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October 11, 2023

Gustavo Rangel, Engineer  
City of Fresno, Public Works Department  
Engineering Services Division  
2600 Fresno Street, Room 4016  
Fresno, CA 93721

**Re: PW00902 Merced Street Reconnection - Supporting Memorandum for Categorical Exemption (Class 2 – Replacement or Reconstruction) / SWCA Project No. 73586-006**

Dear Mr. Rangel:

This memorandum provides supporting documentation for determining the Merced Street Reconnection Project (project) exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines 15302, Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Fresno (City) proposes to re-establish an existing 600-foot-long segment of Merced Street, between H Street and Congo Alley, and an existing 230-foot-long northerly extension of Broadway Street from the current terminus, approximately 280 feet north of Fresno Street to intersect with the proposed Merced Street extension in the city of Fresno, California. The proposed project would include the installation of associated improvements, including sidewalk, curbs, curb ramps, streetlights, and landscaping improvements. Two portions of City-owned property within the project area would be dedicated as public street easements by Resolution to accommodate the construction of the project. The proposed project would be located adjacent to Hotel Fresno (Local Register Historic Property Number 166); however, all work would be conducted within the existing City Right-of-Way (ROW) and no property acquisition or other disturbance would be required.

## APPLICABLE EXEMPTION

A Class 2 Categorical Exemption consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The proposed project would be consistent with the provisions of a Class 2 Categorical Exemption because it would be limited to the re-establishment of an existing roadway and associated improvements.

The proposed project includes the redevelopment and reactivation of the former alignment of Merced Street, between H Street and Congo Alley, as well as a perpendicular segment of Broadway. All of these segments border the Fresno Hotel property, which is a known historic resource. Although the existing conditions of the streetscape would be significantly changed from the current configuration, this would ultimately have no effect on historical resources. Essentially, these segments were converted from an active part of Merced Street first into an offramp-like extension of Fresno Street in the 1960s, and later converted again into a pedestrian plaza around the Fresno IRS Compliance building in 2003. By reactivating the roadways for automobile circulation, the project would be reconnecting the circulation around the historic Fresno Hotel to the grid pattern that is characteristic of downtown, and ultimately restore the surrounding streetscape to a condition and pattern of use that is more consistent with the historic setting of the hotel property. As such, the reconfiguration of Merced Street and a portion of

Broadway between H Street and Congo Alley in downtown Fresno would improve the integrity of setting of the historic Fresno Hotel by restoring the circulation patterns and configurations of the streetscape to a condition that is more consistent with the historical resource's period of significance of 1912 to 1962. Therefore, the Merced Street reactivation project would have no significant impact on historical resources.

The proposed improvements would not increase the capacity of the roadway. In addition, the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts associated with its location, cumulative impacts, scenic resources, hazardous waste sites, historical resources, energy demand, or otherwise have the potential to result in a significant effect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacqueline Markley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline Markley, AICP  
Senior Environmental Planner

Attachment A Notice of Exemption

**ATTACHMENT A**  
Notice of Exemption

**Notice of Exemption****Appendix E**

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Fresno

2220 Tulare Street

Fresno, CA 93721-2600

**From:** (Public Agency): City of Fresno

2600 Fresno Street, 4th Floor

Fresno, CA 93721

(Address)

Project Title: Merced Street Reconnection

Project Applicant: City of Fresno Public Works Department

Project Location - Specific:

**Merced Street between H Street and Congo Alley in the city of Fresno, CA**

Project Location - City: Fresno

Project Location - County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The City of Fresno (City) proposes to re-establish an existing 600-foot-long segment of Merced Street, between H Street and Congo Alley, and an existing 230-foot-long northerly extension of Broadway Street from the current terminus, approximately 280 feet north of Fresno Street to intersect with the proposed Merced Street extension in the city of Fresno, California. The proposed project would include the installation of associated improvements, including a sidewalk, curbs, curb ramps, streetlights, and landscaping. The proposed project would be located adjacent to Hotel Fresno (Local Register Historic Property Number 166); however, all work would be conducted within the existing City Right-of-Way (ROW) and no property acquisition or other disturbance would be required.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Fresno

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Fresno Public Works Department

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));

☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15302 - Replacement or Reconstruction (Class 2)

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why project is exempt:

A Class 2 Categorical Exemption consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The proposed project would be consistent with the provisions of a Class 2 Categorical Exemption because it would be limited to the re-establishment of an existing roadway and associated improvements. The proposed improvements would not increase the capacity of the roadway. In addition, the project would not result in potentially significant environmental impacts associated with its location, cumulative impacts, scenic resources, hazardous waste sites, historical resources, energy demand, or otherwise have the potential to result in a significant effect.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Gustavo Rangel

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (559) 621-8634

**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.

2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 2011