

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

FROM: City of Fresno Planning and Development Department
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, California 93721-3604

TO: X Fresno County Clerk
2220 Tulare Street – First Floor Lobby
Fresno, California 93721

_____ Office of Planning & Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, California 95812-3044

Project Title: Environmental Assessment No. P24-01606

Project Location: 3525 South East Avenue; located on the eastside of South East Avenue In between East Central and Earth North Avenues in Fresno, California. (APNs: 329-130-01 & 17)

Project Location – city: City of Fresno **Project Location- county:** County of Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: Development Permit No. P24-01606 was filed by Nicholas Brantley of Don Pickett & Associates, Inc. on behalf of Valley Wide Beverage and pertains to ±2.66 acres of proposed ground mounted single axis tracking photovoltaic solar array on a ±27.16-acre parcel located at 3525 South East Avenue. In addition, a Voluntary Parcel Merger Application No. L24-00018 (VPM 2024-06) for the APNs noted above will be completed for the ±7.62 and ±19.54 acres which totals the site acreage to ±27.16.

The solar array will be composed of ten (10) 62 kw inverters and (900) 395w solar modules mounted to an ATI Duratek single axis solar tracking system. The system will interconnect to existing electrical service and provide power for the existing business (Valley Wide Beverage). In addition, the solar will be secured with a six-foot (6') tall chain-link fence topped with stranded barbed wire for security and safety purposes. Access to the solar will be provided through the main entry at Valley Wide Beverage Site through two (2) manual operated gates. Knox padlocks will also be provided at the gates for emergency access to the site.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Fresno

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Nicholas Brantley of Pickett Solar & Don Pickett & Associates
7395 North Palm Buffs Suite #101
Fresno CA, 93711

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial - PRC § 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines §15268
 Declared Emergency - PRC § 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines §15269(a)
 Emergency Project - PRC § 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines §15269(b) and (c)
 Categorical Exemption – CEQA Guidelines §15311/Class 11 & §15332/Class 32
 Statutory Exemption – PRC § _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project is exempt under Sections 15311/Class 11 and 15332/Class 32 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines as follows

Section 15311/Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.

The project proposes to install ground-mounted solar for the purpose of providing power to an existing on-site industrial business (Valley Wide Beverage).

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.

By current standards, the subject site is identified as “in-fill” within an urban setting. This project is located on a site within the City limits and is consistent with the Fresno General Plan designation, policies, and zoning. The existing IL (*Light Industrial*) zone districts are consistent with the Employment – Light Industrial planned land use designations approved for this site by the Fresno General Plan, and the South-Central Specific Plan. The proposed development was reviewed for intensity, building form, massing, and location standards per the underlying zone district, and no inconsistencies were found with the proposed setbacks, landscape standards, intensity, height, or lot coverage. The project proposes to develop a ground mounted photovoltaic solar system (ground-mounted solar panels, inverters, and other mechanical equipment) encompassing a total of approximately ± 2.66 acres on an approximately ± 7.62 -acre portion of the ± 27.16 -acre property. Therefore, given the conditions of approval, it can be concluded that the proposed industrial-use project conforms to the development standards of the Light Industrial Use planned land use and IL zone district.

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 City limits, occurs on an approximately ± 2.66 acres on an approximately ± 7.62 -acre portion of the ± 27.16 -acre site, less than the five-acre maximum, and is surrounded by other industrial uses. Existing industrial uses are located to the south, and east, and properties to the north and west are vacant. Properties immediately to the south is where Ulta Beauty (Ulta DC Fresno 0855) distribution center. The property to the east is where Pepsi, Unique Looms’ warehouse and Ernest Packaging Solutions is located. Therefore, it can be concluded that industrial uses substantially surround the site.

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

The project site contains previously disturbed land and surrounding developments consists of a Valley Wide Beverage, Pepsi, Unique Loom, Ernest Packaging, and Ulta Beauty Distribution Center (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.

The project application only includes the construction of a ground mount tracker solar array on an area of the site currently not being utilized, the solar structures are an accessory use generating

renewable energy to offset the energy usage of the primary use of the site and does not change the basic form or function of the existing site.

Further, the solar structures will occupy an area of the site which could potentially otherwise be used for expansion of the primary use of the site by constructing additional building area, which could intensify the use of the overall site. Therefore, the scope of work consisting of constructing accessory solar structures is considered a negligible expansion of use.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District was provided opportunity to review the application and provided comments which can be found in their memo dated August 16, 2024. The site has been reviewed and conditioned by the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District, Fresno Building and Safety Division and the City of Fresno Fire Departments. In addition, given the project site and surrounding properties have been substantially developed and utilities and public services already exist in the area, 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 or cumulative effect on the environment. The project is not located on a hazardous waste site, a historical resource, or adjacent to a scenic highway. A categorical exemption, as noted above, has been prepared for the project and the area is not environmentally sensitive.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Steven Lieng, Planner
City of Fresno Planning and Development Department

Full telephone no. (559) 621-8007

If filed/signed by applicant:

Attach certified document of exemption finding (check if attached)

Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No



Signature: _____ **Date:** February 26, 2025

Printed Name and Title: Ralph Kachadourian, Supervising Planner
City of Fresno Planning and Development Department

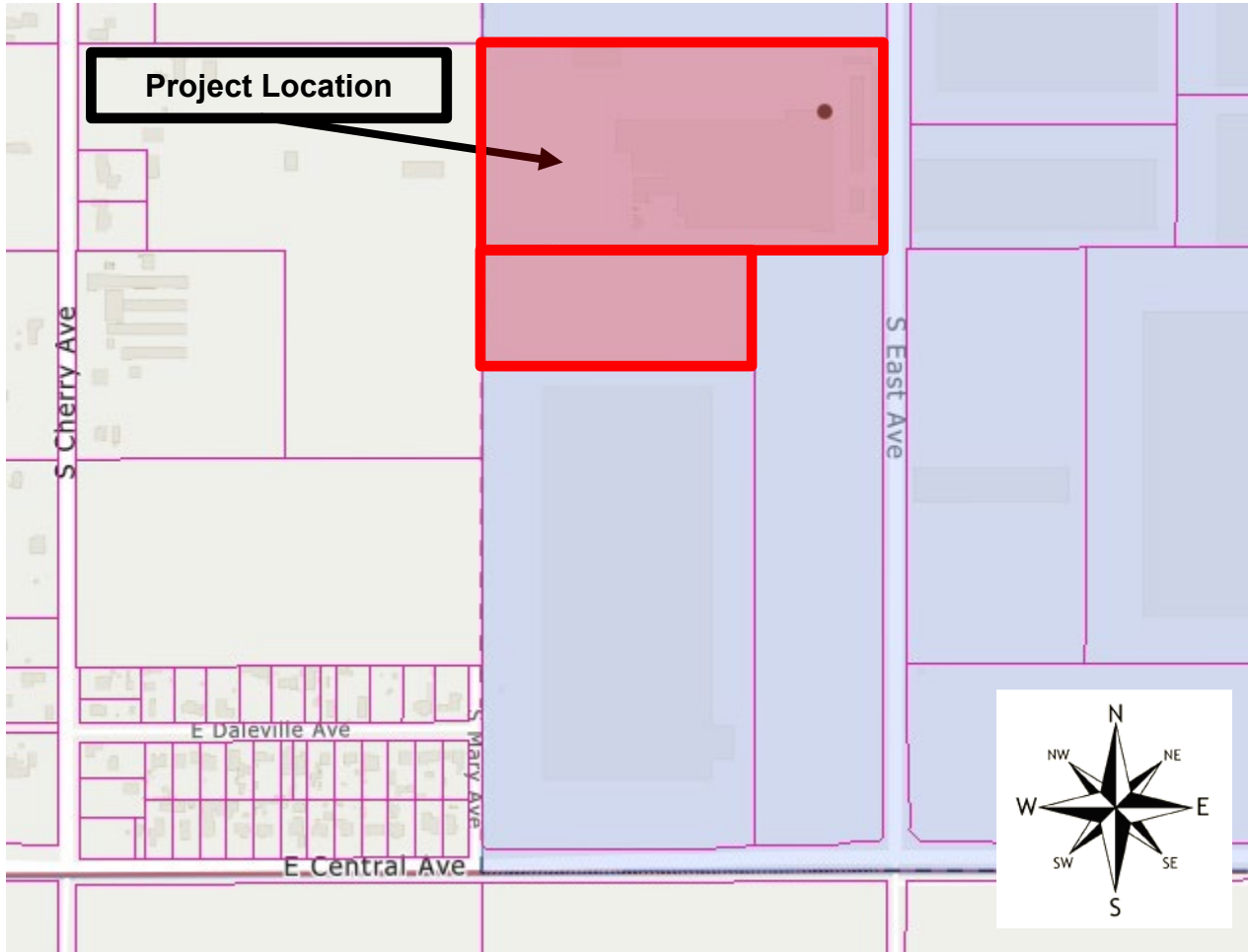
Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by applicant

Attachments: Vicinity Map & Categorical Exemption

VICINITY MAP/SITE LOCATION

3525 South Avenue



LEGEND

Subject Property 

Planning and Development Department
2600 Fresno Street, Room 3043 · Fresno, CA 93721 · Phone (559) 621-8277

**CITY OF FRESNO
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. P24-01606**

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: Nicholas Brantley of Pickett Solar & Don Pickett & Associates
(559) 431-3535
Nicholas@PickettSolar.com
7395 North Palm Bluffs Avenue, Suite #101
Fresno, CA 93711

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Date: February 26, 2025
Prepared By: Steven Lieng, Planner



Submitted by:

Ralph Kachadourian
Supervising Planner
City of Fresno
Planning & Development Department
(559) 621-8277