

Notice of Exemption

To:

Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Los Angeles, Business Filings
12400 E. Imperial Hwy., #1201
Norwalk, CA 90650

From:

Public Agency: LA County Planning
320 W. Temple Street, 13th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Project Title: _____

Project Applicant: _____

Project Location - Specific: _____

Project Location - City: _____ Project Location - County: _____

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: _____

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Los Angeles County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: _____

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemption. State code number: _____
- Exemptions for Agricultural Housing, Affordable Housing, and Residential Infill Projects. State type and section number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt: _____

Lead Agency
Contact Person: _____ Area Code/Telephone/Extension: _____

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Kristina Kulczycki Date: _____ Title: _____

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
SOUTHEAST ANTELOPE VALLEY COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT UPDATE

1. Project Description

LA County Planning is undertaking the process of updating the existing set of development standards specific to the communities of Littlerock and Sun Village, known hereafter as the Southeast Antelope Valley Community Standards District (“CSD”). These communities, along with others in the Antelope Valley, approached LA County Planning requesting preservation of their rural lifestyle and the unique character of their communities. After meeting with members of the community, there was an expressed interest to add requirements to the residential and agricultural zones to allow for accessory cargo shipping containers based on the size of the lot; accessory truck parking when the truck owner or operator resides on-site; allow for rural artifacts to be displayed; and clarify what constitutes a personal vehicle. The community also found that additional standards were needed for commercial projects to ensure that there is on-site circulation for trucks; add additional scrutiny of circulation for new drive-through facilities associated with a restaurant or food establishment; provide direction on where to site parking on a commercial lot; and improve the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area by creating additional development standards for commercial building design, signage, and front yard landscaping. The Palmdale Boulevard Commercial Area standards were also revised to include similar front yard landscaping requirements.

The updated CSD will contain the abovementioned standards which are mainly accessory uses to the already-permitted primary use in the zone. Other standards are intended to clarify and guide commercial design, but none of the standards will introduce new primary uses in the zone or deviate from the existing baseline conditions of the area. These regulations are not intended to create a change in land use or density for any of the properties located within the CSD boundaries. Additionally, no construction activities or specific developments are proposed as part of this project.

2. Description of Project Site

As described in the Antelope Valley Area Plan, the communities of Littlerock and Sun Village are located in southeastern Antelope Valley, east of the City of Palmdale. Sun Village is north of Littlerock and south of Lake Los Angeles. Littlerock is southwest of Pearblossom. Each community has a rural town center area. The Littlerock rural town center area is located along Pearblossom Highway between Little Rock Wash and 90th Street East. The Sun Village rural town center is located along Palmdale Boulevard between Little Rock Wash and 95th Street East. An attached map depicts the boundaries of the existing Southeast Antelope Valley Community Standards District. The community spans several United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) map pages, but the majority is located within the Littlerock Quadrant with the western portion in the Palmdale Quadrant and the southern portion in the Juniper Hills Quadrant.

Littlerock and Sun Village are rural communities with mainly agricultural and residential uses, and numerous public facilities including schools, a library, a post office, a fire station, and parks. The entirety of the area is located in the Rural Outdoor Lighting District and all related standards are applicable to properties in Sun Village and Littlerock. The Antelope Valley Area Plan describes many portions of the area as being “developed or partially developed with a wide range of uses and a distinctly rural character. The remaining portions are largely undeveloped and generally not served by existing infrastructure, include environmental resources such as Significant Ecological Areas, and are subject to safety hazards, such as Flood Zones.”

The Antelope Valley Area Plan identifies three economic opportunity areas where major infrastructure projects are being planned by state and regional agencies. The Little Rock Wash is located along the western boundary between the Southeast Antelope Valley communities and the City of Palmdale. The properties east of the Little Rock Wash are located within the East Economic Opportunity Area due to their proximity to the proposed High Desert Corridor project. Properties within or near the Little Rock Wash are mapped as part of the Antelope Valley Significant Ecological Area and considered within both the Littlerock Dam Inundation Area and a Liquefaction Zone.

Pearblossom Highway (Highway 138) runs east to west through the community and forms the main commercial corridor for the area. As such, many truck owners and operators reside in the community and park their trucks on their properties. Many of the parcels in the community are zoned for agricultural uses. It is common for heavy equipment, such as tractors and semi-trucks, to be used in agricultural operations, including the transport of agricultural goods. This ordinance would allow for accessory truck parking; in other words, trucks would be permitted to park on agricultural properties when the owner or operator resides on-site and required standards (such as a minimum lot size, dust and noise control measures, leak prevention, setbacks, and on-site turnaround) can be met.

3. Reasons Why This Project is Exempt

The project qualifies for Class 1, Existing Facilities; Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction; Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land; and Class 11, Accessory Structures; under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines Sections 15301, 15302, 15303, 15304, and 15311 as classes of projects which do not have a significant effect on the environment.

Class 1: Section 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...Examples include, but are not limited to:

(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;

(g) New copy on existing on and off-premise signs;

(h) Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs...

(n) Conversion of a single family residence to office use.

The development standards proposed as part of this update will not trigger new construction or alter existing buildings. For new construction in the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area, there is a requirement to incorporate architectural design standards that are in-line with the existing architectural styles found within the area including Old West or Western Frontier, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Victorian (Folk). If additions are proposed, signage may be updated as part of the project. There are some new standards for signs including allowing painted wall signs, prohibiting internally illuminated signs, and allowing freestanding signs on smaller commercial lots. If a drive-through for food service is proposed on a property adjacent to Pearblossom Highway, a public hearing process will be required (for the consideration of granting a conditional use permit). Additionally, the standards for landscaping in the front yards within the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area and the Palmdale Boulevard Commercial Area are updated to align with the C-RU Zone landscaping requirements.

Many of the proposed standards are related to accessory uses or structures in agricultural or residential zones including rural artifacts, fencing and walls, personal vehicles, cargo shipping containers, and accessory truck parking on agriculturally zoned land. These standards will allow existing primary uses to continue and may legalize some of the existing accessory structures and uses that the community identified as consistent with rural lifestyle and larger agricultural lots. These accessory uses and structures are already present in the community; some are permitted as part of current agricultural operations. For example, agricultural operations require the use of heavy equipment, such as tractors and trucks, to harvest and transport produce. The community would like to allow these accessory uses and structures with, or without agricultural uses on the properties since they are compatible with rural living, in an agricultural zone, and on larger sized lots. As these uses or structures would be added to sites with an existing primary use and do not require additional buildings or structures, they would qualify for the Class 1 Categorical Exemption.

Class 2: Section 15302, Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced, including but not limited to:

(b) Replacement of a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity.

The project will not alter the current Zoning Code (Title 22) as it applies to replacement or reconstruction of structures. Development standards will be added for commercial projects and signage. However, these standards only apply when new construction or additions are proposed and will be more stringent than the existing Zoning Code allowances. Therefore, the CSD standards will qualify for the Class 2 Categorical Exemption.

Class 3: Section 15303, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities and structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure...Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

(a) One single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone...

(b) A store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2,500 square feet in floor area...

(e) Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

The project will include development standards for ministerial projects allowing new accessory structures and uses such as accessory cargo storage containers, signage, accessory truck parking, rural artifact display, personal vehicles, and walls and fencing. All of these standards would fit into this categorical exemption as they are considered small structures accessory to a residence or commercial building (signage). Truck and personal vehicle parking would both qualify under garages or carports as truck parking would not require the construction of a covered structure, and therefore, would be an even smaller impact than the installation of a carport or garage.

The standards will also address commercial development within the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area including freestanding signs on smaller commercial lots and conditional use permits for new drive-through facilities that include food service on properties adjacent to the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area. Additional architectural design standards will also be required for new commercial development along the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area. These standards will be more restrictive than the general code and will help to maintain lower profile buildings that use colors and materials that match the environment. These new standards will maintain the existing aesthetic and character of the community.

Class 4: Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to:

(b) New gardening or landscaping, including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistance landscaping.

This project proposes to revise the front yard landscaping standards for the Pearblossom Highway and Palmdale Boulevard Commercial Areas to align with the landscaping requirements in the C-RU (Rural Commercial) Zone. The standards will also be updated to allow for more flexibility in the plant palette choices while ensuring that they are all drought-tolerant. Therefore, the proposed standards will qualify for the Class 4 exemption as they will ensure that landscaping is provided, and the plant palette is appropriate for the area by requiring native and drought-tolerant plants.

Class 11: Section 15311, Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to:

(a) On-premise signs;

(b) Small parking lots;

The CSD update will allow for painted wall signs and freestanding signs on smaller commercial lots. Internally illuminated signs will be prohibited. Standards in the CSD will encourage commercial parking lots to be designed so that parking is located away from residential and agricultural zones. The standards will encourage parking to be located behind the building, when possible. Truck on-site circulation plans will also be required in order to ensure that there is adequate on-site maneuvering for trucks to avoid backing onto the commercial sites. A conditional use permit will be required for drive-through facilities with food service on properties adjacent to the Pearblossom Highway Commercial Area. All of these standards are intended to help with traffic flow, create safer circulation patterns, and add to the visual appeal of commercial sites, especially along the commercial corridor. The requirements add more restrictions and apply to accessory structures or uses on the property. They do not impact the density or use of land as designated by the zone and therefore, fit within the Class 11 exemption.

4. Review of Possible Exceptions to the Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines identifies circumstances when a categorical exemption cannot be used. This project has been reviewed to determine if any of the conditions listed in this section might invalidate findings that the project is exempt under CEQA. None of these exceptions to the categorical exemptions are applicable:

(a) Location: This project qualifies for Categorical Exemptions Classes 3, 4, and 11 which each require analysis by location in order ensure that a project is not located

in a particularly sensitive environment where its impacts would ordinarily be insignificant, but circumstantially would be significant. The intent of the CSD is to preserve the existing rural, low-density character of the area. Proposed standards will address accessory uses and structures in residential and agricultural zones; update the signage requirements; revise the front yard landscaping standards; and clarify commercial design, parking and circulation standards. Some additional development standards were added to restrict uses or structures in certain flood areas and Significant Ecological Areas. Moreover, all future development projects proposed within the area of the Southeast Antelope Valley Community Standards District will continue to be reviewed by LA County departments such as Fire, Public Health, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation to ensure compliance with LA County Code requirements. No construction activities are proposed as part of this ordinance update.

- (b) Cumulative Impact:** The project will not have any adverse impact on the environment either individually or cumulatively since this is an update to an existing community standards district and standards that are proposed with this update are intended to capture existing operations and structures that were not addressed in the current CSD. The existing operations and structures addressed in the update are currently present in the community and are considered by community members as part of the rural lifestyle, such as the use of cargo shipping containers; personal vehicles under 10,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight; truck parking on larger agricultural lots; and higher fences or walls. As these are already present in the community and are part of the baseline condition, the inclusion of these standards will not create a significant cumulative impact to the area. Additional standards are included to clarify design standards or commercial lot layouts to ensure consistency with the existing community. None of the standards are growth-inducing or will increase the density or intensity of properties.
- (c) Significant Effect:** No unusual circumstances will cause this project to have a significant effect on the environment because the development standards are related to accessory uses and structures that are already present in the community. Commercial design standards are also proposed for buildings, landscaping, parking, circulation, and signage. None of these standards will impact existing approved uses and none will increase the density or introduce new land uses in the existing designated zones. The standards are only intended to guide future development for continuity and compatibility with the existing rural character of the area.
- (d) Scenic Highways:** None of the highways located within the communities of Sun Village or Littlerock are officially designated as state scenic highways.¹

¹ Caltrans list of officially designated State Scenic Highways (from Caltrans website: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways>, accessed May 18, 2022).

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites:** The project is not located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. No active or open hazardous sites were identified at or adjacent to the project site.²
- (f) Historical Resources:** No officially designated or mapped historic resources are located within the project area. Furthermore, any future construction projects that may be of historic significance will be evaluated when a development application is submitted and none of the standards would prevent the preservation of a historic resource as they relate to accessory uses and structures as well as commercial design standards for buildings, landscaping, parking, circulation, and signage.³






² EnviroStor Database <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/> and GeoTracker Database <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>, both accessed May 18, 2022).

³ Los Angeles County Historical Landmark Database: <http://hlrc.lacounty.gov/HLRC/pdf/Registry%202020.pdf?ver=2020-06-24-172750-153>; California Historical Landmarks Database: http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21427; and the National Register of Historic Places: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>, all accessed May 18, 2022).

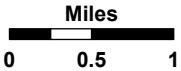
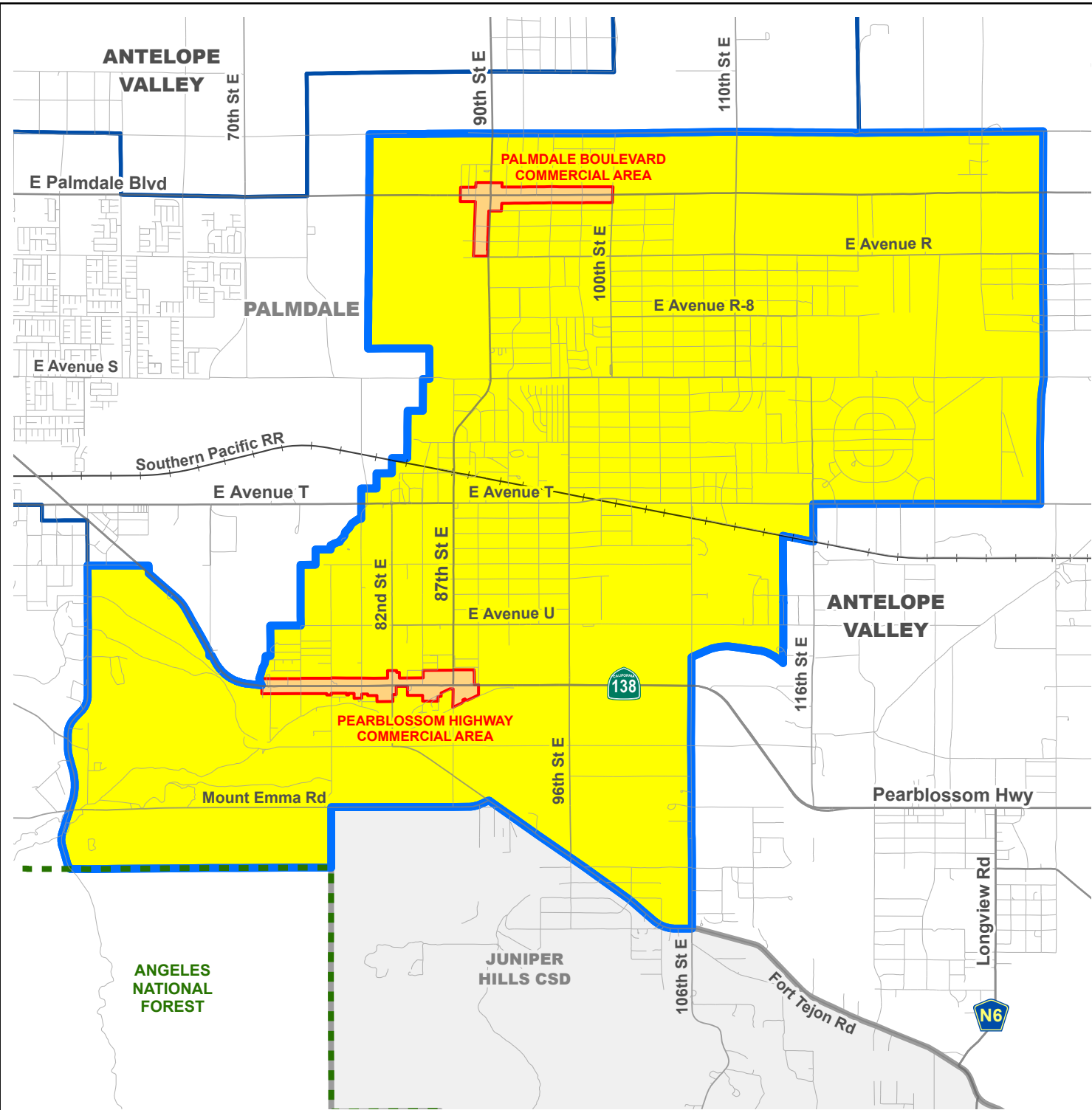
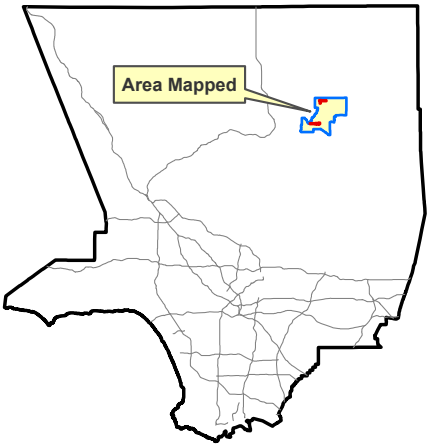
Southeast Antelope Valley Community Standards District

Draft Update

Legend:

-  Southeast Antelope Valley CSD (Proposed Update)
-  Area-Specific Boundary
-  Other Adopted CSD
-  City / Unincorporated Boundary
-  National Forest Boundary

Key Map:



LA COUNTY
PLANNING

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