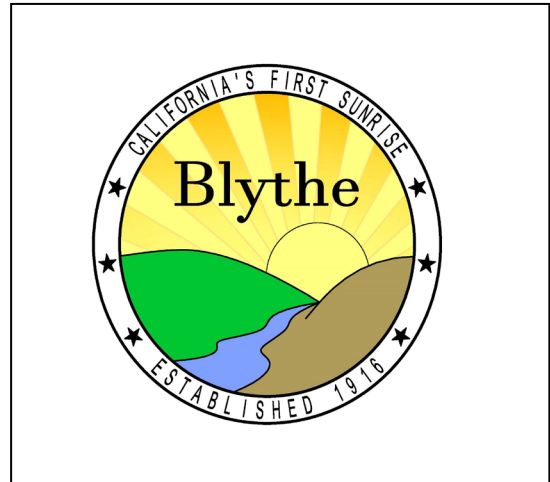


City of Blythe

River Posse Vehicle Storage Project CEQA Exemption – In-fill Development Project

Prepared for:

City of Blythe
Community Development Department
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225



June 2025

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Categorical Exemption – In-Fill Development Project

1.0 River Posse Vehicle Storage Project – City of Blythe

1. **Project Title:** River Posse Vehicle Storage Project
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:** City of Blythe
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:** Mallory Crecelius
Interim City Manager / City Clerk
(760) 922-6161
4. **Project Location:** 9162 E. Hobsonway, Blythe, CA 92225
APN: 851-120-007
33° 36' 39.75" N Latitude, 114° 34' 25.51" W Longitude
(North of Hobsonway, east of Green Valley Road, 600 feet west of Intake Blvd., and 1,000 feet north of I-10)
5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:** J & J Tire Services
P.O. Box 1223 Westmorland, CA 92228
6. **General Plan and Zoning Land Use Designation:** General Commercial (C-G), with a Conditional Use Permit required for vehicle storage facilities.

2.0 Purpose of the Categorical Exemption

This California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption document has been prepared by the City of Blythe in conformance with CEQA review requirements for the proposed *River Posse Vehicle Storage Project*. The Project Description is detailed in the following section, followed by a record of the supporting analyses that were used to make the determination that the proposed vehicle storage project qualifies for an exemption from CEQA as an in-fill development project (CEQA Guidelines §15332).

3.0 Project Description

J & J Tire Services has applied to the City for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) allowing development of the River Posse vehicle storage facility on a 0.44-acre lot located at 9162 E. Hobsonway, (Assessor's Parcel Number 851-120-007). The City's General Plan and zoning land use designation for the property is General Commercial (C-G). The City's zoning code allows vehicle storage facilities within the C-G zone with approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The 125 feet by 150 feet lot is approximately 600 feet west of Intake Boulevard (State Route 95) and the southern boundary is on the north side of East Hobsonway, with Green Valley Road along the western boundary. Interstate-10 lies to the approximately 1,000 feet south, and various commercial and industrial uses extend up and down Hobsonway to the east and west.

The Applicant's goal is to provide the people of Blythe and regular visitors with a safe place to store automobiles, equipment, boats and/or recreational vehicles. The entire lot will be used for storage with no sales areas. Entrance and exit areas will be from Hobsonway on the south side of property. The storage lot will be completely enclosed for security and will be equipped with electronically operated access gates to the lot. Landscaping along Hobsonway will be designed to incorporate low water use native plant species that can improve the visual quality of the facility without interfering with visibility from law enforcement vehicles.

At present, the property is an empty lot that was previously used as a vehicle fueling and service station. The site is level and has very little vegetation, and is surrounded by empty lots to the north, east and south. The existing Magnuson hotel lies to the west across Green Valley Road. An existing pavement and chain-link fence on the perimeter of the property will be repaired as needed and enhanced with installation of slats to screen the property. The other improvements proposed include installation of security lights directed into the parcel from each corner of the lot, and installation of landscaping irrigation for the Hobsonway frontage. The City of Blythe will supply potable water to the facility. The City of Blythe will also provide police and fire protection for the site. (See *Figure 1: Project Site Location Within the City of Blythe*, *Figure 2: Site Map and Surrounding Land Uses*, and *Figure 3: Site Plan*.)

The Project requires a CUP from the City. The Applicant has no other related projects proposed or planned in the City of Blythe and the proposed project is not related to any other proposed projects in the City. The City of Blythe has primary responsibility for approval of the CUP for the proposed Project and is therefore the CEQA Lead Agency.

Figure 1: Project Location Map



Figure 2: Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses



4.0 CEQA Guidance – Categorical Exemption

As the Lead Agency under CEQA, the City of Blythe has undertaken environmental review and determined that the proposed development qualifies for a Categorical Exemption (CE) as an infill development project (State CEQA Guidelines §15332). This CE document has been prepared to describe the proposed project and assess each of the criteria required to qualify for the exemption. The applicable criteria for exemption are identified as follows.

CEQA Guidelines §15332. IN-FILL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions described in this section.

- (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- (c) The project 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.
- (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Note: Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 21084, Public Resources Code

5.0 Categorical Exemption – Analysis and Findings

1. Is the project consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations?

The City's General Plan land use and zoning classification on the subject project site is C-G, General Commercial, which does allow operation of commercial vehicle storage businesses with approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Therefore, the proposed Project is determined to be consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and applicable General Plan policies, and with the City's zoning designation and regulations.

Requiring a CUP allows the City to consider special uses which may be essential or desirable to a community, but which are not allowed as a matter of right within a zoning district and can provide flexibility within the zoning ordinance. Approval of a CUP is a discretionary action and CUPs are therefore subject to CEQA review. Prior to approval the City must evaluate the proposal to determine whether it may have any significant adverse effects on the environment. A CUP application by a project proponent is required to be considered at a public hearing and, if approved, may be subject to applicable conditions of approval. This CEQA evaluation does satisfy requirements for consideration of a CUP, and the City will hold a publicly notice City Council meeting for its consideration of approval of the CUP.

2. Does the proposed development occur within City limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses?

The Proposed Project is located entirely within the City of Blythe on a 0.44-acre project site on the north side of Hobsonway north of Interstate 10, and west of Intake Boulevard. Surrounding land uses include various commercial and light industrial uses extending up and down Hobsonway to the east and west, and the Interstate-10 corridor to the south, (see figure 1 and 2 above.) The River Posse site lies within City core lands that have been developed in urban uses for decades. The City of Blythe is an economically disadvantaged community and is actively pursuing economic development to benefit the community and provide employment opportunities to its residents. The City considers all lands within its boundaries that are designated for urban uses (residential, commercial, industrial, manufacturing or municipal uses) in its General Plan and zoning code to be urban use lands. All surrounding areas of the City are substantially developed in urban uses. On that basis, the City has determined that this project site does meet the criteria of being within City limits, no more than five acres and substantially surrounded by urban uses.

3. Does the project site have value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species?

The project site is not located in proximity to any wetlands, wildlife refuge, or lands protected under a special habitat conservation or management plan. With Hobsonway and Interstate 10 to the south of the project site and long-established commercial and industrial uses on surrounding properties, there is no potential for any wildlife use of the property as a migration corridor. It is determined therefore that the site has no value as habitat for any special-status plant or animal species.

4. Would approval of the project result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality?

The proposed project is a commercial vehicle storage operation, with no retail operations. It is expected to generate a very low traffic volume on Hobsonway and other nearby roadway segments within the City of Blythe for delivery and pickup up of vehicles in and out of storage. All local roadways operate well below capacity and do not experience any congestion under existing conditions. An employee will be hired from the local population as a caretaker for maintenance of the site and will not generate an unusual number of vehicle miles for travel to and from work.

The vehicle storage operations do not require the use of any high-level noise generating equipment and is an inherently quiet activity. City water will be used for high efficiency landscaping irrigation systems along the Honsonway frontage, but no potable water is required for staff, and there will be no facilities requiring sanitary disposal to the City's sewer system. Therefore, it is determined that the project has no potential to cause significant effects or impacts related to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.

5. Can the site be adequately served by all required utilities and public services?

The City's water system does extend to the property at present, and the project will connect with existing City lines for landscaping watering supplies. Southern California Edison provides electricity throughout the City and to this property at present and will continue to do so. No cable, satellite, and internet services are needed to serve this project. The site lies entirely within the City of Blythe and is therefore provided City police and fire services. Waste disposal service is provided throughout the City under contract with CR&R Inc., including for this project site as needed. The site is also served by the City's school system, which is not applicable to this commercial vehicle storage project. For these reasons, it is determined that the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

6.0 Consideration of CEQA Exceptions to Exemptions

The criteria discussed above are listed in the State CEQA Guidelines for determining the proposed Project's eligibility for a Categorical Exemption. Based upon review of the CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that the proposed project has no conditions as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 that would make it ineligible for the applicable categorical exemption. Exceptions for use of an exemption may occur when a project has any of the following conditions:

- A significant cumulative impact as one of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time.
- If there is a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
- A project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.
- A project located on a property identified on any hazardous materials list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- A project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Assessment and Conclusions

The proposed vehicle storage project is not directly related to any successive projects of the same type in the City of Blythe that could result in an adverse cumulative effect. As described in each of the analyses above, no unusual circumstances exist on or around this designated commercial property that could result in a reasonable possibility of having significant adverse effects on the environment.

Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. The proposed project includes the development of a small vehicle storage project located within a designated commercial zone in the City of Blythe. Traffic, noise and air quality effects will be minimal. The project site will be connected to the City's water system for its landscape water irrigation needs, and no expansion of any utility system is required or proposed. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. The site and surrounding lands have been in urban use for decades, including commercial and residential development, major transportation corridors, and previously as a service and fueling station. The project site is entirely within the City of Blythe adjacent to and in proximity to urban land uses and is not located in proximity to any wetlands, wildlife refuge, or lands protected under a special habitat conservation or management plan.

No designated scenic highway is in proximity to the proposed project site. As shown in figures 1 and 2 above, State Route 95 lies to the east and Interstate 10 is located approximately 0.2-mile south of the site, but neither is an officially designated State Scenic Highway, and there are no State Scenic Highways from which the property is visible.

The site is not on any *EnviroStor* list maintained by the Department of Toxic Substances Control¹. There are 10 sites listed in Riverside County, none of which are in or near the City of Blythe. On the hazardous materials Cortese list² there are four sites listed within approximately 10,000 feet of the project site which are listed as "Closed" and "No further action". None of the sites is near the project site.

There are no historic resources located on or in the vicinity of the property, and there is no potential for such resources to be impacted by construction or operation of the project. Therefore, based upon this review, it is concluded that there are no conditions applicable to the project site that would qualify as exceptions to use of an exemption for the vehicle storage project.

¹ (www.calepa.ca.gov/sitecleanup/corteselist/; last accessed March 27, 2025)

² (www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=Blythe; last accessed March 27, 2025)

7.0 Eligibility Conclusion

Based upon information contained in the administrative record, as reflected in the answers provided to evaluation of exemption criteria and consideration of possible exceptions to use of an exemption above, the City hereby determines that the proposed River Posse Vehicle Storage Project qualifies for a Class 32 categorical exemption. The project fits within the parameters included in CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 as an in-fill development project, and none of the exceptions to this exemption defined in Section 15300.2 apply. Should the City Council approve the proposed CUP for the project, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse as described in the CEQA Guidelines §15062 (c)(2).

Signed: _____

Date: June 16, 2025

Name: Mallory Crecelius

Title: Interim City Manager & City Clerk