

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

July 22, 2024

**Project Name:** Office of Economic Development, Community Facilities District (CFD) No. 24-1M (Sunstone) of the County of Riverside; Adoption of Ordinance No. 991, an Ordinance of the County of Riverside Authorizing the Levy of a Special Tax Within the Sunstone CFD

**Project Number:** FM05915011815

**Project Location:** Community Facilities District No. 24-1M (Sunstone) of the County of Riverside

**Description of Project:** On January 27, 2015, the Board of Supervisors revised Board Policy B-12 entitled “Land Secured Financing Districts” to include “Service and Maintenance CFDs” to fund the ongoing maintenance of landscape, storm water Best Management Practices (BMP), street lighting, or other similar improvements and set goals and policies concerning Community Facilities Districts (CFD). As approved by voters, a special tax is to be levied on each individual parcel located within the boundary of the CFD to fund the costs associated with (i) Landscaping improvements that may include but are not limited to all landscaping material and facilities within the CFD. These improvements include turf, ground cover, shrubs, trees, plants, irrigation and drainage system, ornamental lighting, masonry walls or other fencing, park and trail maintenance (ii) Street lighting maintenance, which includes energy charges, operation, maintenance, and administration of street lighting located within the designated boundaries of the CFD (iii) Traffic signal maintenance, which includes energy charges, operation, maintenance, and administration of street lighting located within the designated boundaries of the CFD (iv) Administration, inspection, and maintenance of all stormwater facilities and BMPs to include: water quality basins, fossil filters, basin forebays, and all other NPDES/WQMP/BMP related devices and structures as approved and accepted by the Community Facilities District; administration includes, but is not limited to, quality control and assurance of inspections and maintenance, general contract management, scheduling of inspections and maintenance, and general oversight of all NPDES/WQMP/BMP operations; inspection includes, but is not limited to, travel time, visual inspection process and procedures for functionality, GPS location recording, assurance of proper vegetation, functioning irrigation, and citing operational or structural deficiencies, erosion, trash, silt and sediment build-up; and maintenance includes, but is not limited to, repair or replacement of any deficiencies noted during inspection, weed control and abatement, trash removal, and healthy upkeep of required plant materials (v) Graffiti abatement of walls and other permanent structures. AG EHC II (LEN), L.P. is the Owner of Tract 37078 and has petitioned the Riverside County Office of Economic Development to assist them in forming a CFD to cover the costs associated with the maintenance of public improvements within the district. The boundaries of CFD No. 24-1M (Sunstone) will encompass the entire Tract Map No. 37078, which is projected to include 154 single family residential units, none of which are currently occupied.

On June 4, 2024 the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors approved agenda item 3.33 and Resolution No. 2024-113, a Resolution of Intention as the initial step for forming the CFD and declared the intention of the Board of Supervisors as required by the Mello-Roos Act of 1982 to levy a special tax to fund the service and maintenance functions requested by the Developer. On July 9, 2024 (Agenda Item 19.2), the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors held a public hearing to receive public comments and conduct a majority protest hearing concerning the establishment of the CFD and the levy of the special tax. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2024-114, the Resolution of Formation of the CFD, which also authorized the levy of a special tax within the CFD which was approved during a duly called election held that same day. In addition, the Board introduced Riverside County Ordinance No. 991 authorizing the levy of the special tax pursuant to the Rate and Method of Apportionment approved by the voters.

Now the Board will formally adopt the special tax ordinance and levy the special tax. Riverside County Ordinance No. 991, which authorizes the levy of a special tax within the Sunstone CFD to fund services for maintenance and service activities, was reviewed and determined to be not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 15378. The Ordinance includes the creation of a funding mechanism to provide maintenance and service activities within the CFD. No additional direct or indirect physical environmental impacts are anticipated from the provision of maintenance services identified in the Riverside County Ordinance No. 991.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of Riverside


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

**Exempt Status:** Not a project as defined in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 21065 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378; Section 15061(b) (3), General Rule or “Common Sense” Exemption. Codified under Public Resources Code Division 13, Chapter 2.5, Section 21065, and CCR Title 14, Articles 5 and 20, Sections 15061 and 15378.

**Reasons Why Project is Exempt:** The direct effects of the adoption of the Ordinance to levy a special tax within the McCanna Hills CFD would not constitute a project as defined by CEQA Section 21065 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Section 15378 (b) provides a list of five activities that are not considered a project under CEQA. The proposed Ordinance would qualify under two conditions identified in Section 15378 (b): (4) the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment and (5) organizational or administrative activity of the government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. The adoption of the Ordinance by the Board satisfies these conditions as the Ordinance would provide a funding mechanism to provide ongoing maintenance of existing buildings that would not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. Based on the above conditions, the adoption of the Ordinance is not a project as defined by CEQA Section 21065 and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. The adoption of the ordinance is limited to the creation of a special tax ordinance to provide an alternative mechanism for financing maintenance activities involving the operation, maintenance, repair, and minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features. Those public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features were already separately analyzed under prior CEQA documents and approved as part of Tract 37078. As a result, the adoption of the ordinance would not result in significant physical impact on the environment since it would not include any changes to the existing land use or a physical degradation of the property and any such impacts would have already been previously analyzed under CEQA as part of Tract 37078.

- **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 adoption of the ordinance is limited to the creation of a special tax ordinance to provide an alternative mechanism for financing maintenance activities involving the operation, maintenance, repair, and minor alteration of public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, which were already separately analyzed previously under CEQA as part of Tract 37078. As a result, there is no possibility the adoption of the ordinance would not result in any reasonably foreseeable environmental effects and any such impacts would have been previously analyzed under prior CEQA documents approved as part of Tract 37078. 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 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:** 7-22-2024  
Mike Sullivan, County of Riverside