

County of Riverside
Facilities Management
3450 14th Street, Riverside, CA 92501

FOR COUNTY CLERK USE ONLY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

May 16, 2024

Project Name: Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) Approval of Third Amendment to the Lease Agreement with Bel Air Plaza, LTD, Moreno Valley

Project Number: FM042462001300

Project Location: 23119 Cottonwood Avenue, Building A, Moreno Valley, California; 92553, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 296-151-029

Description of Project: The County of Riverside has been under a lease at 23119 Cottonwood Avenue, Bldg. A, Moreno Valley, since September 2010 (Lease). The office, occupied by DPSS, continues to meet the needs of the Department for use by the Children's Services Division. The second option to extend term expires June 30, 2024. DPSS desires to continue the Lease and will be amending the Lease with a third amendment, which will extend the term through November 30, 2029. The Third Amendment to the Lease is defined as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The project is the letting of property involving existing facilities; no substantial expansion of the existing facility will occur. The operation of the facility will continue to provide public services. No additional 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 Facilities Management

Exempt Status: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, Existing Facilities Exemption; Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption. Codified under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Article 5, Section 15061.

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 involve unusual circumstances that could potentially have a significant effect on the environment. 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 Third Amendment to the Lease Agreement.

- **Section 15301 – Class 1 Existing Facilities Exemption:** This categorical exemption includes the operation, repair, maintenance, leasing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities, provided the exemption only involves negligible or no expansion of the previous site’s use. The project, as proposed, is limited to a Lease Agreement regarding continued lease of an existing facility. The Third Amendment will not substantially increase or expand the use of the site and the lease extension would result in the continued use of the site in a similar capacity; therefore, the project is exempt as the project meets the scope and intent of the Class 1 Exemption identified in Section 15301, 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 proposed Third Amendment to the Lease will not result in any direct or indirect physical environmental impacts. The use and operation of the facility will be substantially similar to the existing use and will not create any new environmental impacts to the surrounding area. No impacts beyond the ongoing, existing use of the site would occur. 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.

Therefore, the County of Riverside Facilities Management hereby concludes that no physical environmental impacts are anticipated to occur and the project as proposed is exempt under CEQA. No further environmental analysis is warranted.

Signed:  _____ **Date:** 5-18-2024
Mike Sullivan
County of Riverside, Facilities Management