducted by the Department found that twenty-two trees were a total loss and must be removed. Another seventy-six trees do not pose a risk but have minor issues and will be monitored regularly, while forty-nine were not affected and appear in very good condition. The number of trees that will be removed is not yet known. It is known that the Project is expected to plant 350 new trees, and that tree removal and replacement and construction around trees will occur according to RAPs Urban Forest Manual approved by RAP's Board on February 06, 2025 (BR 25-005) and in agreement with RAP's Forestry division.

Justification for Project Exemption

The proposed project consists of the replacement of certain buildings destroyed by the Palisades Fire on January 7 2025, improvements to elements of the park that have been minimally affected by the fire and installation of new improvements at Palisades Recreation Center.

Division 13, Chapter 2.6 of the California Public Resources Code, Subsection (b) of Section 21080 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) states that “this division does not apply to any of the following activities” and specifies at subsection (3), “Projects undertaken, carried out, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8550 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code).”

CEQA Guidelines (Title XIV, Division 6, Chapter 3 of the California Code of Regulations) specifies that the statutory exemption includes “Projects to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, commencing with Section 8550 of the Government Code. This includes projects that will remove, destroy, or significantly alter an historical resource when that resource represents an imminent threat to the public of bodily harm or of damage to adjacent property or when the project has received a determination by the State Office of Historic Preservation pursuant to Section 5028(b) of Public Resources Code.”

On January 7, 2025, the Governor of California declared the state of emergency in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties due to the Palisades Fire and windstorm conditions, pursuant to Section 8625 of California Government Code.

The proposed Project will replace the recreation center and other buildings destroyed by the fire, repair the existing parking lots and access road and restore the basketball courts, playground and picnic areas that were damaged as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor. The Project will not increase the total area of the recreation center and reconstruct the damaged/destroyed elements of the Palisades Recreation Center with substantially the same elements. The recreation center buildings and the structures involved in the Project are not designated as a historic or historical building under the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or as a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument. The structures were also not identified as potentially historic in the Los Angeles Historic Resources Inventory, a Citywide historic resources repository.

Based on the above, attached, and evidence in the entire record, Staff recommends that the Board determine that the proposed project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Division 13, Chapter 2.6 of the California Public Resources Code, Section 21080(b)(3), and Section 15269(a) of the California CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the Governor’s Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, and post the NOE on the City’s website, upon the Board’s approval.