

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: Lake Los Angeles Community Standards District

Project Applicant: Los Angeles County

Project Location - Specific:

The unincorporated community of Lake Los Angeles in the eastern region of the Antelope Valley. See attached map.

Project Location - City: Unincorporated Area Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The LA County Planning Department proposes a new Community Standards District for the community of Lake Los Angeles to protect, preserve, and enhance the rural, equestrian, and agricultural character of the community. Development standards applicable to this community will be more environmentally protective, preserve native vegetation, and specify development standards for residential and commercial uses. See attachment for additional information.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

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: Class 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 20, and 21
- 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:

This project qualifies for a categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resource Code section 21000, et seq.) because standards incorporated by this ordinance will be more environmentally protective or meet the baseline condition of the community. None of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions are applicable. See attachment for a more detailed explanation.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Katie Lample Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 213-974-6618

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: Katie Lample Date: 12-19-2023 Title: Regional Planner

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

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

1. Project Description

LA County Planning is undertaking the process of creating the Lake Los Angeles Community Standards District (“CSD”) with development standards specific to the community of Lake Los Angeles.

The proposed Lake Los Angeles CSD adds requirements to maintain rural road standards; adds additional protections to hillside management areas (“HMAs”); modifies standards for signs; standardizes new rural subdivisions; establishes trail development standards; regulates the removal of vegetation; allows accessory cargo shipping containers in residential and agricultural zones; specifies residential standards for fences and walls, dogs, and home-based occupations; and creates commercial design standards.

The standards 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

The unincorporated community of Lake Los Angeles is located in the eastern most portion of the Antelope Valley, northeast of Sun Village, south of Hi Vista, and east of the City of Palmdale. An attached map depicts the boundaries of the proposed Lake Los Angeles CSD.

Lake Los Angeles is a rural desert community with mostly residential and agricultural uses. The community has a rural town center along Avenue O between 167th Street East and 172nd Street East and along 170th Street East, between Avenue O and Glenfall Avenue. The Antelope Valley Area Plan (“AVAP”) describes the area as “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 buttes and Significant Ecological Areas (“SEA”), and are subject to safety hazards, such as Flood Zones.”

The AVAP identifies three economic opportunity areas (“EOA”) where major infrastructure projects are being planned by state and regional agencies. The southwest corner of the CSD boundary, including the rural town center, is located within the EOA due its proximity to the proposed High Desert Corridor project, which is proposed to run along E Palmdale Blvd.

A large portion of the community is located within the Antelope Valley SEA and the entire community is located within the Rural Outdoor Lighting District. A small area in

the southwest corner of the CSD boundary falls within a Liquefaction Zone and 100-year Flood Zone. Additional 100-year Flood Zone corridors bisect a small selection of properties throughout the community.

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:

(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...

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

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. In commercial areas, for new construction or additions, there are architectural design standards that are in line with the existing architectural styles found within the area including Old West or Southwestern.

The Lake Los Angeles CSD includes 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.

Many of the proposed standards are related to accessory uses or structures in agricultural or residential zones including cargo shipping containers, fencing and walls, dogs, and home-based occupations. 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.

The project also proposes the inclusion of development standards to limit grading in HMAs and protect vegetation removal. The inclusion of these new standards will provide an additional layer of vegetation protection and promote the maintenance of existing landscape and natural growth on private property.

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 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 Title 22 allowances.

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 shipping containers, signage, fences and walls, dogs, home-based occupations, and commercial design standards. 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 the 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 those currently in Title 22.

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 Title 22 and therefore, will be more protective of the environment. The development standards will include an evaluation of vegetation removal as well as establishing additional protections on grading within HMAs.

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 environment. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption.

The project will further protect the environment and prevent environmental degradation with the addition of standards limiting expansion of roads, prohibiting new billboards, further regulating grading in HMAs, limiting vegetation removal, and restricting subdivisions. The CSD includes 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;

Development standards related to commercial signage are proposed as part of this project. The project also proposes to include a prohibition on new outdoor advertising signs (billboards).

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 County 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 Lake Los Angeles 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. 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. This project includes the addition of development standards that limit development in HMAs, add vegetation protections, limit the size and types of signage, restrict subdivisions to a minimum lot size, and add standards for utilities. 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, HMA, 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 Lake Los Angeles 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 Los Angeles 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, higher fences or walls, home-based occupations, and dogs 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 and they are intended to guide future development for compatibility and protection of the existing rural environment.
- (d) Scenic Highways:** No highways located within the community of Lake Los Angeles are officially designated as a state scenic highway.
- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites:** The project is not located on a site that 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.
- (f) Historical Resources:** There is one historical resource located within the community of Lake Los Angeles, California State Point of Interest No. P588. The

development standards will not cause a significant impact to this resource as they will be more restrictive.