



# CITY OF MENIFEE

## Community Development Department

Orlando Hernandez – Acting Community Development Director

### Notice of Determination

**TO:**  
 Office of Planning and Research (OPR)  
P.O. Box 3044, Sacramento, CA 95812-3044  
 County Clerk  
County of Riverside  
2720 Gateway Dr., Riverside, CA 92507

**FROM:**  
Lead Agency: City of Menifee  
Comm. Dev. Department  
Address: 29844 Haun Road,  
Menifee, CA 92586  
Contact Person: Brandon Cleary, Associate Planner  
Phone Number: (951) 723-3740

**SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21152 of the California Public Resources Code.**

State Clearinghouse Number: 2021110379

Project Title: Similar Use Determination (PLN26-0004), Minor Conditional Use Permit (PLN26-0003) and Minor Modification (PLN26-0002) for Stacked Farms Vertical Farming Operation

Project Applicant: Luke Sarmiento, Lovett Industrial, LLC. 610 Newport Center Drive, Suite 340 Newport Beach, CA 92660

Project Location (include county): The Project site is generally located south of Ethanac Road, east of Evans Road, west of Barnett Road, and north of McLaughlin Road within the City of Menifee, County of Riverside, State of California (Assessor Parcel Numbers [APNs]: 331-060-007, 331-060-008, 331-060-030, 331-060-023 and 331-060-020).

Project Description: **Similar Use Determination (PLN26-0004), Minor Conditional Use Permit (PLN26-0003) and Minor Modification (PLN26-0002)** proposes a Controlled Environment Agriculture Facility (CEA), otherwise known as vertical farming operation, that would produce, process and distribute fresh leafy greens and herbs within fully enclosed industrial buildings originally approved under Plot Plan PLN23-0040 Northern Gateway Logistics Center.

**Similar Use Determination (PLN26-0004)** proposes to classify the Controlled Environment Agriculture Facility (CEA) consistent with a Heavy-Intensity Manufacturing use. A Similar Use Determination is required when a use is not listed in the Development Code but may be allowed if it is determined to be similar in nature to a use that is permitted by right or conditionally permitted. A CEA is not explicitly listed in the Menifee Municipal Code (MMC) for the Economic Development Corridor – Northern Gateway (EDC-NG) Zoning District. However, the most similar listed use is Heavy-Intensity Manufacturing which is a conditionally permitted use in the EDC-NG zone.

Heavy-Intensity Manufacturing is classified as “the manufacturing, storage, and distribution or packaging of products involving chemicals, petroleum and heavy agricultural products or other hazardous materials”. The proposed project would include the manufacturing/growing of crops (leafy greens and herbs) along with the storage, packaging and distribution of such products. Although the distribution of products generally includes increased truck usage, the proposed project only anticipates up to 50 truck trips per day (to and from the facility). Heavy-Intensity manufacturing was chosen over Medium-Intensity Manufacturing due to the potential for the scaling up of distribution/truck trips for the proposed vertical farming use, which is a main distinction between the two uses in the Menifee Municipal Code.

In addition, Exhibit B is a statement of operations for the proposed CEA which provides additional research supporting the City’s Similar Use Determination as cities such as Chicago, Seattle, Newark and Los Angeles also allow this use in industrial zones.

**Minor Conditional Use Permit (PLN26-0003)** would allow the CEA at the Northern Gateway Logistics Center. A Conditional Use Permit is required due to the unique land use proposal and potential for heavy truck usage on-site. The MMC allows conditionally permitted uses to be administratively approved if the project was previously approved or there is an existing building. The Northern Gateway Logistics Center, as noted in more detail below, was approved by City Council

on July 16, 2025 as speculative warehouses. The proposed use incorporates growing crops within an enclosed tilt-up concrete industrial building currently pending construction along with the processing, packaging and distribution of crops to businesses.

**Minor Modification (PLN26-0002)** proposes to modify Building 1 of the previous entitlement, Plot Plan No. PLN23-0040 Northern Gateway Logistics Center to make the site suitable for the proposed CEA use. The proposed modifications include minor on-site parking adjustments and architectural changes that are consistent with City of Menifee Design Guidelines. There are no proposed changes to the exterior of Building 2 at this time. However, the applicant intends to use both buildings.

*For reference, Plot Plan No. PLN23-0040 was approved by City Council on July 16, 2025 for two speculative warehouses. Building 1 (northern building) is 45 feet 1 inch in height and includes 99,326 square feet of warehousing space with 6,000 square feet of office space for a total of 105,326 square feet. Building 2 is 45 feet 7 inches in height and includes 277,715 square feet of warehousing space, 8,000 square feet of office space and a 7,000 square-foot mezzanine for a total of 292,715 square feet. Both warehouses have a combined total of 398,041 square feet. Additional improvements include a parking lot and loading docks, ornamental landscaping, associated onsite infrastructure, and construction of offsite street improvements.*

Under the Minor Modification, Building 1 would be reduced from 105,326 square feet to 100,188 square feet (a reduction of 5,138 square feet) and the height would be increased from 45 feet 7 inches to 66 feet. The Economic Development Corridor – Northern Gateway allows a maximum height of 100 feet.

Architectural modifications to Building 1 include the increased height, façade changes, a revised building footprint, and the addition of an above-ground water tank. The building will include a larger office-like façade on the northwest corner of the building with a large glass atrium and a farm-style main office on the northeastern corner to match the proposed farming use. A 48-foot-tall exterior water tank (300,000 gallons) will supply the CEA and will be painted to match the building. The project is anticipated to use approximately 65,000 gallons of water per day, a reduction from the original expected consumption of 205,269 gallons per day analyzed in the original Environmental Impact Report adopted by City Council. To assist with screening, the project is conditioned to provide substantial landscaping around the water tower. Additionally, the truck bays were relocated to the eastern façade to further reduce visibility along with reducing the overall number of bays from 15 to 5.

The modification also proposes small site plan changes including relocated and reduced parking stalls to accommodate the proposed use and smaller footprint. Parking stalls have been relocated from the north side of Building 1 to the south side of the building. The reduction of parking stalls from 108 to 97 is consistent with the proposed reduction in square footage of the building and utilizes the alternative programs for parking to reduce the required parking by up to 15% as noted in the MMC. This project proposes utilizing the street improvement and lot consolidation reduction options to reduce the required/provided parking to 97 spaces, down from 102 spaces required by the Development Code.

The proposed site changes do not modify the approved ingress, egress or emergency vehicle access points approved by the original entitlement.

This is to advise that the City of Menifee Community Development Department, as the lead agency, has approved the above-referenced project on March 18, 2026, and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project:

1. The proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment. Impacts for the Project area were previously addressed and mitigation measures adopted as part of the Northern Gateway Logistics Center Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse [SCH] # 2021110379).
2. The Project was prepared pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. No further environmental documentation is required because:
  - a. All potentially significant effects of the proposed Project have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR (SCH # 2021110379) adopted by the City of Menifee pursuant to applicable legal standards;
  - b. All potentially significant effects of the proposed project have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR;
  - c. The proposed Project will not result in any new significant environmental effects not identified in the earlier EIR;
  - d. The proposed Project will not substantially increase the severity of the environmental effects identified in the earlier EIR;
  - e. No considerably different mitigation measures have been identified; and

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- f. No mitigation measures found infeasible have become feasible.
- 3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the FEIR and are applicable to this project.
- 4. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan/Program was adopted for the FEIR and the Project is subject to the Program.
- 5. A Statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for the Northern Gateway Logistics Center project.
- 6. Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the FEIR with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the general public at the City of Menifee Community Development Department, 29844 Haun Road, Menifee, CA 92586.

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Brandon Cleary  
*City Contact Person*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(951) 723-3761  
*Phone Number*



\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Planner  
**Title**

\_\_\_\_\_  
5/18/2026  
**Date**

Date Received for Filing and Posting at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR COUNTY CLERK'S USE ONLY**