

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 1, 2023

To: Thai-Chau Le, Planning Manager, City of Foster City

FROM: Theresa Wallace, AICP, Principal

SUBJECT: Foster City Recreation Center Rebuild Project Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration – Response to Comments

In accordance with Section 15074 of the CEQA Guidelines, prior to approving a project, the decision-making body of the lead agency shall consider the proposed environmental document together with any comments received during the public review process. Although there is no legal requirement to formally respond to comments on a proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) as there is for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), this memorandum provides a response to the written comments received on the Foster City Recreation Center Rebuild Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) to aid the City of Foster City decision-makers in their review of the project.

The Draft IS/MND was available for public review and comment from July 26, 2023 to August 15, 2023. In the following pages, the comments and responses are enumerated to allow for cross-referencing of CEQA-related comments. The enumerated comment letters are included in this memorandum, followed by the respective responses. As noted above, CEQA does not require or provide guidance on responding to comments on MNDs; therefore, this memorandum follows CEQA Guidelines Section 15088, applicable to responses to comments on EIRs, which requires that agencies respond only to significant environmental issues raised in connection with the project. Therefore, this document focuses primarily on responding to comments that relate to the adequacy of the information and environmental analysis provided in the IS/MND.

Minor revisions to the proposed project identified in the IS/MND that are made in response to comments received are identified at the end of this memorandum and are incorporated into the Final MND, which includes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP). Minor design changes initiated by the City since the publication of the IS/MND are also identified in this section. The MMRP will be adopted by the City of Foster City if the IS/MND is adopted.

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

This section includes a reproduction of the comment letters received on the IS/MND and responses to each substantive CEQA-related comment. The comment letters are assigned a letter (A1, A2, etc.) and individual comments with the letter are numbered consecutively. For instance, comment A1-1 is the first numbered comment in Letter A1.

Please note that text within the letter that has not been numbered does not raise environmental issues or related to the adequacy of the information or analysis within the IS/MND, and therefore, no comment is enumerated or response required, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15132.

The following comment letters on the IS/MND were submitted to the City:

LETTER A1
Jon Froomin, Mayor, City of Foster City
July 26, 2023

LETTER A2
Greg Koss
July 26, 2023

LETTER A3
Khalaf Hirmina
July 31, 2023

LETTER A4
Melvin Lee
July 26, 2023

Written responses to the comments on the IS/MND are provided after the comment letter.

**Comment
Letter
A1**

From: Jon Froomin-Mayor <jfroomin@fostercity.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 11:41 AM
To: Foster City Webmaster Account <webmaster@fostercity.org>
Subject: Re: [Planning] Notice of Intent (NOI) for Public Review of Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Rec Center Rebuild Project (File No. UP2023-0003/ CIP 301-678)

The first sentence in the Proposed Project Section is incomplete.

Jon

Jon Froomin, Mayor
City of Foster City
650-286-3502 - voicemail

A1-1

On Jul 26, 2023, at 11:29, Foster City California <fostercity@municodeweb.com> wrote:

Notice of Intent (NOI) for Public Review of Initial
Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Rec Center
Rebuild Project (File No. UP2023-0003/ CIP 301-678)

**NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI)
TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
FOR THE PROPOSED FOSTER CITY RECREATION CENTER REBUILD PROJECT**

Project Name: Foster City Recreation Center Rebuild Project

Project File Number: UP2023-0003/CIP 301-678

Lead Agency:
City of Foster City
610 Foster City Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404
Attn: Thai-Chau Le
Planning Manager
tle@fostercity.org
(650) 286-3244

Applicant:
City of Foster City
610 Foster City Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404
Attn: Derek Schweigart
Parks and Recreation Director
dschweigart@fostercity.org
(650) 286-3390

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Foster City (City), as the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), has completed an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the proposed Foster City Recreation Center Rebuild Project (proposed project).

PROJECT LOCATION: 650 Shell Blvd, Foster City, CA 94404 (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 094-470-130 and 094-470-150). Specifically, the approximately 6-acre project site is located within Leo J. Ryan Park at 650 Shell Boulevard, in the City of Foster City, San Mateo County. The project site is bound by Shell Boulevard to the north, Leo J. Ryan Park to the east and west, and the Foster City Lagoon to the south. The project site is currently developed with the William E. Walker Recreation Center, which is a multi-purpose facility with classrooms and event spaces as well as various other community-oriented uses. Originally constructed in 1974, the William E. Walker Recreation Center is a one-story, approximately 24-foot-tall, 32,000-square-foot building with approximately 18,000 square feet devoted to programming space.

PROPOSED PROJECT: Demolish the existing 32,000-square-foot recreation center and construct new Foster City Recreation Center in approximately the same location with a different. The new recreation center building would be two stories and a maximum of approximately 40 feet in height and approximately 40,000 square feet in size. The proposed project would also include improvements to Leo J. Ryan Park consisting of new outdoor gathering spaces, new landscaping, and restriped parking lots.

FINDINGS: The Initial Study prepared by the City was undertaken for the purpose of deciding whether the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. On the basis of the Initial Study, City has concluded that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The project site is not on a list of hazardous waste sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

PUBLIC REVIEW:

The Draft Initial Study, MND, and reference documents are available for review online at: www.fostercity.org/ReccenterCEQA. Paper copies of the IS/MND are also available for review from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the City's Community Development Department, located at 610 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, CA 94404. ***The public comment period for this Draft IS/MND begins on July 26, 2023 and ends on August 15, 2023.*** Comments from all Responsible Agencies and interested parties are requested. Any person wishing to comment on the Draft IS/MND must submit written comments to the Lead Agency's contact listed above.

For more information on project timeline and components, please visit
<https://rebuildtherec.org/en/projects/rebuildtherec>

City of Foster City | 610 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, CA 94404 | (650) 286-3200

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LETTER A**Jon Froomin, Mayor, City of Foster City****July 26, 2023**

Response A1-1: This comment correctly notes that the first sentence in the 'Proposed Project' section of the Notice of Intent (NOI) is incomplete. Revisions made to the Draft IS/MND to complete the statement are identified in Revisions to the Draft IS/MND, below. In addition, a complete description of the proposed project is included in Section 2.0, Project Description, of the Draft IS/MND. This comment does not relate to the adequacy of the information provided in the Draft IS/MND, and no further response is required.

From: [Greg Koss](#)
To: [Thai-Chau Le](#); [Derek Schweigart](#)
Subject: Rec Center Rebuild Project
Date: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 7:10:27 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

**Comment
Letter
A2**

Hi,

The plan looks like its shaping up nicely. But I notice there's no consideration for pedestrian traffic crossing Foster City Blvd to and from the parking at the Library or City Offices parking lot. Here's a snippet from your architectural rendering in the plan document to illustrate the crossing I'm talking about.



A2-1

I suggest it would help all the people parking at the Library and points east to have a crosswalk with pedestrian activated signalling. The idea being that normally traffic would not be impacted by this crossing outside of events at the amphitheater or at the Rec Center itself. In the high-traffic periods when events are happening it would be a great help to a lot of people parking in those lots by the Library, City Offices, and Foster Square.

Please consider this suggestion to assist everyone that parks across the street and has to navigate FCB traffic across 6 lanes of traffic.

Thanks for listening.

Best Regards,
-G

--

Greg Koss
[Redacted Signature]

LETTER A2
Greg Koss
July 26, 2023

Response A2-1:

This introductory comment correctly notes that the proposed project does not include a pedestrian crossing of Foster City Boulevard.

This comment, which suggests a midblock crossing with pedestrian-activated signaling from the project site across Foster City Boulevard should be included in the proposed project, is noted.

As described Section 4.17, Transportation, of the Draft IS/MND, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact related to transportation hazards as it would not include any roadway or driveway changes. In addition, pedestrian access to the project site would be provided by existing sidewalks along Shell Boulevard and pathways within Leo J. Ryan Park. Therefore, no mitigation related to pedestrian access or other transportation hazards is warranted.

The City may consider a midblock crossing as a future project separate from the proposed project. In the event the midblock crossing is considered by the City, this project would be reviewed separately to determine whether or not it would have any environmental impacts under CEQA. This comment does not relate to the adequacy of the information provided in the Draft IS/MND, and no further response is required.

From: [Khalaf Hirmina](#)
To: [Thai-Chau Le](#)
Subject: Two story building at the lagoon to replace the one story building is not acceptable.
Date: Monday, July 31, 2023 5:05:03 PM

Hi Mr. Thai-Chau Le,

I am an owner at Foster Square. I live in Building 738 Eppleton lane, unit 204, facing Shell Blvd and the Lagoon. I moved here on February 2019.

The existing low profile building at the Lagoon is purposely designed for keeping the nature's beauty wide open at all the surroundings. The 40 feet high two story building is going to block the view and degrade the attractiveness of the Lagoon and its surrounding areas.

Highly recommended to discard the two story design and build a one story building of the same height as the existing one. The existing height is the right design and should be followed.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Khalaf (Kal) Hirmina


]

A3-1

LETTER A3
Khalaf Hirmina
July 31, 2023

Response A3-1:

This comment states that the existing single-story recreation center is purposefully design to provide views of the Foster City Lagoon, and that the proposed project would block the view and degrade the attractiveness of the Lagoon and surrounding areas. The comment states that the proposed project should only be one story in height.

Potential impacts related to aesthetics and visual resources are discussed in Section 4.1, Aesthetics, of the Draft IS/MND. As described on page 4-1 of the Draft IS/MND, the proposed project would be a maximum of approximately 16 feet taller than the existing recreation center, but would not result in any physical changes to the Lagoon itself that would change the visual character of the Lagoon. While western views of the Foster City Lagoon are available from the project site, the proposed building would be located in the same general location as the existing recreation center. Views of the Lagoon would still be available from within and around the project site, including from public vantage points, such as along Shell Boulevard.

While the increase in building height would alter the physical character of the project site and immediate vicinity, the new building would not be out of character with existing buildings in the vicinity such as the Foster City Library and Community Center and Foster Square Apartments. Furthermore, the proposed project would be required to undergo design review through the Use Permit Planning application as it would consist of a new development. Design review would ensure that the proposed project is attractively designed and potential aesthetic elements are considered and consistent with City policies.

From: Melvin Lee [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 3:16 PM
To: Foster City Webmaster Account <webmaster@fostercity.org>
Subject: Re: [Pilgrim-Triton] Notice of Intent (NOI) for Public Review of Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Rec Center Rebuild Project (File No. UP2023-0003/ CIP 301-678)

Thank you for the NOI.

I'd like to alert Foster City's Park & Recreation Department.

If a landscape architectural firm by the name of Van Dorn & Abed responds to any RFPs for design services, they may be using projects Sea Cloud Park and Booth Bay Park as reference for work performed in Foster City.

This firm did not design Sea Cloud Park or Booth Bay Park including Civic Centers or Public Space projects for the cities of Atwater, Gilroy, Lompoc, Morgan Hill and South San Francisco. They may also list many Centex Homes projects in Foster City, they were not involved in any Centex Homes projects.

They were my employees at Melvin Lee Associates but not while these projects were designed in the 1980's. They joined my firm many years after.

Thank you,
Melvin Lee
Retired Landscape Architect.

A4-1

On Jul 26, 2023, at 12:42 PM, Foster City California <fostercity@municodeweb.com> wrote:

Notice of Intent (NOI) for Public Review of Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Rec Center Rebuild Project (File No. UP2023-0003/ CIP 301-678)

NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE PROPOSED FOSTER CITY RECREATION CENTER REBUILD PROJECT

Project Name: Foster City Recreation Center Rebuild Project

Project File Number: UP2023-0003/CIP 301-678

Lead Agency:

City of Foster City

610 Foster City Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404

Attn: Thai-Chau Le
Planning Manager
t1e@fostercity.org
(650) 286-3244

Applicant:

City of Foster City

610 Foster City Boulevard
Foster City, CA 94404

Attn: Derek Schweigart
Parks and Recreation Director
dschweigart@fostercity.org
(650) 286-3390

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PROPOSED PROJECT: Demolish the existing 32,000-square-foot recreation center and construct new Foster City Recreation Center in approximately the same location with a

different. The new recreation center building would be two stories and a maximum of approximately 40 feet in height and approximately 40,000 square feet in size. The proposed project would also include improvements to Leo J. Ryan Park consisting of new outdoor gathering spaces, new landscaping, and restriped parking lots.

FINDINGS: The Initial Study prepared by the City was undertaken for the purpose of deciding whether the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. On the basis of the Initial Study, City has concluded that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The project site is not on a list of hazardous waste sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

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LETTER A4
Melvin Lee
July 26, 2023

Response A4-1:

This comment notifies the City about the design of various parks and other public spaces that are not included or impacted by the proposed project. This comment does not relate to the adequacy of the information provided in the Draft IS/MND, and no further response is required.

REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT IS/MND

This section presents specific text changes to the IS/MND initiated by City staff or in response to comments received. These revisions also reflect minor refinements to the project design and amenities described in the IS/MND. In no case do these revisions result in a greater number of impacts or impacts of a greater severity than those set forth in the IS/MND. Added text is indicated with double underlined text and deleted text is shown in ~~strikeout~~.

Staff-Initiated Revisions

The following revision is made to the 'Proposed Project' section of the NOI that was published with the Draft IS/MND:

PROPOSED PROJECT: Demolish the existing 32,000-square-foot recreation center and construct the new Foster City Recreation Center in approximately the same location with a different. The new recreation center building would be two stories and a maximum of approximately 40 feet in height and approximately 40,000 square feet in size. The proposed project would also include improvements to Leo J. Ryan Park consisting of new outdoor gathering spaces, new landscaping, and restriped parking lots.

The following revisions are made to Section 2.2.1, starting on page 2-3, of the Draft IS/MND:

The existing 32,000-square-foot recreation center would be demolished and the new Foster City Recreation Center would be constructed in approximately the same location with a different, ~~larger~~smaller footprint. The new recreation center building would be two stories and a maximum of approximately 40 feet in height and approximately 40,000 square feet in size. The first floor of the new recreation center building would include a café and multiple event spaces, as well as space for classrooms, offices and staff rooms, meeting rooms, a community lounge/lobby, a senior lounge, and a kitchen. A playground and patio would also be provided adjacent to the classroom spaces to allow classroom spaces to operate as a preschool. Additionally, the first floor would include restrooms, storage, and building mechanical space. Building service areas would also include generator¹ and trash enclosures near the northern boundary of the site. The second floor would include space for fitness rooms, multi-purpose activity rooms, an arts room, meeting rooms, and additional office space as well as an outdoor patio on the south side of the building facing the Foster City Lagoon.

The following revisions are made to Section 2.2.2, starting on page 2-3, of the Draft IS/MND:

The proposed project would include improvements to Leo J. Ryan Park within the immediate vicinity of the proposed building. These improvements would largely consist of new outdoor gathering spaces, including a waterfront terrace near the lagoon, a social terrace near the proposed building that could include a beer garden and two new bocce ball courts (in

¹ For purposes of this analysis, a 335-horsepower generator was assumed to run one hour per week for testing.

addition to the two existing courts), and a garden terrace and rose garden that would include public seating.

The following revisions are made to the second paragraph in Section 4.11.a, starting on page 4-64 of the Draft IS/MND:

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the demolition of the existing recreation center and the construction of the new recreation center in approximately the same location with a different, ~~larger~~smaller footprint to improve recreational access and programming for the community. Associated improvements include improvements to the Leo J. Ryan Park and existing parking lots to improve visitor access and circulation. The proposed project would not result in the construction of any improvements that would remove a means of access or impair mobility within the community. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact.

The following revisions are made to the first paragraph in Section 4.11.b, starting on page 4-64 of the Draft IS/MND:

The project site is designated as Parks and Recreation on the City's General Plan Land Use Map.⁵⁹ This designation is for improved open space lands where the purpose is recreation. The project site is located within the Public Facilities (P-F) and the Open Space and Conservation (OSC) zoning districts.⁶⁰ The P-F district is reserved for the construction, use and occupancy of governmental, public utility and educational buildings and facilities, and other uses compatible with the semipublic character of the district. Buildings and facilities owned and operated by the City are permitted within the P-F district. The OSC district is reserved for open space uses with public structures and facilities deemed as Conditional Uses. The project site is also within the Planned Development (PD) combining district, which is designed to accommodate various types of development, such as single-family residential developments, multiple housing development, neighborhood and community shopping centers, professional and administrative areas, commercial service centers, and industrial parks and other uses or a combination of uses which can be made appropriately a part of a planned development.