

**Riverside County  
Office of Economic Development**

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

October 10, 2024

**Project Name:** Riverside County Indio Library Project

**Project Number:** FM05190011816

**Project Location:** 200 Civic Center Drive Indio, CA 92201 , east of Towne Street, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 611-212-043

**Description of Project:** The Riverside County Library System (RCLS) covers the state's fourth largest geographic library service area, more than 7,000 square miles, and includes thirty-four libraries within the County, including the Max T. McCandless Branch Library located in the City of Indio. The Development Impact Fee (DIF) Program, established by Riverside County Ordinance No. 659, allows for the use of DIF funds to improve and expand public library facilities to address increased and high volume use due to new development. The ability to enhance and improve Riverside County Library System (RCLS) Library branches continues to promote lifelong learning for all patrons.

On January 17, 2024, the City of Indio hosted a groundbreaking event for the new Max T. McCandless Branch Library, to be located at 200 Civic Center Drive, Indio, CA 92201. The new library will be 7,814 square feet, with design and construction being managed and financed by the City of Indio with construction completion anticipated in the spring of 2025. Today's Board action will allow RCLS to furnish and equip the new library and maintain ownership of the furniture, fixtures and equipment, including new shelving. The furnishing of the library 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 15301 Existing Facilities Exemption; and Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or "Common Sense" Exemption, Codified under Title 14, Articles 5 and 19, Sections 15061 and 15301.

**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 unusual circumstances which could have the possibility of having 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 furnishing of the Library.

- **Section 15301 –Existing Facilities:** This Class 1 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 the furnishing of the new library, including new shelving, and would not expand the footprint of the facility or increase the capacity of the site. The facility would continue to provide public services and the improvements to the existing facility are exempt as they meet the scope and intent of the Categorical 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 furnishing of the library will not result in any direct or indirect physical environmental impacts. The minor modifications would occur within the existing facility and would not expand the building footprint or substantially increase the capacity of the site. 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 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: 10-10-2024

Mike Sullivan  
County of Riverside