

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research

County Clerk
County of Los Angeles
12400 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk, CA 90650

From: County of Los Angeles
Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 754
Los Angeles, CA 90012

PROJECT TITLE: Project Homekey – The Nest on Exposition

PROJECT LOCATION -- Specific: 3787 S Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90007

PROJECT LOCATION – City: Los Angeles

PROJECT LOCATION – County: Los Angeles

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT: The State's Homekey Program (Homekey), has made funding available for local jurisdictions to purchase hotels and other properties to be used as interim and permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness (PEH). In late 2022, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) announced the availability of approximately \$736 million of Homekey grant funding through its Round 3 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). In December 2022, the County's Chief Executive Office (CEO) released a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSI) for the identification of nonprofit or for-profit entities (Corporations) eligible to apply jointly with the County of Los Angeles (County) for the Homekey Round 3 NOFA. In February 2023, the CEO released a Request for Services (RFS), which eligible Corporations had the opportunity to respond to with project proposals. Selected Corporations would own and, in some cases, operate properties acquired through Homekey Round 3. The County received more than 30 responses to the RFS and identified 11 Corporations with whom to submit applications to HCD by July 28, 2023. Selected Corporations have performed due diligence on the properties to ensure the properties are appropriate for use as interim or permanent supportive housing for PEH, and to support a fair market purchase price for the properties. The State's Homekey Round 3 funds will be used to pay for the cost to acquire, develop, and/or rehabilitate each property. In some cases, a local match will be required to acquire, develop, and/or rehabilitate each property. On May 2, 2023, the County authorized applications for 11 proposed Homekey projects, and found the projects to be exempt from CEQA.

The Project consists of the development of an interim housing project, The Nest on Exposition, with 24 studios with an average unit plan of 305 square feet and one manager's unit for a total of 25 units. The Nest on Exposition will serve transition-aged youth (TAY). The site on which the Project will be built is comprised of 11 lots, which Wellnest owns. Based on the average unit plan and the square footage of the lots in the site's parcel map, the project will fit into two lots and have a ground floor area of approximately 7,800 square feet. The project will be a mixed ground floor comprised of site amenities (laundry room, service offices, community rooms, etc.) and half of the units, with the remaining units stacked on the second story.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: County of Los Angeles

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Wellnest

EXEMPT STATUS:

- Ministerial (Pub. Res. Code Sec. 21080(b)(1); Guidelines Sec. 15268).
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Res. Code Sec. 21080(b)(3); Guidelines Sec. 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Pub. Res. Code Sec. 21080(b)(4); Guidelines Sec. 15269(c))
- Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines § 15332. In-Fill Development Projects (Class 32)
- Statutory Exemption:
- Health and Safety Code Section 50675.1.4


REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: See attachment, which is incorporated herein.

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON:

Elizabeth Ben-Ishai, Manager, Chief Executive Office – Homeless Initiative; Telephone: (213) 974-2566

IF FILED BY APPLICANT: Not Applicable

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: 6/1/2023 Title: Manager

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant Date Received for Filing at OPR:

Wellnest, The Nest on Exposition – Project Homekey

Summary of Reasons Why Project is Exempt Attachment

The Project utilizes Homekey grant funds and other public funds and will provide housing units for individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness. The Project consists of the development of an interim housing project, The Nest on Exposition, with 24 studios with an average unit plan of 305 square feet and one manager's unit for a total of 25 units. The Nest on Exposition will serve transition-aged youth (TAY). The site on which the Project will be built is comprised of 11 lots, which Wellnest owns. Based on the average unit plan and the square footage of the lots in the site's parcel map, the project will fit into two lots and have a ground floor area of approximately 7,800 square feet. The project will be a mixed ground floor comprised of site amenities (laundry room, service offices, community rooms, etc.) and half of the units, with the remaining units stacked on the second story.

The project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15332, In-Fill Development Projects (Class 32) because:

(a) The subject parcel has a General Plan land use designation that allows for homeless shelters and other temporary housing uses and is zoned C-2, Commercial, which allows residential development by-right at the densities proposed.

(b) The Project site is located within city limits, is less than 5 acres in size and is surrounded on all sides by urban uses, namely commercial and residential development.

(c) The Project site is completely covered with paved parking lots and a commercial building, except for limited vegetation, including small shrubs, on-site streets, and street side trees. The Project site has limited value for habitat and is not known to provide habitat for endangered rate or threatened species. As part of the City's standard procedures, the street tree removals will be subject to review and approved by the City Department of Parks and Recreation.

(d) Traffic: The Project site is accessible by multiple modes of transportation. Vehicle access is available by city streets, including 38th St, Exposition Blvd., and Vermont Avenue. LA Metro transit buses run along Vermont Avenue and Exposition Blvd., with several bus stops within two blocks of the Project site. Bike routes and lanes are located on Exposition Blvd., which runs perpendicular to Vermont Avenue. Walking is convenient from the Project site to retail and services on Vermont Avenue. During construction of the Project, there will be additional vehicles in the vicinity of the Project site, including construction equipment vehicles, deliveries and contractor personal vehicles. The conditions of approval require implementation of a construction management plan to manage truck routes, construction vehicle circulation and parking, and potential sidewalk closures. With implementation of the construction management plan over the construction period, traffic impacts during construction are not anticipated to have significant effects.

Noise: As described in the General Plan, most Los Angeles neighborhoods experience average daily noise levels between 55 dB and 65 dB, with higher levels near the freeway, LAX, and the Alameda corridor. These noise levels are above the optimal levels for residential areas, but are not unusual for urban, high-density communities. During operation of the Project, the 25 interim residential units would not substantially exceed existing noise levels in the neighborhood and would be consistent with the normally acceptable range.

(e) The Project is situated in an urban area already served by all necessary municipal utilities (i.e., water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste) and public services (i.e., fire, police, schools). The addition of 25 interim households would have a negligible impact on utility and public service capacity. Moreover, the anticipated population growth at the Project site would be within the growth anticipated in the Los Angeles City General Plan and Housing Element, based on its land use designation.

Finally, based on the record of the Project, it will comply with all applicable regulations, it is not located in a sensitive environment, the Project will not result in cumulative impacts, there are no unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment, there are no impacts to scenic highways, it is not located on a hazardous waste site, and there is no indication that it may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource that would make the exemptions inapplicable.

Further, the Project is exempt pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.27, as it is an emergency shelter or supportive housing development within the City of Los Angeles, partially funded by the County of Los Angeles. The Project is also exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 21080(b)(4) of the Public Resources Code and Section 15269(c) of the State CEQA Guidelines, which exempts specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency, the current homelessness crisis facing the County.