

**CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. P21-02508**

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: Scott A Jones
The Taylor Group, Architects
410 Park Creek Drive
Clovis, CA, 93611

PROJECT LOCATION: 2017, 2025, 2111 East Dakota Avenue, 3821, 3837, 3845 North Clark Avenue, and 3872 North Diana Street; Located on the north side of East Dakota Avenue between North Diana and North Clark Streets (APN(s): 436-270-01, 436-270-07, 436-270-13T, 436-270-14, 436-270-15, and 436-270-16)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Development Permit Application No. P21-02508 was filed by Scott Jones of The Taylor Group Architects and pertains to six separate parcels of property. The project proposes an adaptive re-use of an existing 77,981 square foot four-story building to a new mixed-use social services and office facility and re-use of an existing 18,992 square foot single story building for Aspen Charter School. The project also includes a proposed 43,998 square foot four-story emergency shelter tower with 73 rooms and a 7,007 square foot community center & gym. Additionally, parking lot and site improvements are being proposed. The existing 7,087 square foot warehouse and plant services building, 14,754 square foot Wawona building, and 7,439 square foot Ahwahnee building will remain on-site with existing uses. The parcel is zoned RMX.

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

Under Section 15332/Class 32, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA requirements when the project is characterized as in-fill development meeting 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.

Given the conditions of approval, Development Permit Application No. P21-02508 will meet all the provisions of the Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) and complies with the Fresno General Plan, the McLane Community Plan, and the Regional Mixed-Use planned land use. Pursuant to

Section 15-1102 of the Fresno Municipal Code, Offices - Business and Professional, Emergency Shelter, Schools, Public or Private are permitted by right in the RMX zone district. Therefore, it has been determined the project demonstrates development in accordance with the subject application and is consistent with the planned land use for the subject property.

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

By current standards, the subject site is identified as “in-fill” within an urban setting. The proposed development includes buildings that will remain with their current use/occupancy. The proposed new construction occurs on two parcels that total 4.71 acres, which is under the five acres. The site is located within an area that has been significantly developed with commercial buildings, schools, and residential homes. The subject property buffers multi-family residential to the northern property line, an electrical substation and a government building to the western property line, State route 41 to the eastern property line and single family homes to the southern property line.

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

The project site contains previously disturbed land and has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.

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

Traffic

Senate Bill (SB) 743 requires that relevant CEQA analysis of transportation impacts be conducted using a metric known as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) instead of Level of Service (LOS). 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 is 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. These may be size, location, proximity to transit, or trip-making potential. For transportation projects, the primary attribute to consider with transportation projects is the potential to increase vehicle travel, sometimes referred to as "induced travel."

The project proposes an adaptive re-use of an existing 77,981 square foot four-story building to a new mixed-use social services and office facility and re-use of an existing 18,992 square foot single story building for Aspen Charter School. New construction includes a 43,998 square foot four-story emergency shelter tower and a 7,007 square foot community center & gym. Traffic Operations & Planning Division, Public Works Department determined the project would not require a traffic impact study.

The project proposes a shared integrated campus that will serve as one-stop center offering people assistance with emergency needs and resources for a pathway out of crisis through once single center. The 77,981 square foot building will serve as the main hub providing common active space areas, office spaces for the Fresno Mission and additional office spaces for over a dozen different partner organizations. The Aspen Charter School will provide classes with specialization for homeless and foster youth. The proposed 43,998 square foot four-story emergency shelter tower will provide approximately 73 emergency shelter beds that are dedicated to providing housing needs for assistance with finding sustainable pathos out of homelessness or poverty. The emergency shelter tower will offer a portion of the rooms for people in need of hospital discharge location who may need additional medical care. Additionally, the emergency shelter tower will offer facilities for laundry, computer rooms, community kitchen facilities and case management. The proposed 7,007 square foot community center & gym will serve as an active meeting space for the residents of the emergency shelter tower, the City Center building, and the Aspen Charter School.

As described the proposed campus offers a one-stop destination for men, women, and children in desperate need social services. The project will provide a bridge for basic human needs in the

form of food services, emergency housing, education, community centers, case management, assistance with available community programs, health and human services, and public mental health services. Staff has determined the project will offer public services that support the health, safety, and welfare of the community; therefore, in conclusion, the proposed project has been determined to screen out of VMT analysis.

Noise

The project site is located in a developed neighborhood adjacent to existing government office, commercial, school, and residential uses; therefore, the project would not result in a significant amount of noise compared to the other adjacent uses and would be conditioned to comply with any applicable noise standards of the Citywide Development Code.

Air Quality

The project is conditioned to comply with any applicable regulations and conditions from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the project is subject to review by the agency in regard to air quality during construction and operation.

Water Quality

The project is further conditioned to comply with any applicable conditions from Public Works or Utilities Department to ensure the project won't have an effect on water quality.

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

Given the surrounding properties and neighborhoods have been substantially developed and utilities and public services already exist in the area, the site can be adequately served by all required utilities, including sewer, water, and solid waste, as well as public services.

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 or cumulative effect on the environment. The project is not located on a hazardous waste site, a historical resource, or adjacent to a scenic highway. A categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project and the area is not environmentally sensitive.

Date: April 22, 2022

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Submitted by:

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