

**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.

APPLICANT: Cultiva La Salud
2409 Merced Street
Fresno, California 93721

PROJECT LOCATION: 620 North Fresno Street; Located on the northeast corner of
North Fresno Street and East White Avenue

APNs: 452-321-17
(Council District 7)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: New Community Kitchen at 620 N Fresno St, Fresno, CA 93701.
The project is a new two shell building with approximately 10,600
sf. The first floor is the central kitchen and support spaces, offices
and conference spaces. The second floor consists of (6) offices,
open office space, breakroom and work room, the site consists of
outdoor bike/pedal cart storage and an outdoor break/patio area.

The purpose of this community kitchen is to provide a space for
local food vendors to prepare healthy food options for their
customers. This location will also provide space to educate food
vendors on proper food handling techniques and serve as an
incubator for entrepreneurs looking to start or expand a food
service business.

This facility is expected to serve approximately 48 participants per
year.

**This project is exempt under Section 15332/Class 32 of the California Environmental
Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.**

Section 15332/Class 32 (Class 32/In-Fill Development Projects) of the CEQA Guidelines
exempts from the provisions of CEQA, projects characterized as in-fill development, which meet
the following conditions:

- 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.

Specifically, the project does not propose any changes to the current land use designation
and zoning, and further anticipates food preparation and office uses, both of which are
permitted uses within the existing Neighborhood Mixed Use zoning; and

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

Development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses. Specifically, the project site is approximately 0.43 acres; and.

- c) The project has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. Specifically, the site is already developed and paved, with no habitable land within the footprint suitable for endangered, rare, or threatened species; and

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

The proposed project was reviewed, and no significant effects were identified relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality as provided in detail below.

Traffic

Senate Bill (SB) 743, signed in 2013, changes how transportation studies are conducted in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) replaces motorist delay and level of service (LOS) as the metric for impact determination. VMT measures how much actual auto travel (additional miles driven) a proposed project would create on California roads. If the project adds excessive car travel onto our roads, the project may cause a significant transportation impact.

The State CEQA Guidelines were amended to implement SB 743, by adding Section 15064.3. Among its provisions, Section 15064.3 confirms that, except with respect to transportation projects, a project's effect on automobile delay shall not constitute a significant environmental impact. Therefore, LOS measures of impacts on traffic facilities are no longer a relevant CEQA criteria for transportation impacts.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(4) states that "[a] lead agency has discretion to evaluate a project's vehicle miles traveled, including whether to express the change in absolute terms, per capita, per household or in any other measure. A lead agency may use models to estimate a project's vehicle miles traveled and may revise those estimates to reflect professional judgment based on substantial evidence. Any assumptions used to estimate used to estimate vehicle miles traveled and any revision to model outputs should be documented and explained in the environmental document prepared for the project. The standard of adequacy in Section 15151 shall apply to the analysis described in this section."

On June 25, 2020, the City of Fresno adopted CEQA Guidelines for Vehicle Miles Traveled Thresholds, dated June 25, 2020, pursuant to Senate Bill 743 to be effective of July 1, 2020. The thresholds described therein are referred to herein as the City of Fresno VMT Thresholds. The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds document was prepared and adopted consistent with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Sections 15064.3 and 15064.7. The December 2018 Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA (Technical Advisory) published by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR),

was utilized as a reference and guidance document in the preparation of the Fresno VMT Thresholds.

The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds adopted a screening standard and criteria that can be used to screen out qualified projects that meet the adopted criteria from needing to prepare a detailed VMT analysis.

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, including:

- The project is within 0.5 mile (mi) of a Transit Priority Area or a High-Quality Transit Area unless the project is inconsistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/SCS, has a floor area ratio (FAR) less than 0.75, provides an excessive amount of parking, or reduces the number of affordable residential units.
- The project involves local-serving retail space of less than 50,000 square feet (sf).
- The project has a high level of affordable housing units.
- The project generates a low volume of daily traffic. The city will allow screening out projects if the project would generate less than 500 ADT.
- The development of institutional/government and public service uses that support community health, safety and welfare.

Staff utilized the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Screening Tool to determine the VMT for the proposed project. The adopted threshold of significance is 13%, which means that projects that generate VMT in excess of 13% than the existing regional VMT per capita or per employee would have a significant environmental impact; projects that meet the 13% threshold are determined to have a less than significant effect on regional VMT. According to the VMT screening tool, the proposed commercial community kitchen with second floor offices project is located within a low-VMT zone and is estimated to generate 19.66 VMT, lower than the 25.60 VMT (13%) threshold.

Small projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day or less than 500 Active Daily Trips (ADT) generally may be assumed to cause a less-than significant transportation impact, which is lower than the 13% VMT threshold. Given the project's proposed square footage of 10,600, it is not anticipated to exceed the established thresholds for ADT and daily trips. Furthermore, due to its location in a low VMT zone, the Fresno COG VMT Calculation Tool (Excel) was employed with the project parameters, yielding results that indicate the project's VMT remains below the established limits. Additionally, the project qualifies for screening out based on its location in a low-VMT zone, its classification as local-serving retail under 50,000 square feet, and its designation for public service use.

In summary, the project will not adversely affect VMT and is projected to result in less-than-significant traffic impacts.

Noise:

The project site is an infill site located within an urban neighborhood surrounded by existing urban uses including existing residential and mixed-use areas. As such, there are existing ambient noise levels that are typical of these types of developments including traffic. Development of the site for an office and commercial kitchen use would not generate a new, noise generating source that would not otherwise occur in the Project vicinity (i.e., 0.25-mile radius). The nearest sensitive land uses are residences adjacent to the site and Tehipite Middle School located just east of the site. While the project would require construction, construction-related noise impacts would be temporary, short-term, and subject to compliance with FMC Section 10-109, which limits construction hours. Operational uses would not create significant noise impacts since no amplifying system is proposed. While noise would mainly be generated by traffic, traffic generation would be limited, as analyzed above. For these reasons, the project would not result in any significant effects relating to noise.

Air Quality:

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) recommends a three-tiered approach to analysis based on project size to allow project screening for significant impacts. The first tier is the Small Project Analysis Level (SPAL), the second tier is a Cursory Analysis Level (CAL) for projects exceeding the SPAL criteria, and the third tier is a Full Analysis Level (FAL), which is the level of analysis that is usually required for an EIR. The SPAL was established by the SJVAPCD on November 13, 2020, and the threshold for the SPAL was performed based on CalEEMod version 2016.3.2.

The Project would not have any significant effects relating to air quality pursuant to the SJVAPCD SPAL based on pre-quantified emissions and determined values related to project type, size, and number of vehicle trips. According to the SPAL, projects that fit specified descriptions are deemed to have a less than significant impact on air quality and as such are excluded from quantifying criteria pollutant emissions for CEQA purposes. Based on the Project description, the applicable land use types for the proposed project include the General Office Building and Quality Restaurant land use type.

Overall, the proposed project generates fewer than 1,000 ADT and 115 HHDT for office use, and fewer than 1,500 ADT and 25 HHDT for the commercial kitchen. As a result, the project is expected to have a less-than-significant impact on air quality and is therefore exempt from the requirement to quantify criteria pollutant emissions for CEQA purposes.

Water Quality:

The Project site is an infill site with existing residential and mixed-use development surrounding the property. Development of the Project may require connections to existing utilities including water and stormwater systems. For sites greater than one (1) acre in size, the Applicant is required to prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) in compliance with the NPDES stormwater program, as shown in the Project Description. The SWPPP estimates the sediment risk associated with construction activities and includes BMPs to control erosion. BMPs specific to erosion control cover erosion, sediment, tracking, and waste management controls. Implementation of the SWPPP minimizes the potential for a project to result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil and impacts would

be less than significant.

The City of Fresno is under the jurisdiction of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Central Valley NPDES Permit and Waste Discharge Requirements General Permit for Discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4), Order Number R5-2016-0040-014, NPDES Number CA S0085324 ("MS4 Permit"). The MS4 Permit requires compliance with stormwater quality controls as identified in the Fresno Clovis Storm Water Quality Management Construction and Post-Construction Guidelines. Compliance would reduce the potential for discharge of pollutants in violation of water quality standards or waste discharge requirements and impacts would be less than significant.

Stormwater infiltration has the potential to affect groundwater quality whereby rainfall and stormwater runoff flow into and through the subsurface soil. A majority of the project site would be of impervious surface. Runoff from the site would be collected and diverted to the storm drainage system through existing drainage services. Further, runoff resulting from the Project would be managed by the FMFCD in compliance with the Storm Drainage and Flood Control Master Plan in addition to approved grading and drainage plans. Therefore, potential for stormwater infiltration reaching subsurface soils and impacting groundwater quality is limited, and impacts would be less than significant.

The SWPPP and MS4 Permit are standardized (non-project specific) and pre-existing project features, these features are taken into account prior to making a significance determination. Overall, compliance with SWPPP, MS4 Permit, FMFCD regulations, and approved grading and drainage plans would minimize the potential for the Project to violate any water or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality and impacts would be less than significant.

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

The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Specifically, the site is already developed with utilities and public services already in place.

None of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply to the project. Furthermore, the proposed project is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment.

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