

Natividad Medical Center Emergency Department Addition and Remodel Description and Evidence for Categorical Exemption

Project Description

The proposed project consists of a remodel to the existing 12,000 square-foot emergency department facility (part of a 482,000 square-foot hospital) and a 6,000 square-foot addition to the facility at the Natividad Medical Center located at 1441 Constitution Boulevard in Salinas. The remodel of the existing emergency department facility would update it to current California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) standards.

Categorical Exemption and Evidence

The proposed project qualifies for a categorical exemption under Article 19, Section 15301 and Section 15332 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

15301. Existing Facilities: Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The types of “existing facilities” itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- (a) Interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances;
- (b) Existing facilities of both investor and publicly owned utilities used to provide electric power, natural gas, sewerage, or other public utility services;
- (c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities (this includes road grading for the purpose of public safety), and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian

crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes);

- (d) Restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety, unless it is determined that the damage was substantial and resulted from an environmental hazard such as earthquake, landslide, or flood;
- (e) Additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than:
 - (1) 50 percent of the floor area of the structures before the addition, or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less; or
 - (2) 10,000 square feet if:
 - (A) The project is in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the General Plan and
 - (B) The area in which the project is located is not environmentally sensitive.
- (f) Addition of safety or health protection devices for use during construction of or in conjunction with existing structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment, or topographical features including navigational devices;
- (g) New copy on existing on and off-premise signs;
- (h) Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs (excluding the use of pesticides, as defined in Section 12753, Division 7, Chapter 2, Food and Agricultural Code);
- (i) Maintenance of fish screens, fish ladders, wildlife habitat areas, artificial wildlife waterway devices, streamflows, springs and waterholes, and stream channels (clearing of debris) to protect fish and wildlife resources;
- (j) Fish stocking by the California Department of Fish and Game;
- (k) Division of existing multiple family or single-family residences into common-interest ownership and subdivision of existing commercial or industrial buildings, where no physical changes occur which are not otherwise exempt;
- (l) Demolition and removal of individual small structures listed in this subdivision:
 - (1) One single-family residence. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be demolished under this exemption.

- (2) A duplex or similar multifamily residential structure. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to duplexes and similar structures where not more than six dwelling units will be demolished.
- (3) A store, motel, office, restaurant, or similar small commercial structure if designed for an occupant load of 30 persons or less. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to the demolition of up to three such commercial buildings on sites zoned for such use.
- (4) Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.
- (m) Minor repairs and alterations to existing dams and appurtenant structures under the supervision of the Department of Water Resources.
- (n) Conversion of a single-family residence to office use.
- (o) Installation, in an existing facility occupied by a medical waste generator, of a steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical waste generated by that facility provided that the unit is installed and operated in accordance with the Medical Waste Management Act (Section 117600, et seq., of the Health and Safety Code) and accepts no offsite waste.
- (p) Use of a single-family residence as a small family day care home, as defined in Section 1596.78 of the Health and Safety Code.

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 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.

Evidence and Findings

The proposed project includes the remodel of the existing 12,000 square-foot emergency department facility (482,000 square-foot hospital) to update it to current OSHPD standards and the construction of a 6,000 square-foot addition to the existing emergency department facility. The

project site is located at the existing developed Natividad Medical Center in Salinas. The site of the proposed addition is developed with a portion of a parking lot and a sidewalk.

For these reasons, the proposed project is categorically exempt as:

- (a) the remodel is characterized as a minor alteration of an existing public structure and facility, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use;
- (b) the addition is would not result in an increase of more than 10,000 square feet and is located in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development in the general plan and the site is not environmentally sensitive;
- (c) the addition would not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structures before the addition;
- (d) the project site is consistent with the applicable Public/Semipublic general plan designation, applicable general plan policies, Public/Semipublic “PS” zoning designation, and zoning regulations;
- (e) the approximate 6,000 square foot project site is no more than five acres within the Salinas city limits and surrounded by urban uses;
- (f) the project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species, as it is a developed site and entirely surrounded by the hospital environs and urban development;
- (g) approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, as the project is a minor expansion to an existing use; and
- (h) the site is currently adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines lists exceptions that would prohibit a project from qualifying for a Categorical Exemption, even if the project satisfies the requirements for one or more of the exemption classes. The County’s CEQA consultant, EMC Planning Group, conducted an independent review and evaluation of the proposed project, and conducted independent research. Based on its review, EMC Planning Group concluded that none of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 (a-f) apply to the proposed project (discussed below). Therefore, a Categorical Exemption is appropriate pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15332.

Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of

hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Discussion. *The project qualifies for Class 1 and Class 32 exemption and therefore, the location exception does not apply to the project.*

- (b) **Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Discussion. *The “Long Range Concept” sheet of the project’s site plan shows a future addition to the facility of approximately the same size. The future addition would be similarly categorically exempt for the same reasons as the proposed project. Therefore, there is no cumulative impact that would be significant.*

- (c) **Significant Effect.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Discussion. *Neither the County of Monterey nor the consultants are aware of any unusual circumstances associated with the project such that the project would result in a reasonable possibility of resulting in a significant effect on the environment.*

- (d) **Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for 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. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

Discussion. *According to the City of Salinas General Plan, the project site is not identified as being within a scenic resource area. According to the Caltrans Scenic Highway System Map website, the project site is located approximately five miles north of the nearest officially designated State of California scenic highway (segment of State Route 68 terminating at the Salinas River). However, a segment of State Route 68 from US Highway 101 to the Salinas River is considered an “eligible” scenic route, which is located approximately 1.84 miles south of the proposed project site. The proposed project site is not visible from State Route 68. Additionally, the proposed project is within the developed medical center complex. Therefore, no scenic highways, or scenic resources, would be affected as a result of the project.*

- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

Discussion. *The proposed project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The site is not located on the California Environmental*

Protection Agency's Cortese List (Health and Safety Code Section 25187.5). The State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker (Health and Safety Code Section 25295 and Water Code Sections 13273 and 13301) indicates one closed/completed Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) cleanup site at the medical center facility at 1330 Natividad Road. Cleanup was completed and the case is closed. GeoTracker does not indicate any hazardous sites within the medical facility. The project site is not listed on the California Environmental Protection Agency's list of solid waste sites identified by the Water Board with waste constituents above hazardous waste levels outside the waste management unit (Health and Safety Code Section 116395).

- (f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Discussion. *The project site does not contain any historical resources and all proposed changes are within existing medical center grounds. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a change in the significance of a historical resource.*

Sources

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