

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 Regional 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 Department of Regional Planning

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: Caroline Chen Date: _____ Title: _____

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
PEARBLOSSOM COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT

1. Project Description

LA County Planning is undertaking the process of establishing the Pearblossom Community Standards District (“CSD”). with development standards specific to the community of Lake Los Angeles. This community, along with others in the Antelope Valley, approached LA County Planning requesting preservation of their rural lifestyle, protections for the surrounding environment, and conservation of their unique community character.

After meeting with members of the community, there was an expressed interest to add requirements to apply rural road standards; modify standards for signs; standardize new rural subdivisions; apply trail development standards; regulate the removal of vegetation; allow accessory cargo shipping containers and onsite materials storage areas in residential and agricultural zones; specify standards for fences and walls, specify standards for streetlights; specify paving requirements; specify landscape standards; specify graffiti removal guidelines; specify wireless communications tower guidelines; require community amenities for commercial and industrial developments; establish commercial and industrial design standards; display rural artifacts; clarify what constitutes a personal vehicle; and allow taller fences and walls. The community also found that additional standards are needed to limit locations where alcoholic beverage sales and drive-through facilities with food services may be located. The Pearblossom CSD committee also established the Blossom Community Corridor Area along Pearblossom Highway where metal plating; truck storage; truck sales, rentals, and storage; and recreational vehicle sales and rentals are prohibited.

The proposed Pearblossom CSD will include the abovementioned standards which will largely be more environmentally protective, more restrictive, or equal to what is currently allowed within the Zoning Code (“Title 22”). Additionally, the CSD includes standards which are predominantly accessory uses to the already-permitted primary use in the zone. No construction activities or specific developments are proposed as part of this project.

2. Description of Project Site

Pearblossom is a small rural community located in the southeastern portion of the Antelope Valley. The community is situated along Pearblossom Highway, east of Littlerock, west of Llano, south of Lake Los Angeles, and north of Juniper Hills. **An attached map depicts the boundaries of the proposed Pearblossom Community Standards District.**

Pearblossom is a small rural desert community that is located in the foothills of the Angeles Forest. Due to its higher elevation, it enjoys a more moderate climate than most of the other

communities in the Antelope Valley. Pearblossom has a Rural Town Center Area along Pearblossom Highway between 121st Street East and 133rd Street East. Nearly all commercial businesses and services are located on south side of Pearblossom Highway. The AVAP describes the area as “developed with a wide range of uses and a distinctly rural character, while other portions are largely undeveloped, generally not served by existing infrastructure, and subject to safety hazards, such as Seismic Zones and Flood Zones.”

The entirety of Pearblossom is located in the East Economic Opportunity Area where major infrastructure projects are being planned by state and regional agencies due to the community’s proximity to the proposed High Desert Corridor project. The whole community is also located within the Rural Outdoor Lighting District (“ROLD”) and all related standards are applicable to properties in Pearblossom. Numerous public facilities including schools, a post office, a fire station, a park, and three wildlife sanctuaries are located within the Pearblossom CSD.

Pearblossom is the site of many natural hazards. South of Pearblossom Highway, half of the community is situated in a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone while the other half is situated in a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone. To the east of Pearblossom is Big Rock Creek, an alluvial fan which originate from the Angeles National Forest and spreads out between Pearblossom and the neighboring community to the east, Llano, stretching northward towards Lake Los Angeles. Big Rock Creek is a groundwater recharge area for the Antelope Valley and a Mineral Resource Zone for the County. The Federal Emergency Management Agency designates this area, which comprises about one third of Pearblossom, a Special Flood Hazard Area (100-year [1 percent annual chance] flood area). A smaller 500-year flood hazard area (0.2 percent annual chance of flood) is found in western portion of the CSD. The active San Andreas Fault appears in two places within the Pearblossom CSD: on the western edge of the Pearblossom CSD just south of Pearblossom Highway, and a more extensive stretch that is just outside the southern boundary the Pearblossom CSD on the other side of Fort Tejon Road; a small number of properties are located in Liquefaction and Seismic Zones. Land undisturbed by agriculture is found in two areas in Pearblossom: west of 121st Street East, and along the eastern boundary of the CSD near 155th Street East which is part of the Antelope Valley Significant Ecological Area (SEA). Joshua trees and California juniper are found throughout Pearblossom.

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; Class 7, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources; Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment; Class 11, Accessory Structures; Class 20, Changes in Organization of Local Agencies; and Class 21, Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies. Under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”)

Guidelines Sections 15301, 15302, 15303, 15304, 15307, 15308, 15311, 15320, and 15321 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:

(c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities...

(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;

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

The project will not trigger new construction or alter existing buildings. The development standards will only impact new changes that are proposed to a site. For example, one development standard will exclude the addition of new outdoor advertising signs (billboards) within the community. Some new standards for signs including allowing hand-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 in Pearblossom, the CSD will not allow it within 300 feet of Pearblossom Highway.

The Pearblossom CSD will include development standards that restrict the road widths and prohibit the use of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, unless deemed necessary by the County. These standards will not impact existing roads and therefore, the project will allow for the continued operation and maintenance of existing roads.

The project proposes consideration of trail easements and alignments for all new development or subdivisions requiring a discretionary land-use permit to be consistent with the County Trails Manual and Trails Plan of the AVAP.

The project also proposes the inclusion of development standards to limit vegetation removal. The inclusion of these new standards will protect the existing landscape and natural growth on private property.

Many of the proposed standards are related to accessory uses or structures in agricultural or residential zones including cargo shipping containers, onsite materials storage areas, fencing and walls, and rural artifacts. 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. 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.

(d) Conversion of overhead electric utility distribution system facilities to underground including connection to existing overhead electric utility distribution lines where the surface is restored to the condition existing prior to the undergrounding.

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.

The community is interested in requiring the undergrounding of utilities. This development standard may be applicable to new subdivision projects of a minimum size.

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 such as accessory cargo storage containers, accessory onsite materials storage areas, signage, rural artifact display, personal vehicles, fences and walls, and commercial and industrial design standards. These standards would fit into this categorical exemption as they are considered small structures accessory to a residence or commercial building (signage).

The standards will also address commercial development within Blossom Community Corridor Area including freestanding signs on smaller commercial lots and prohibit impactful uses such as auto dismantling facilities and recycling processing facilities from being established in this Area. Drive-through facilities that include food services will also not be allowed on parcels within 300 feet from Pearblossom Highway, while alcoholic beverage sales will not be allowed on parcels within 1,000 feet from public schools and places of worship. In addition, new commercial and industrial developments will have to comply with new design standards, maximum building floor areas, maximum heights, and minimum distance between buildings. These standards will be more restrictive than the general code and will help to maintain lower profile buildings that use materials that match the rural 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 development standards to evaluate proposed removal of vegetation and encourage planting of native vegetation when the proposed vegetation removal exceeds a specific threshold. Although there are adopted ordinances that protect vegetation, this CSD would add a new layer of protection for plants in areas that may not otherwise be protected. These standards will be more environmentally protective than the current Zoning Code.

Class 7: Section 15307, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources

Class 7 consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment... Construction activities are not included in this exemption.

The project will include a set of development standards that will be more stringent than the existing County Code and therefore, will be more protective of the environment. The development standards will include evaluation of vegetation removal and prohibit

removal of more than 70 percent of vegetation from the total net acreage of any property. The CSD also prohibits clear-scraping of land without an approved use.

Class 8: Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment

Class 8 consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the enviro. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption.

The proposed project will further protect the environment and prevent environmental degradation with the addition of standards limiting expansion of roads, prohibiting new billboards, limiting vegetation removal, restricting subdivisions, and allowing existing vegetation originally on site that is preserved to count towards landscape requirements. The CSD does include guidance for trail development; however, these trails are already identified and included on the existing, adopted Antelope Valley Trails Map and the Regional Trails System, adopted as part of the General Plan. None of the proposed development standards will relax the existing code requirements or allow additional environmental degradation.

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 and billboards will be prohibited. Standards in the CSD will require commercial and industrial parking lots to meet minimum landscape requirements.

Drive-through facilities with food service will not be allowed on parcels within 300 feet of Pearblossom Highway, while those situated at a greater distance from the Highway will be required to obtain a conditional use permit to ensure vehicles queuing will not create a potential crash hazard. Impactful uses such as auto dismantling yards and recycling processing facilities will not be allowed within the Blossom Community Corridor Area which spans the length of Pearblossom Highway and is the rural town center area. These standards are intended to help with traffic flow, increase safety, and add to the visual appeal of the Blossom Community Corridor. These standards add more restrictions, apply to accessory structures or uses on commercial and industrial properties, and do not impact the density or use of land as designated by the zone and therefore, fit within the Class 11 exemption.

Class 20: Section 15320, Changes in Organization of Local Agencies

Class 20 consists of changes in the organization or reorganization of local governmental agencies where the changes do not change the geographical area in which previously existing powers are exercised. Examples include, but are not limited to:

(a) Establishment of a subsidiary district;

This project will establish a new district with an additional layer of standards for a specific community. This community will remain within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles and will still be governed by the Board of Supervisors. This additional district will only apply specific development standards to this specified area with the intention of preserving its existing rural character, landscape, and natural vegetation.

Class 21: Section 15321, Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies

Class 21 consists of:

(a) Actions by regulatory agencies to enforce or revoke a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use issued, adopted, or prescribed by the regulatory agency or enforcement of a law, general rule, standard, or objective, administered or adopted by the regulatory agency. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) The direct referral of a violation of lease, permit, license, certificate, or entitlement for use or of a general rule, standard, or objective to the Attorney General, District Attorney, or City Attorney as appropriate, for judicial enforcement;*
- (2) The adoption of an administrative decision or order enforcing or revoking the lease, permit, license, certificate, or entitlement for use or enforcing the general rule, standard, or objective.*

This project proposes to add additional development standards to the Pearblossom community with the objective of preserving its existing character. These standards will result in more environmental protections to the area. Any violation to these rules will be enforced pursuant to Chapter 22.242 of the County Code.

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 landscaping standards; and clarify commercial design; restrict subdivisions to a minimum lot size; add standards for utilities; and add vegetation protections. Additional proposed standards will address accessory uses and structures in residential and agricultural zones and provide guidelines for commercial design. Although there are properties located within the boundaries of the project that are mapped as being located within a Flood Zone, Liquefaction Zone, and SEA, none of the proposed standards will create a significant impact on the environment. Furthermore, all future development projects proposed within the area of the Pearblossom CSD 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 the standards included in this CSD will be more restrictive and environmentally protective than the current standards in the Zoning Code, or capture the existing operations and structures currently present and considered part of the rural lifestyle. Cargo shipping containers; onsite materials storages areas; personal vehicles under 10,000 pounds Gross Vehicle Weight; and higher fences or walls are already present in the community and are part of the baseline condition, the inclusion of standards related to these topics will not create a significant cumulative impact to the area.
- (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 or include additional limitations on signage, vegetation protections, stricter commercial design standards, standards guiding new subdivisions, the design and dedication of new trails, and the prohibition of new billboards. None of these standards will impact existing approved uses nor will they increase the density or introduce new land uses in the existing designated zones. These 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 Pearblossom are officially designated as state scenic highways.¹
- (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 historical resources are located within the community of Pearblossom. 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

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).




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).

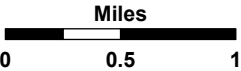
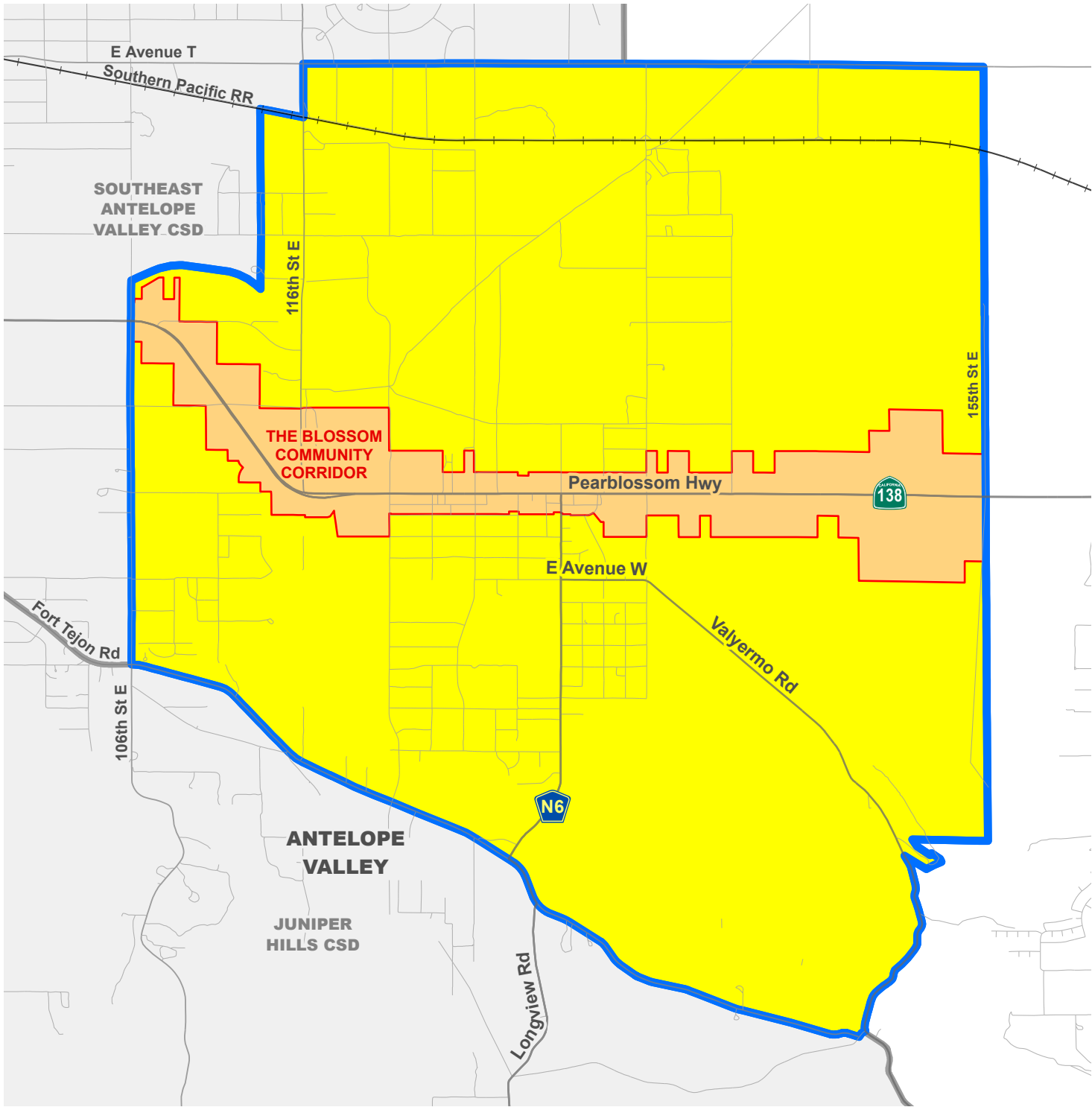
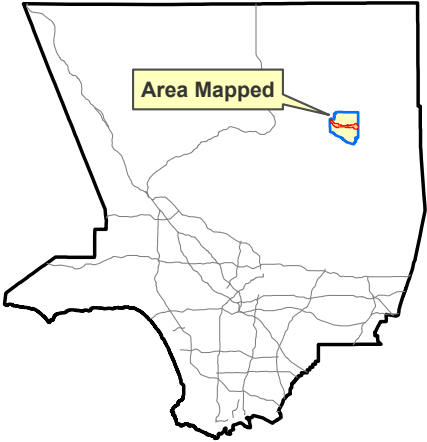
**Pearblossom
Community Standards District**

Draft

Legend:

-  Pearblossom CSD (Proposed)
-  Area-Specific Boundary (500 Ft)
-  Other Adopted CSD

Key Map:



**LA COUNTY
PLANNING**

Los Angeles County
Dept. of Regional Planning
320 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012