



## DESIGN REVIEW BOARD Staff Report

Agenda Item C.1  
Meeting Date: March 28, 2023

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TO: Goleta Design Review Board

FROM: Travis Lee, Associate Planner; (805) 562-5528

SUBJECT: **301 Mentor Dr (APN 071-140-079)**  
**Google Generators and Improvements and California Environmental**  
**Quality Act Notice of Exemption utilizing Section 15301**  
**Case Nos. 23-0001-SCD/23-0007-DRB/23-0007-ZC**

### DRB ACTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. Adopt DRB and CEQA Findings provided as Attachment A;
2. Adopt CEQA Categorical Exemption Section 15301 for Existing Facilities provided as Attachment B; and
3. Conduct Conceptual/Preliminary review and approve or approve with conditions if the findings of Attachment A can be made for the Google Generators and site improvements.

If the findings cannot be made to approve the request at this meeting, the DRB can either continue the item for additional information/redesign or deny the request specifically identifying the reasons for the denial.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This is a request for a **Conceptual/Preliminary Review** to construct a new utility area with visual screening adjacent to the eastern side of the existing building, a new prefabricated workshop surrounded by a security fence, 3 new rooftop HVAC units, and 8 new backup generators at the south side of the existing building. For DRB's information, the Property Owner is changing the interior uses within the building to convert offices into laboratory area which reduces the parking requirements. Seven (7) Tipuana Tipu trees are to be removed and landscape/tree replacements will be proposed. The existing site has 212 parking spaces and proposed project would reduce total parking by 9 parking spaces to 203 spaces. The 203 parking spaces would exceed the 183 minimum spaces required based on the revised uses proposed within the building (Office and laboratory space).

The property is located in the Inland Area of the City and has a General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation of Office Institutional (OI). The project does not include a request for any modifications. The proposed project is to be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board as required by Title 17. The project was filed by Walter Grey on behalf of Google.

The approvals needed associated with the proposed changes include Design Review (Chapter 17.58), and a Substantial Conformity Determination (Section 17.52.100(B). Should the DRB approve the design elements associated with the project, staff will proceed with processing a Substantial Conformity Determination for the PER Director's approval. The Director must determine that the change is in substantial conformity with the previous discretionary approval such that the change would not result in a change to the original project, which would alter the scope and intent of the approval the Review Authority originally acted on.

The proposed project is a request for a Substantial Conformity Determination to the previously approved Development Plan (97-DP-24), as amended by an associated Amendment (97-DP-24 AM01), a Substantial Conformity Determination (97-DP-24 SCD01), a subsequent Substantial Conformity Determination (18-048-SCD), and an additional Substantial Conformity Determination (21-0005-SCD).

### **DISCUSSION:**

The project is consistent with Title 17 development standards for the Office Institutional zone (e.g., height, setbacks, parking, noise, etc.) if DRB approves the proposed development. None of the proposed development exceeds the OI height limit of 35' and are outside of all setbacks. Seven (7) non-native Tipuana Tipu trees are proposed for removal. Some view the tree as an invasive weed known for its aggressive root system.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (NOE):**

Pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code, §§ 21000 et seq.), the regulations promulgated thereunder (14 Cal. Code of Regulations, §§ 15000, et seq.: State CEQA Guidelines), and the City's Environmental Review Guidelines, the project has been found to be exempt from CEQA under Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines and a Notice of Exemption is proposed.

The City of Goleta is acting as the Lead Agency for this project. The project has been found to be exempt from CEQA Guidelines per Section 15301 because the project is the interior and exterior improvements to an existing building. The proposed improvements meet the criteria of Section 15301 as the applicant proposes conversion of office space into laboratory space. The property will continue to be served by existing streets and driveways and will not change the demand on the existing infrastructure services. Further, the project would not alter any biological resources, cultural resources, geologic resources, or site drainage and would not impact visual resources. Therefore, given the minor nature of improvements, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Moreover, none of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions set forth in State CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 apply to the project. The exception set forth in State CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2(a), Location. Class 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located and the project is not located in or have an impact on an environmental resource of critical concern that is designated, precisely mapped, or officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. Section 15300.2(b)'s exception, relating to cumulative impacts, does not apply as, there are no

other successive projects of the same type in the same place that could result in significant cumulative impacts. Section 15300.2(c)'s exception does not apply because there are no "unusual circumstances" that apply to the project; interior and exterior improvements and new electrical equipment is not considered unusual for a research facility. Section 15300.2(d)'s exception does not apply because the project is not located near any scenic highways. Section 15300.2(e)'s exception does not apply because the project site and off-site improvement locations do not contain hazardous waste and are not on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Finally, Section 15300.2(f)'s exception does not apply because the project has no potential of causing a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Additionally, the projects site does not contain any identified significant cultural resources and no grading is proposed.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

If the DRB grants the applicant's request, the next steps include: (1) a 10-day DRB appeal period; (2) Substantial Conformity Determination (SCD) by the Director of Planning and Environmental Review or designee and a 10-day SCD appeal period; (3) Final DRB review; (4) ministerial issuance of a Zoning Clearance; (5) review and approval by Building & Safety ("Building Permits"); and (6) project construction, including Building & Safety site inspections.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. DRB Preliminary Review Findings
- B. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption
- C. Project Plans