

Riverside County
Office of Economic Development
3403 10th Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA 92501

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

April 16, 2024

Project Name: Riverside County Perris Valley Cemetery Flood Mitigation Project

Project Number: 23040

Project Location: 915 North Perris Boulevard, south of Mildred Street, Perris, California 92571, Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 311-150-017, 311-150-018

Description of Project: The Perris Valley Cemetery, located at 915 N. Perris Blvd. in Perris, CA 92571, was created as an independent cemetery district in 1927. On January 29, 2002, Item 7.1, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2002-49, becoming the governing body of the Perris Valley Cemetery District to overcome prior economic, operational and personnel challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant increase in burials at the Perris Valley Cemetery, resulting in approximately 75% of the property being fully developed. The property frontage road, N. Perris Boulevard, is considered an arterial highway and is notorious for localized road flooding during moderate to heavy rain events. Just south of the Perris Valley Cemetery main entrance are two drainage catch basins collecting storm water from N. Perris Boulevard and the Rancho Village subdivision. The catch basins convey stormwater onto the Perris Valley Cemetery property via a concrete channel, box culvert, and then daylights to an earthen swale at the midpoint of the cemetery property. The water floods the balance of the unimproved cemetery property, continuing east to either the neighboring residential development or the Riverside County Flood Control Metz Channel. The flooding has inhibited the development of the final 25% of the property, sent drainage waters to neighborhoods in lieu of Metz Channel, and restricted the ability of the cemetery to provide burial services to the local community.

The Perris Valley Cemetery Flood Mitigation Project (Project) will connect a 42" concrete pipe to the catch basin fronting the Perris Valley Cemetery and divert the flows directly into the Metz Channel, a length of approximately 400 linear feet. OED will take the lead in designing and constructing the Project, and the District will take the lead in funding, plan check, permitting and post construction maintenance. The construction of the pipe connecting the catch basins with the Metz Channel to redirect stormwater away from the Perris Valley Cemetery is identified as the project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). No direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Riverside County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Riverside County Office of Economic Development

Exempt Status: State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15303 New Construction of Conversion of Small Structures Exemption; and Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption, Codified under Title 14, Articles 5 and 19, Sections 15061 and 15303.

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA specifically by the State CEQA Guidelines as identified below. The project will not result in any specific or general exceptions to the use of the categorical exemption as detailed under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The project will not cause an impact to an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern nor would the project include a reasonable possibility of having a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The project would not result in impacts to scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, historic resources, or other sensitive natural environments, or have a cumulative effect to the environment. No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to occur with the construction of stormwater conveyance infrastructure to restore function to the Perris Valley Cemetery.

- **Section 15303 – Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures Exemption:** This Class 3 exemption includes the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made to the exterior of the structure. Under (d), water mains, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility connections are exempt if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where public services and facilities are available, and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive. The project would result in the installation of a new approximately 400 feet conveyance pipe within the Perris Boulevard right-of-way. The location would result in a storm water extension that would link the two catch basins on Perris Boulevard with the existing Metz Channel drainage infrastructure. This revision in flood drainage would allow full function of the Perris Valley Cemetery which currently is inundated with surface water and unusable. The operation of the new drainage extension would not result in the use of a significant amount of hazardous substances and would enhance provide public services at the facility. The location has existing utilities and does not contain environmentally sensitive areas. Therefore, the project is exempt as the project meets the scope and intent of the Categorical Exemption identified in Section 15303, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions of the CEQA Guidelines.
- **Section 15061 (b) (3) – “Common Sense” Exemption:** In accordance with CEQA, the use of the Common Sense Exemption is based on the “general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.” State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b) (3). The use of this exemption is appropriate if “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.” *Ibid*. This determination is an issue of fact and if sufficient evidence exists in the record that the activity cannot have a significant effect on the environment, then the exemption applies and no further evaluation under CEQA is required. See *No Oil, Inc. v. City of Los Angeles* (1974) 13 Cal. 3d 68. The ruling in this case stated that if a project falls within a category exempt by administrative regulation or 'it can be seen with certainty that the activity in question will not have a significant effect on the environment', no further agency evaluation is required. With certainty, there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The construction of a conveyance pipe is a flood mitigation project to link the catch basins on Perris Boulevard to the Metz Flood channel, which will avoid surface water flooding to the Perris Valley Cemetery and improve the function of the site as well as the adjacent drainage infrastructure. Therefore, in no way, would the project as proposed have the potential to cause a significant environmental impact and the project is exempt from further CEQA analysis.

Based upon the identified exemptions above, the County of Riverside, Office of Economic Development hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the project as proposed is exempt under CEQA or NEPA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.

Signed: _____



Date: 4-16-2024

Mike Sullivan
County of Riverside

RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

**AUTHORIZATION
TO BILL
BY JOURNAL VOUCHER**

Project Name: Perris Valley Cemetery Flood Mitigation

Accounting String: 537280-30100-7200800000-FM05190011815

DATE: April 16, 2024

AGENCY: Riverside County

THIS AUTHORIZES THE COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER TO BILL FOR FILING AND HANDLING FEES FOR THE ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENT(S).

NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS INCLUDED: One (1)

AUTHORIZED BY: **Mike Sullivan, Senior Environmental Planner**

Signature: 

PRESENTED BY: **Erik Sydow, Facilities Principal Development Specialist, Office of Economic Development**

-TO BE FILLED IN BY COUNTY CLERK-

ACCEPTED BY: -

DATE: -

RECEIPT # (S) -

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County of Riverside
Office of Economic Development

Date: April 16, 2024
To: Office of the County Clerk
From: Mike Sullivan, Riverside County
Subject: **County of Riverside Office of Economic Development Project # 23040**
Perris Valley Cemetery Flood Mitigation

The Riverside County's Office of Economic Development is requesting that you post the attached Notice of Exemption. Attached you will find an authorization to bill by journal voucher for your posting fee.

After posting, please return the document to:

Mail Stop #2600

Attention: Mike Sullivan,

3450 14th Street, Suite 303, Riverside, CA 92501

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Sullivan at 955-8009 or email at msullivan@rivco.org.

Attachment

cc: file