

County of Riverside
Facilities Management
3450 14th St, 2nd Floor, Riverside, CA

FOR COUNTY CLERK USE ONLY

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

September 20, 2024

Project Name: Approval of Temporary Library Lease Agreement with Mohr Affinity LLC, a California limited liability company, Lake Elsinore

Project Number: FM0411900448

Project Location: 17600 Collier Avenue, Suite 170, south of Nichols Road, Lake Elsinore, California, 92530, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 389-210-063

Description of Project: The current Lake Elsinore Library building is experiencing a significant amount of health and structural issues, necessitating a temporary relocation until a new, permanent library is constructed. After an extensive search by Riverside County Facilities Management, a lease was secured for a temporary location at the Lake Elsinore Outlets, which will serve the community during this transition. This temporary site will provide essential library services, ensuring uninterrupted access for patrons while the new, modern facility is under development.

Recently, the City of Lake Elsinore was awarded a \$9.9 million grant from the State of California's Building Forward Library Facilities Improvement Program. This funding will significantly contribute to the construction of a new library to meet the needs of the growing community. Completion of the new library is anticipated by late 2026.

The temporary facility at the Lake Elsinore Outlets located at 17600 Collier Avenue, Suite 170, Lake Elsinore will be ready for occupancy soon after the lease is finalized. Planned improvements include the addition of a staff breakroom, study rooms, and new furniture and shelving. These upgrades are expected to be completed within three months of the lease approval, allowing the library to continue serving the community effectively during this interim period. This temporary move also addresses the urgent health and safety concerns associated with the current Lake Elsinore Library. The Temporary Library Lease Agreement with Mohr Affinity LLC is identified as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Lease agreement would result in the use of an existing facility as a library and would not result in alter the existing building footprint or result in a significant increase in capacity of use. 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), “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 Agreement, permitting continued use of an existing commercial building.

- **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 the continued use of the existing commercial building. The temporary use of the existing building for a Library would require minor interior alterations to provide functionality for use as a library, which would include a staff breakroom, study rooms, and new furniture and shelving. The project would not substantially increase or expand the use of the sites; and is limited to temporary occupancy of the facility, which will 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 Lease Agreement is limited to the continued use of the existing facility which will not expand or increase the capacity or intensity of use of the site. The use and operation of the facilities 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 sites 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:** 9-20-2024
Mike Sullivan,
County of Riverside, Facilities Management