

4816 Firestone Boulevard Fast Food Restaurant with Drive Through Project

**4816, 4820 Firestone Boulevard and 8915 Vossler Avenue, South Gate CA 90280
(APNs 6222-011-015, 6222-011-017, and 6222-011-037)**

FINDINGS SUPPORTING A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION



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I. INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this document is the proposed fast food restaurant with drive through (the “Project”) at 4816 and 4820 Firestone Boulevard and 8915 Vossler Avenue (the “Project Site”) in the City of South Gate (the “City”), California. The Project is described in further detail in Section II, Project Description. The City of South Gate Community Development Department is the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”).

2. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: 4816 Firestone Boulevard Fast Food Restaurant with Drive Through Project

Project Applicant: 4816 Firestone, LLC

Project Location: 4816, 4820 Firestone Boulevard and 8915 Vossler Avenue
South Gate CA 90280
APNs 6222-011-015, 6222-011-017, and 6222-011-037

Lead Agency: City of South Gate, Community Development Department
8650 California Avenue
South Gate, CA 90280
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II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Project includes demolition of the existing vacant commercial building and construction of an approximately 1,700-square foot fast-food restaurant with drive-through and walk-up service. The requested entitlements include a Zone Change and General Plan Amendment for the parcel at 8915 Vossler Avenue (APN 6222-011-015) from Neighborhood Low (NL) to Urban Neighborhood (UN), and removing the Corridor Transition Overlay, and from Medium Density Residential (9-16 du/ac) to Commercial for the General Plan land use designation. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is needed for a drive-through in the UN zone.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

a) Project Location

The Project Site is located at 4816 and 4820 Firestone Boulevard and 8915 Vossler Avenue in the City of South Gate, California 90280 and consists of assessor parcel numbers (APNs) 6222-011-015, -017, and -37.

The Project Site is generally bounded by Firestone Boulevard to the north, Vossler Avenue to the east, residences to the south, and commercial and residential uses to the west. Regional access to the Project Site is available from Interstate 710 ("I-710"), approximately 0.69 mile to the east.

b) Existing Conditions

The approximately 18,274-square-foot site is developed with a vacant one-story commercial building comprising approximately 3,680 square feet, which would be demolished under the Project. The Project Site is zoned UN and NL and the southern portion (8915 Vossler Avenue) is within the Corridor Transition Overlay.

c) Surrounding Land Uses

The Project Site is located within an urbanized setting in the City of South Gate. The uses surrounding the Project Site include a mix of commercial uses along Firestone Boulevard and residential uses to the south along Vossler Avenue.

d) Project Overview

The Project includes demolition of the existing vacant commercial building and construction of an approximately 1,700-square-foot fast-food restaurant with drive-through and walk-up service. The Project would be accessed through one driveway from Firestone Boulevard, and two one-way

driveways from the existing alleyway bisecting the site. The alleyway would provide vehicular access to the U-shaped drive through lane to the north and to a parking area to the south of the alleyway.

The requested entitlements include a Zone Change Zone Change and General Plan Amendment for the parcel at 8915 Vossler Avenue (APN 6222-011-015) from Neighborhood Low (NL) to Urban Neighborhood (UN), and removing the Corridor Transition Overlay, and from Medium Density Residential (9-16 du/ac) to Commercial for the General Plan land use designation. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is needed for a drive-through in the UN zone.

The Project is proposed to be constructed over an approximately nine-month period. Construction phases will include demolition and site preparation, building construction, and finishing.

3. REQUESTED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

The list below includes the anticipated requests for approval of the Project. The entitlements, reviews, permits, and approvals required to implement the Project include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- (1) Zone Change from NL to UN and removal of the Corridor Transition Overlay for the parcel at 8915 Vossler Avenue (APN 6222-011-015);
- (2) General Plan Amendment for the parcel at 8915 Vossler Avenue (APN 6222-011-015) from Medium Density Residential (9-16 du/ac) to Commercial;
- (3) Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a drive-through in the UN zone; and
- (4) Other discretionary and ministerial permits and approvals that may be deemed necessary, including, but not limited to, temporary street closure permits, demolition permits, grading permits, excavation/shoring permits, building permits, and sign permits in order to execute and implement the Project.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

As demonstrated in the following Section III, Categorical Exemption Analysis, this Project has been determined to qualify under Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, which is a categorical exemption under CEQA.

III. CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION ANALYSIS

1. EXEMPTION

The Project qualifies for a Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) (Public Resources Code, Sections 21000-21189.57) as set forth in Section 15303 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387).

2. EXEMPTION RATIONALE

Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, of the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Sections 15300 – 15333) lists classes of projects which have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which are exempt from the provisions of CEQA as required by Section 21084 of the Public Resources Code. This section provides an analysis demonstrating that the Project meets the conditions for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption and that none of the possible exceptions to a Categorical Exemption listed in Section 15300.2 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* is applicable to this Project. The specific language of the Class 3 Categorical Exemption and each possible exception is shown in italics below under their respective headings, which are followed by the Project analysis for each condition and exception.

3. PROJECT ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONS CONSISTENCY

a) Conditions of the Class 3 Categorical Exemption

[State CEQA Guidelines Section] 15303. New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or 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. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to:

(a) One single-family residence, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone. In urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption.

(b) A duplex or similar multi-family residential structure, totaling no more than four dwelling units. In urbanized areas, this exemption applies to apartments, duplexes and similar structures designed for not more than six dwelling units.

(c) A store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2500 square feet in floor area. In urbanized areas, the exemption also applies to up to four such commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive.

(d) Water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

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

(f) An accessory steam sterilization unit for the treatment of medical waste at a facility occupied by a medical waste generator, provided that the unit is installed and operated in accordance with the Medical Waste Management Act (Section 117600, et seq., of the Health and Safety Code) and accepts no offsite waste.

Discussion: As discussed in the Project Description above, the Project consists of the construction of an approximately 1,700-square foot fast-food restaurant with drive-through and walk-up service.

As quoted above, the CEQA Guidelines for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption includes the example of a restaurant not exceeding 2,500 square feet of floor area, or 10,000 square feet of floor area in urbanized areas. The Project would construct a restaurant smaller than both sizes referenced in the Class 3 examples, within an urbanized area. Therefore, given the size of the proposed restaurant, the Project fits within the definition of a small structure.

The Project Site is also within an urbanized area, and the Project would not require the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances. The Project Site is within an area where all public services and facilities are available.

With respect to environmentally sensitive areas, the Project Site is not within a designated or proposed Significant Ecological Area.¹ Furthermore, the Project Site is located within an urbanized and developed area, and the site is entirely developed and paved; the Project would not disturb any previously undisturbed or natural areas.

These findings demonstrate that the Project consists of the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures. The Project, therefore, meets the requirements of a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Planning & Zoning Information, GIS-NET Public online database, website: https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET_Public.GIS-NET_Public, accessed October 2025.

4. PROJECT ANALYSIS OF EXCEPTIONS

a) Exceptions to a Categorical Exemption

[State CEQA Guidelines Section] 15300.2. Exceptions

- (a) *Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.*
- (b) *Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*
- (c) *Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*
- (d) *Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*
- (e) *Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*
- (f) *Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

Exception (a): Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Discussion: According to the South Gate General Plan 2035, the City is entirely urbanized and has a diverse mix of land uses. The City primarily contains open space for outdoor recreation, provided by its City park and multiuse trail system and the nearby rivers, the Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo Channel. There is also a small amount of open space for public health and

safety, such as flood zones or buffers from highways.² The Project Site and surrounding area are not within or near a designated Significant Ecological Area.³

The flat Project Site is currently entirely paved and developed with one building, previously used as a restaurant, driveways, and parking areas. As the Project Site is completely developed with structures and hardscaping within a heavily urbanized area of the City, the Project Site does not contain any habitat capable of sustaining any species identified as endangered, rare, or threatened. No such species or habitats are known to occur at the Project Site per local or regional plans by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, there are no known locally designated natural communities at the Project Site or in the immediate vicinity, nor is the Project Site located near undeveloped natural/undisturbed open space or a natural water source that may otherwise serve as habitat for state- or federally-listed species. Furthermore, the Project Site and its vicinity are not part of any draft or adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.⁴

Therefore, Categorical Exemption Exception (a) is not applicable to the Project.

Exception (b): Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Discussion: Cumulative impacts are two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15355). Cumulative impacts may be analyzed by considering a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15130[b][1][A]).

The Project involves redevelopment of a developed site by replacing an approximately 3,680 square-foot commercial building previously used as a restaurant with a new 1,700 square-foot building to be used as a fast food restaurant with drive through. There are no known or otherwise identifiable successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, as the Project. In addition, any additional projects in the vicinity of the Project would be required to undergo further environmental reviews. Therefore, this exception would not apply to the Project.

² South Gate General Plan 2035, Green City Element, December 2009.

³ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Planning & Zoning Information, GIS-NET online database, https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET_Public.GIS-NET_Public, accessed October 2025. website:

⁴ California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Natural Community Conservation Plans, August 2023.

Exception (c): Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

Discussion: There are no unusual circumstances with the Project Site or the proposed Project that would create a reasonable possibility of significant effects to the environment. The Project would redevelop an urban site, completely paved and developed with an approximately 3,680 square-foot commercial building previously used as a restaurant, with a new 1,700 square-foot building to be used as a fast food restaurant with drive through. The Lead Agency has not determined an unusual circumstance is applicable to the Project. The Project Site has been developed and used as a restaurant previously, and the Project would modify the site to allow drive through service. The proposed land uses are consistent and compatible with the Project Site's setting; the Site's zoning designation is Urban Neighborhood (UN) on the parcels where the restaurant and drive through would be located. The Site's Neighborhood Low (NL) zoned parcel is proposed to be rezoned to UN, removing the Corridor Transition Overlay, and the General Plan designation amended from Medium Density Residential (9-16 du/ac) to Commercial to permit development and use of the site as surface parking area associated with the proposed restaurant. The Project includes a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) request to allow drive through operations associated with the restaurant. Therefore, as there are no unusual circumstances regarding the proposed Project or Project Site, Categorical Exemption Exception (c) is not applicable to the Project.

Exception (d): Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

Discussion: The California Scenic Highway System indicates that no existing or proposed State scenic highways are located in the vicinity of the Project Site.⁵ The nearest State-designated scenic highway to the Project Site is Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, which is located over 26 miles northwest of the Site.⁶ Therefore, the Project would not result in substantial damage to scenic resources in a State scenic highway. The Project does not propose to alter any trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or any other resources within any highway. Therefore, as the Project would not have an impact on scenic resources or historic buildings within a State scenic highway, Categorical Exemption Exception (d) is not applicable to the Project.

⁵ California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways, <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>, accessed October 2025.

⁶ California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways, <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>. Accessed October 2023.

Exception (e): Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

Discussion: California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires various State agencies to compile lists of hazardous waste disposal facilities, unauthorized releases from underground storage tanks, contaminated drinking water wells, and solid waste facilities where there is known migration of hazardous waste, and submit such information to the Secretary for Environmental Protection on at least an annual basis. A significant impact may occur if a project site is included on any of the above lists and poses an environmental hazard to surrounding sensitive uses.

According to California Department of Toxic Substances Control's ("DTSC") EnviroStor database,⁷ SWRCB's GeoTracker database,⁸ the Project Site is not identified on any of the lists compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, construction and operation of the Project would not pose an environmental hazard to surrounding sensitive uses or the environment in regard to siting the Project on a known hazardous waste site, and Categorical Exemption Exception (e) is not applicable to the Project.

Exception (f): Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Discussion: Section 15064.5 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* defines an historical resource as:

1. a resource listed in or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources;
2. a resource listed in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting certain state guidelines; or
3. an object, building, structure, site, area, place, record or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided that the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

A significant adverse effect would occur if a project were to adversely affect an historical resource meeting one of the above definitions. A substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.

⁷ California Department of Toxic Substances Control, EnviroStor, website: <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>, accessed October 2025.

⁸ State Water Resources Control Board, GeoTracker, website: <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>, accessed October 2025.

The Project Site is currently developed with one commercial building containing 3,680 square feet; development on the site began in 1927 and the existing building was present by 1958.⁹ A search of the national and State Historic Register indicated that no historical resources are located within the Project Site or in the immediate area.^{10, 11} The Project would be limited to the Project Site and will not affect any existing resources listed on the national or State Register or those identified as being eligible for listing on the national or State Register. Therefore, implementation of the Project would not result in a substantial adverse change to an historic resource. As such, Categorical Exemption Exception (f) is not applicable to the Project.

⁹ *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Report, EFI Global Project No.: 045.00712, 4816-4820 Firestone Boulevard and 8915 Vossler Avenue, South Gate, California 90280, Date of Issuance: June 7, 2019.*

¹⁰ *U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. National Register of Historic Places. <https://www.nps.gov/maps/full.html?mapId=7ad17cc9-b808-4ff8-a2f9-a99909164466>, accessed October 2025.*

¹¹ *California Office of Historic Preservation. California Historical Resources Listed, <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=19>, accessed October 2025.*

5. CLASS 3 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION CONCLUSION

As the Project meets the condition for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption under CEQA and none of the six exceptions are applicable, the Project therefore qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA. No further analysis is required.

DETERMINATION:

I find that the answers given above are adequately supported by the information sources cited following each question and that the effects of the Project are typical of those generated within that class of projects (*i.e.*, Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions of Section 15303 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. The Project will not cause a significant effect on the environment and is, therefore, categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act.



Signature of City of South Gate Representative

John F. Signo, AICP, Planning Manager
Printed Name, Title

November 25, 2025

Date

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