

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

October 16, 2024

Project Name: Riverside University Health System Department of Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH) Fifth Amendment to Lease with Lucia and Robert Ramos, Blythe

Project Number: FM042134003400

Project Location: 1297 West Hobsonway, west of North Carlton Avenue, Blythe, California 92225 Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 836-180-045

Description of Project: The County of Riverside has been under lease at 1297 W. Hobsonway Way, Blythe since 2001 for use by RUHS-BH. The facility continues to meet the needs of the department and additional space is requested for to adequately serve the current needs of the community. Under a Fifth Amendment to Lease submitted for approval, the 9,660 square foot office will be increased in size by 2,240 square feet with the occupancy of a contiguous space. The additional space is currently unimproved and will require full tenant improvements. The lease will also be extended 5 years commencing December 1, 2026.

The Fifth Amendment to the Lease Agreement is identified as the proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). No expansion of an existing use will occur. The operation of the facility will continue to provide behavioral health services for RUHS and will not result in an increase in the intensity of the use of the site. 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 Fifth 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 an Amendment to a Facilities Lease Agreement to extend the term, and interior tenant improvements, to make the existing vacant office space within the building integrated and compatible with the RUHS-BH space. The revisions will result in the continued use, operation, and maintenance of the facility. The use of the facility would not result in any physical changes and no expansion of public services would occur as a result of the Fourth Amendment. 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 Fifth Amendment, which will extend the term of the Lease and include interior tenant improvements, will not expand the existing building footprint, or 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:** 10-16-2024
 Mike Sullivan,
 County of Riverside, Facilities Management