CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

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PROJECT TITLE: Lease Agreement with City of Fresno and Anoush Chamlian for Office Space

PROJECT LOCATIONS: 621 Santa Fe, Fresno, CA 93721; located on the west side of Ventura Avenue, between Santa Fe Avenue and P Street in downtown Fresno.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project consists of the City of Fresno entering into a lease agreement for approximately 16,425 square feet of existing office space and occupying an existing office building for administrative, utilities planning, and engineering functions. Initial occupancy is anticipated to include approximately 45 to 50 City employees relocated from existing City facilities. Occupancy may increase over time based on operational needs; however, occupancy would remain within the capacity of the existing building, on-site parking supply, and available infrastructure, with a maximum occupancy of approximately 100 employees. The project involves occupancy and operation of an existing building. No construction, demolition, expansion, grading, major tenant improvements, interior alterations, exterior modifications, or changes to existing building systems are proposed as a condition of the lease Existing parking, utilities, and infrastructure would continue to serve the site. Routine maintenance activities may occur as part of normal building operations.

The Project is exempt under Section 15301/Class 1 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Under Section 15301/Class 1—Existing Facilities, projects are exempt from CEQA requirements when they consist of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 – Existing Facilities). Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The proposed project consists of the leasing and occupancy of an existing office building for administrative, utilities planning, and engineering functions. The project would utilize an existing building and existing supporting infrastructure. No construction, expansion, major tenant improvements, or physical alterations to the building or site are proposed. Occupancy would remain within the capacity of the existing building, parking supply, and available infrastructure. Accordingly, the project involves the leasing and operation of an existing facility with negligible or no expansion of existing or former use and qualifies for the Class 1 categorical exemption.

None of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2, apply:

(a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

> The project is not located in a sensitive environment which will impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. Rather, the project consists solely of the lease and occupancy of an existing developed office building in an urbanized area. The project does not involve construction, site disturbance, grading, vegetation removal, or other activities that could affect an environmentally sensitive habitat or resource area. Therefore, the location exception does not apply.

(b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

> The project would not result in a significant environmental effect due to unusual circumstances. The project consists solely of the lease and occupancy of an existing office building for office uses that are consistent with the building's existing and historical use. No construction, physical alterations, expansion, or operational changes are proposed that would result in environmental impacts. Accordingly, there are no unusual circumstances that would create a reasonable possibility of a significant environmental effect.

(c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

> The Project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The Project is largely relocation of existing operations which would not result in substantial or significant effect on the environment.

(d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

> The project would not result in damage to scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a State Scenic Highway. The project does not involve exterior modifications, construction activities, vegetation removal, or other physical changes that could affect scenic resources. Therefore, the scenic highways exception does not apply.

(e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

> The Project is not located on a hazardous waste site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Therefore, the hazardous waste sites exception does not apply.

(f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

> The building H.P. #59 Berven Rug Mills, Inc./Wellman-Peck & Company Building (1917) is registered in the Local Register of Historic Resources. The proposed

project consists solely of the lease and occupancy of the existing building for administrative, utilities planning, and engineering functions. No interior or exterior alterations, major tenant improvements, construction activities, demolition, relocation, or other physical modifications to the building or site are proposed.

Any routine maintenance activities would be limited to activities that do not alter character-defining features of the historical resource and would be consistent with ongoing building operations. Because the project would not result in any physical change to the historical resource, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of the resource as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. Therefore, the historical resources exception set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f) does not apply.

Furthermore, the proposed project is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. Accordingly, a categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project.

Prepared &
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