

CITY OF FRESNO
RESIDENTIAL INFILL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 12.5 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

APPLICANT: Danny Tohme
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PROJECT LOCATION: 930, 932, and 934 F Street and 931 and 935 China Alley; Located along F street and China Alley between Tulare and Kern Streets (APN: 467-071-15).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The proposed project will include the acquisition of APN 467-071-15, demolition of the existing structures, and construction of a future residential infill project. All units are expected to be rented to low income households and will be deeded affordable for 30 years.

This project is exempt under Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as follows:

Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions described in this section.

(a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The proposed project is consistent with the following General Plan goals and policies:

Goals:

Goal 7. Provide for a diversity of districts, neighborhoods, housing types (including affordable housing), residential densities, job opportunities, recreation, open space, and educational venues that appeal to a broad range of people throughout the city.

Goal 8. Develop Complete Neighborhoods and districts with an efficient and diverse mix of residential densities, building types, and affordability which are designed to be healthy, attractive, and centered by schools, parks, and public and commercial services to provide a sense of place and that provide as many services as possible within walking distance.

Policies

LU-1-a Promote new development, infill, and rehabilitation of existing building stock in the Downtown Planning Area, along BRT corridors, in established neighborhoods generally south of Herndon Avenue, and on other infill sites and vacant land within the City.

The proposed project site is zoned DTN (Downtown Neighborhood), and multi-unit residential development is a permitted use. The DTN zone district is consistent with the Downtown Neighborhood planned land use designation of the Fresno General Plan.

The project is consistent with the City of Fresno's General Plan and the Downtown Neighborhoods Community Plan.

(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

The proposed development is within the City of Fresno. The project would occur on a 0.17-acre site and thus is below the five-acre threshold. The project site is located in the Downtown area along F Street, which is already developed for urban uses.

(c) The project site has no value for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The project site has been developed for urban uses and surrounded by urban uses for several decades. No suitable habitat for wildlife or special status plant species exists on or near the project site. Because no species are present on the site, the proposed project does not cause the destruction or removal of any species protected by a local ordinance, the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.), the Native Plant Protection Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 1900) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code), the California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050) of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code, or any other law or ordinance in effect at the time the application for the project was deemed complete.

(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

The Project site is located in a highly developed area with existing infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drain) in place. The building was a commercial/retail/residential building since at least 1927. The site was vacant for about 30 years before a fire on March 4, 2022 caused the roof of the primary structure to collapse onto the 2nd level. It is not anticipated that the Project would result in significant environmental impacts due to the nature of the proposed Project (residential housing). This project is an infill site and there are no unusual circumstances which would cause significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

Traffic

The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds adopted a screening standard and criteria that can be used to screen out qualified project sites that meet the adopted criteria from needing to prepare a detailed VMT analysis. As explained below, staff believes this project site will have a less than significant impact on traffic because of the site location within 0.5 mile of a Transit Priority Area as well as the high level of affordable housing units.

The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds Section 3.0 regarding Project Screening discusses a variety of projects that may be screened out of a VMT analysis including specific development and transportation projects. For development projects, conditions may exist that would presume that a development project has a less than significant impact. These may be size, location, proximity to transit, or trip-making potential. For transportation projects, the primary attribute to consider is the potential to increase vehicle travel, sometimes referred to as “induced travel.”

The proposed project site is eligible to screen out pursuant to the City of Fresno VMT Thresholds Section 3.0 (Project Screening). Using the Fresno COG VMT Calculator Tool, it indicated the Transportation Analysis Zone in which the subject property is located would generate 4.5 VMT per capita. As the City’s established VMT threshold is 13.10 VMT per capita, the Project’s impact to VMT is less than the 13 percent minimum threshold, resulting in a less than significant impact.

In summary, this project site will not result in any significant traffic impacts or will have a less than significant impact on Regional VMT.

Noise.

A future project site development would be to predevelop and construct new residential units and will be affordable to low income households deeded for 30 years. The project site is surrounded by commercial/retail uses.

Housing developments typically generate low noise levels due to limited automotive speeds within the complex and limited use of open space areas. Furthermore, noise from the existing adjacent major freeway (Highway CA-99) would exceed the noise levels produced within the residential development, assuring the proposed development would not cause a nuisance in exceeding noise decibel standard of the Fresno Municipal Code.

Noise impacts from demolition and construction activities would be temporary and less than significant due to compliance with performance standards contained in the City’s Development Code.

(e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project is in a developed area with existing utility and public service infrastructure. The development can be adequately served by existing utilities located in F Street and China Alley. The applicant shall pay all applicable fees.

Date: October 4, 2024
Submitted by: Philip Skei
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City of Fresno
Planning & Development
Department