

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: University of California, Irvine
Physical & Environmental Planning
4199 Campus Drive, Suite 380
Irvine, CA 92697-2325

Project Title: Greenhouse Replacement

Project Applicant: University of California, Irvine

Project Location – Specific: Academic Core of the University of California, Irvine

Project Location – City: Irvine

Project Location – County: Orange County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Refer to attachment.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: University of California, Irvine

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: University of California, Irvine

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));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 3, Section 15303
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:
- General Exemption (Sec. 15061(b)(3)).

Reason Why Project is Exempt:

Refer to attachment.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Richard Demerjian **Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** (949) 824-7058

Signature: _____

Date: 1.23.20 **Title:** Asst. Vice Chancellor

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JAN 28 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Greenhouse Replacement Notice of Exemption Attachment

Project Description

The Greenhouse Replacement project (proposed project) would construct an approximately 17,400-gross-square-foot (GSF) greenhouse and headhouse facility with approximately 13,460 assignable square feet (ASF) on an undeveloped site located in the Academic Core of the University of California, Irvine (UCI). A service road with four parking spaces would be constructed to connect the project site to West Peltason Drive, and improvements would be made to the existing pedestrian footpath located south of the project site to allow for emergency vehicle access. The proposed project is a replacement for the existing approximately 15,000 GSF greenhouse and headhouse facility located approximately 0.25 miles northeast of the project site, which would be demolished and analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the upcoming Student Success Building project. Additional scope of work includes demolition of existing ornamental landscaping; earthwork; and installation of utilities, lighting, and new landscaping. Proposed uses of the space include offices, laboratories, seed room, growth chamber, headhouse wet room, and equipment and chemical storage.

Reasons the Project is Exempt

The CEQA Guidelines Section 15300 describes Categorical Exemptions as the classes of projects which have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which shall, therefore, be exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

The project generally meets the conditions described under Section 15303, Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures:

“A Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

- c) A store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2,500 square feet in floor area. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to up to four such commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive.”

As discussed in the project description above, the proposed project would be located in the Academic Core, which has been predominantly built-out with existing development; the facility would not involve the usage of significant amounts of hazardous materials but would include small amounts of chemicals, pesticides, and fertilizers to be used and stored on-site; is generally consistent with the commercial building floor area maximum at 13,460 ASF (17,400 GSF); and as a replacement facility would have sufficient public services to support operation. The project site is designated as Academic and Support in the 2007 UCI Long Range Development Plan (LRDP), which allows for instructional and research laboratories, research institutes, and ancillary support facilities.

Review of Possible Exceptions to the Categorical Exemption

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines provides conditions where Categorical Exemptions are inapplicable. The proposed project has been reviewed for characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the project is exempt under CEQA.

- a) **Location.** The proposed project is consistent with the LRDP Academic and Support land use designation. Surrounding uses include West Peltason Drive and a surface parking lot to the north, West Peltason Drive and Student Services to the west, a pedestrian walkway and Campus Village student housing to the south, and academic buildings to the east, including the Science Library, Arts Annex, and modulars. Due to its location within the Academic Core, which is to support academic and research space, the use is compatible for the project site. Additionally, although the project site is currently undeveloped, it contains only ornamental landscaping and is not considered environmentally sensitive.
- b) **Cumulative Impacts.** Although projects are ongoing throughout the UCI campus, no further projects for the project site is planned. Construction and operation of the proposed project would implement best management practices (BMPs) and adhere to State and federal regulations. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated during construction or operation.
- c) **Significant Effects.** Implementation of the proposed project would have negligible to no expansion of use as it is a replacement facility for a comparably sized existing greenhouse located 0.25 miles northeast of the project site. The proposed project does not have unusual circumstances regarding the proposed use or regarding the project site that would cause a significant impact on the environment.
- d) **Scenic Highways.** Pacific Coast Highway (SR-1), approximately 3.2 miles southwest of the project site, is designated as an Eligible State Scenic Highway – Not Officially Designated through Orange County. Due to distance, no impact to scenic resources within a state scenic highway would occur.
- e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** No hazardous waste sites were identified on the project site with review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's EnviroStor and the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker websites, which includes Federal Superfund sites (NPL), State response sites, voluntary cleanup sites, school cleanup sites, permitted sites, corrective action sites, and leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites.
- f) **Historical Resources.** The project site is currently undeveloped with only existing ornamental landscaping. No buildings would be demolished as part of the proposed project.