

**CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT P24-02130**

THE PROJECT DESCRIBED HEREIN IS DETERMINED TO BE CATEGORICALLY
EXEMPT FROM THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19 OF THE STATE CEQA GUIDELINES.

APPLICANT: Mayra Merino
Planning and Development Department
2600 Fresno Street, Third Floor
Fresno, CA 93721

PROJECT LOCATION: E. Cesar Chavez Boulevard between S. Seventh Street and S. Eighth Street Fresno Ca 93702 (APN 470-052-02T, 470-052-03T and Agency APN: 470-052-01T)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Environmental Assessment Application No. P24-02130 was filed by Mayra Merino of the City of Fresno and pertains to 3.41 acres (148,539.6 sq ft) of property. The project proposes that the City of Fresno provide a resolution in support of a conditional commitment of City Funds to Integrated Community Development LLC (ICD) to assist with mixed-use mixed-income housing and commercial development, located at E. Cesar Chavez Boulevard between S. Seventh Street and S. Eighth Street to be used for 54 units of proposed farm labor housing and commercial space.

This project is exempt under Section 15332/Class 32 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as follows:

Under Section 15332/Class 32, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA requirements when the project is characterized as in-fill development meeting the following conditions:

- a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The project is consistent with the following Fresno General Plan goals, objectives and policies related to residential land use and the urban form:

Goals

Goal 7: Provide for a diversity of districts, neighborhoods, housing types (including affordable housing), residential densities, job opportunities, recreation, open space, and educational venues that appeal to a broad range of people throughout the city.

Goal 8: Develop Complete Neighborhoods and districts with an efficient and diverse mix of residential densities, building types, and affordability which are designed to be healthy, attractive, and centered by schools, parks, and public and commercial services to provide a sense of place and that provide as many services as possible within walking distance. The site is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

Goal 11: Emphasize and plan for all modes of travel on local and Major Streets in Fresno. Facilitate travel by walking, biking, transit, and motor vehicle with interconnected and linked neighborhoods, districts, major campuses and public facilities, shopping centers and other service centers, and regional transportation such as air, rail, bus and highways.

Objectives

Objective LU-1 establishes a comprehensive citywide land use planning strategy to meet economic development objectives, achieve efficient and equitable use of resources and infrastructure, and create an attractive living environment.

Objective LU-2 plans for infill development that includes a range of housing types, building forms, and land uses to meet the needs of both current and future residents.

Objective LU-6 retains and enhances existing commercial areas to strengthen Fresno's economic base and site new office, retail, and lodging use districts to serve neighborhoods and regional visitors.

Objective D-4 preserves and strengthens Fresno's overall image through design review and create a safe, walkable, and attractive urban environment for the current and future generations of residents.

Policies

Policy LU-1-a promotes new development, infill, and rehabilitation of existing building stock in the Downtown Planning Area, along BRT corridors, in established neighborhoods generally south of Herndon Avenue, and on other infill sites and vacant land within the City.

Policy LU-6-a fosters high quality design, diversity, and a mix of amenities in new development with uses through the consideration of guidelines, regulations, and design review procedures.

Development Code

Residential Housing uses are permitted uses in NMX Zone Districts in accordance with Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) Table 15-1102.

The project proposes to construct 54 units of farm labor housing and commercial retail space. The project also proposes off-site improvements such as curb, gutter, sidewalks, and driveways as needed.

Therefore, it is staff's opinion that the proposed project is consistent with respective general and community plan objectives and policies, and the applicable zoning designation and regulations of the Development Code and will not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of the City of Fresno.

- b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.

The proposed project is located within the city limits, occurs on a site of approximately 3.41 acres total (less than the five-acre maximum) and is substantially surrounded by urban uses.

- c) The project has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.

The project site is currently a vacant parcel, and substantially surrounded by urban uses such as commercial developments. Therefore, the site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species.

- d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

Traffic

The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds adopted a screening standard and criteria that can be used to screen out qualified projects that meet the adopted criteria from needing to prepare a detailed VMT analysis. As explained below, staff believes this project will have a less than significant impact on traffic because of the site's location within 0.5 mile of a Transit Priority Area as well as the high level of affordable housing units

The City of Fresno VMT Thresholds Section 3.0 regarding Project Screening discusses a variety of projects that may be screened out of a VMT analysis including specific development and transportation projects. For development projects, conditions may exist that would presume that a development project has a less than significant impact. These may be size, location, proximity to transit, or trip-making potential. For transportation projects, the primary attribute to consider is the potential to increase vehicle travel, sometimes referred to as "induced travel."

The proposed project is eligible to screen out pursuant to the City of Fresno VMT Thresholds Section 3.0 (Project Screening). Using the Fresno COG VMT Calculator Tool, it indicated the Transportation Analysis Zone in which the subject property is located within

would generate 8.029 VMT per capita. As the City's established VMT threshold is 11.4 VMT per capita, the Project's impact to VMT is less than the 13 percent minimum threshold, resulting in a less than significant impact.

In summary, this project will not result in any significant traffic impacts or will have a less than significant impact on Regional VMT.

Noise

The project is for the construction of affordable housing consisting of 54 units of farm labor housing and commercial retail space. The project site is surrounded by commercial/residential uses.

Housing developments typically generate low noise levels due to limited automotive speeds within the complex and limited use of open space areas. Furthermore, noise from the existing adjacent major streets would exceed the noise levels produced within the development, assuring the proposed development would not cause a nuisance in exceeding noise decibel standard of the Fresno Municipal Code.

In any case, the project is conditioned to comply with all applicable noise standards of the Citywide Development Code,

Air Quality

The project is conditioned to comply with any applicable regulations and conditions from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the project is subject to review by the agency in regard to air quality during construction and operation. The project, as described, will not occur at a scale or scope with potential to contribute substantially or cumulatively to existing or projected air quality violations or impacts.

Water Quality

The project is conditioned to comply with any applicable regulations and conditions from the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District and the project is subject to review by the agency in regard to water quality during construction and operation. The project, as described, will not occur at a scale or scope with potential to contribute substantially or cumulatively to existing or projected water quality violations or impacts.

- e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The surrounding properties and neighborhood have been substantially developed and utilities and public services already exist in the area and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities, including sewer, water, and solid waste, as well as public services.

None of the exceptions to Categorical Exemptions set forth in the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply to the project. Furthermore, the proposed project is not expected to have a significant effect on the environment. A categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project and the area is not environmentally sensitive.

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