

Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Snelling Event Center Project

Lead Agency: Merced County
2222 "M" Street
Merced, CA 95340

Project Title: Snelling Road Event Center Project

Project Location: The project site (Assessor Parcel Number [APN] 043-080-002) is located at 15080 N. Snelling Road within the unincorporated portion of Merced County near the community of Snelling. Snelling is located along State Route (SR) 59, and is approximately 21 miles east of Turlock and 13 miles north of Merced. The project site encompasses approximately 22 acres located along the Merced River, adjacent east of Snelling Road, and approximately 0.54 miles south of SR 59.

The project site was formerly used for dredge mining operations, and has remnant gravel/rock tailing piles from the dredging activities. The project site currently contains a mobile home that is served by a water well system and an elevated/bermed septic tank and seepage tank. The project site has several ancillary facilities including a shop building, kennel for two dogs, and a gasoline tank. These developed areas are accessed by an existing gravel driveway and gravel roadway off Snelling Road.

The property has been used seasonally for Halloween festivities, including up to 400 people per day during the fall season. Parking for these festivities has occurred in a flat grassy area that is mowed prior to vehicular parking use by the seasonal visitors. The property has also been used for several private weddings, with wedding activities being held in the same location as the Halloween festivities.

Project Description: The proposed project would include development and operation of an outdoor event and recreation area on the project site. The event and recreation area would require development of a catering and storage building, restroom and changing room building, and gazebo (Figure 4).

The project anticipates using the existing parking area for event parking. This parking area will remain earthen and vegetated (grass), but is anticipated to be graded initially to ensure it is level. There is a possibility that the parking area would be graveled to create an all-weather surface. If left as vegetated, the applicant will mow the parking area prior to events, if graveled there is very little maintenance anticipated other than adding some additional gravel and leveling every five to ten years.

The project would also include some basic landscaping associated with the event area (including ornamental landscaping, flower beds/pots, and a garden), however, it is noted that landscaping will be minimal and focus on the natural environment that is present (i.e., oak trees, grasses, river). Irrigation and electrical utilities are in place from the current landscaping in the event area. A septic system will be added to serve the event restroom. The septic will be similar to the existing septic system that serves the existing mobile home.

Findings/Determination: The County of Merced has reviewed and considered the proposed project and has determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment with the incorporation of mitigations, with substantial supporting evidence provided in the Initial Study. The County of Merced hereby prepares and proposes to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project.

Public Review Period: A 30-day public review period for the Mitigated Negative Declaration/Initial Study will commence on June 17, 2022, and will end on July 17, 2022 for interested individuals and public agencies to submit written comments on the document. Any written comments on the Mitigated Negative

Declaration/Initial Study should be sent to the attention of Cameron Christie, Planner I, at 2222 M Street, 2nd Floor, Merced, CA 95340 by 5:00 PM on July 17, 2022.

Document Availability: Copies of the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration are available for review online at:

<https://www.co.merced.ca.us/414/Environmental-Documents>