

COUNTY CLERK'S USE

CITY OF LOS ANGELESOFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
200 NORTH SPRING STREET, ROOM 395
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT****NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines § 15062, the notice should be posted with the County Clerk by mailing the form and posting fee payment to the following address: Los Angeles County Clerk/Recorder, Environmental Notices, P.O. Box 1208, Norwalk, CA 90650. Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

DIR-2026-572-SPPC-DRB / Specific Plan Project Compliance/Design Review Board SPPC/DRB Director Determination

LEAD CITY AGENCY

City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2026-573-CE

PROJECT TITLE

Fitness Studio AION Training

COUNCIL DISTRICT

14 – Jurado

2777 West Broadway (2775 and 2779 West Broadway, 5308 North El Verano Avenue - North El Verano Avenue and Sumner Avenue

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

☐ Additional page(s) attached.

The proposed project is a change of use from Retail to Fitness Studio (Fitness Studio AION Training); and a new non-illuminated channel letter wall sign measuring approximately 20.5 square feet, for a tenant space encompassing 1,385 square feet within an existing multi-tenant commercial building. The Applicant is utilizing AB 2097 allowing for zero (0) additional parking spaces. There are 14 existing parking spaces for the multi-tenant commercial building, including one accessible parking space. The project site is approximately 5,473 square feet. The project is located in Subarea I of the Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan in the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan Area.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

Marcus McDuffie, AION Training/ Urban Acres, LLC

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

Charles Schram, Röhme Architects

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

(248) 417- 0624

EXT.

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

STATE CEQA STATUTE & GUIDELINES

☐ STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)

Public Resources Code Section(s) _____

☒ CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) Section 15311 / Class 11☐ OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b)

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:☒ Additional page(s) attached

The project is exempt because of Categorical Exemption Class 11 (Accessory Structures). Class 11 consists of construction, or replacement of minor structures accessory (appurtenant) to existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to on-premise signs. As this involves the conversion of one use to another without exterior modifications, and involves a new sign, the Class 11 exemption is applicable. The project is a change of use from Retail to Fitness Studio within an existing commercial building. No new floor area is proposed. Fitness Studio use is allowed by the subject site's zoning. None of the exceptions to the Categorical Exemption Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies to the proposed project. (a) Location: The project is not located within a hillside area or within the Santa Monica Mountains Zone, the subject site does not contain an officially mapped environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. The site is identified as having low potential for biological resources and mountain lions; (b) Cumulative Impact: The project will not result in significant cumulative impacts from successive projects of the same type in the same place; (c) Significant Effect: The project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Most adjacent lots are developed with commercial buildings or residential uses, and the subject site is of similar size and slope to nearby properties. The project site is located in a typical urbanized area of the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan, and the project would be consistent with the designated zoning and would adhere to all requirements of the LAMC, with the approval of the SPPC/DRB Director Determination. The project is not unusual for the vicinity of the site and is similar in scope to other existing commercial uses in the area. Furthermore, there is not a reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The subject site is in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) and a Special Grading Area. This does not support an unusual circumstance as the City has thousands of similar developments of the same size and scale in VHFHSZ. Additionally, the existing regulatory compliance measures will ensure there is no potential for an impact. Such areas are subject to existing emergency plans and regulations that govern development in fire hazards areas. The project will not increase the existing floor area of the commercial building. (d) Scenic Highways: The project is not in the vicinity of a state scenic highway and will not damage scenic resources in a state scenic highway; (e) Hazardous Waste Sites: The project site is not on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 related to hazardous waste sites. According to Envirostor, the State of California's database of Hazardous Waste Sites, the subject site is not identified as a hazardous waste site. (f) Historical Resources: Per ZIMAS, SurveyLA, and/or Historic Places LA, the project site is not identified as a historical resource.

☒ None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project; no unusual circumstance is found.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.

If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

CITY STAFF USE ONLY:

CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE

Debbie Lawrence

Debbie Lawrence

STAFF TITLE

Project Planner

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

Specific Plan Project Compliance/Design Review Board SPPC/DRB Director Determination

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record **Rev. 9-17-2025**

**DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING**

COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

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CALIFORNIA**



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EXECUTIVE OFFICES

200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1271

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JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2026-573-CE

The Planning Department has determined that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 and the State CEQA Guidelines designate the subject project as Categorically Exempt under Article 19, Section 15311, Class 11 (Accessory Structures). Class 11 consists of construction, or replacement of minor structures accessory (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to on-premise signs.

Project Description

The subject site is located at 2777 West Broadway (2775 and 2779 West Broadway, and 5308 North El Verano Avenue) on the north side of West Broadway between North El Verano Avenue and Sumner Avenue. The site is located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan area and Subarea I of the Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan. According to ZIMAS, the parcel/lot area for the site at 2777 West Broadway encompasses 5,473 square feet. The proposed project is a change of use from Retail to Fitness Studio, for use as a fitness center (AION Training) within an existing multi-tenant commercial building. The tenant space is approximately 1,385 square feet and no changes are proposed to the floor area. The project includes a new non-illuminated channel letter wall sign, measuring 20.5 square feet. The multi-tenant commercial building has a total of 14 parking spaces, and the Applicant is utilizing California Government Code Section 65863.2 (AB 2097) allowing for zero additional parking spaces.

The site is located within the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan, and is zoned [Q]C4-2D with a General Plan Land Use Designation of Community Commercial. Properties to the north are zoned R1-1 with residential uses, and properties to the south, west and east are zoned [Q]C4-2D and improved with commercial uses. The site is separated from the residential uses by an alley to the north. The neighborhood properties are generally improved with one-story residential buildings and one- and two-story commercial buildings with community commercial uses such as the Eagle Rock Plaza shopping mall, and neighborhood commercial uses such as retail, office, and restaurant. The site is located in the western portion of the Colorado Boulevard Specific Plan in Subarea I, which allows for a by-right Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 to 1. There is no increase in floor area proposed; therefore, the proposed project will not exceed the maximum allowed FAR of 1.0 to 1.0.

Exceptions Narrative for Categorical Exemption

There are six (6) Exceptions which the City is required to consider before finding a project exempt under Class 15311: (a) Location; (b) Cumulative Impacts; (c) Significant Effect; (d) Scenic Highways; (e) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (f) Historical Resources.

As shown in the case file, the project is consistent with the applicable Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan designation and policies and all applicable zoning designations and regulations. The subject site is wholly within the City of Los Angeles, on a site that is approximately 5,473 square feet. Lots adjacent to the subject site are developed with commercial and residential uses in an urbanized area. The project site is previously disturbed and surrounded by development and therefore is not, and has no value as, a habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. It is currently developed with an existing building and surrounded by development, and therefore is not, and has no value as, a habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs), which require compliance with the City of Los Angeles Noise Ordinance; pollutant discharge, dewatering, stormwater mitigations; and Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff will apply if the project involves any construction. These RCMs will ensure the project will not have significant impacts on noise and water. Furthermore, the project does not exceed the threshold criteria established by LADOT for preparing a traffic study. Therefore, the project will not have any significant impacts to traffic. Interim thresholds were developed by DCP staff based on CalEEMod model runs relying on reasonable assumptions, consulting with AQMD staff, and surveying published air quality studies for which criteria air pollutants did not exceed the established SCAQMD construction and operational thresholds.

The subject site is located 0.038 kilometers from the Raymond Fault Zone, is in an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, and Special Grading Area as identified on the latest Bureau of Engineering Basic Grid Map A-13372. Per Section 91.7003 of the Building Code, RCMs, including, Aesthetics (RC-AE-3 Vandalism), RC-AE-4 (Signage), Noise (RC-NO-1 (Demolition, Grading, and Construction Activities)); and Public Utilities and Service Systems (RC-WS-2 (Green Building Code), RC-EN-1 (Green Building Code)) in the City of Los Angeles regulate construction of projects and will reduce any potential impacts to less than significant. These RCMs have been historically proven to work to the satisfaction of the City Engineer to reduce any impacts from the specific environment the project is located. Thus, the project will not result in a significant impact based on its location, nor will there be any significant cumulative impacts.

The subject site is in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). This does not support an unusual circumstance as the City has thousands of similar developments of the same size and scale in VHFHSZ. Additionally, the existing regulatory compliance measures will ensure there is no potential for an impact. Such areas are subject to existing emergency plans and regulations that govern development in fire hazards areas:

- Adopted emergency response plans and emergency evacuation plans applicable to the City of Los Angeles, include the City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Plan and the Los Angeles County Operational Area Emergency Response Plan (OAERP). The OAERP defines responsibilities and provides guidance to agencies and jurisdictions within the County Operational Area on how to interface with the Operational Area Coordinator during emergencies and disasters.¹ The City's Emergency Operations Plan and Annexes identify roles, responsibilities and required actions for various City departments, particularly LAFD and the LAPD. In addition to their emergency response plans, both the City and County

¹ OAERP, p. 20

also designate Disaster Routes, which are freeway, highway or arterial routes pre-identified for use during emergencies. Disaster routes are not the same as evacuation routes. The Evacuation Annex of the City's Emergency Operation Plan provides that "[p]rimary evacuation routes consist of the major interstates, highways, and primary arterials within the City and Los Angeles County."² Disaster routes are used to bring emergency personnel, equipment, and supplies to impacted areas, while evacuation routes are used to move an affected population out of an impacted area. The closest County-designated primary (i.e. freeway) Disaster Routes to the project site are the Ventura Freeway (State Route 134) and the Glendale Freeway (State Route 2). Broadway/Colorado Boulevard is another Disaster Route.³

- Fire, Building, and Zoning Code. Properties in VHFHSZs must comply with the requirements of Fire Code Section 57.322, which requires brush clearance within 200 feet of any structure. LAFD performs microenvironment weather analysis to check for irregular weather patterns and changes, which alerts LAFD to conditions such as windy days combined with low humidity. LAFD uses a Burning Index⁴ to determine when to call a Red Flag Day.⁵ A Red Flag Day is when the potential for a fast-moving brush fire is extremely high, when wind speeds are 25 mph or more and the humidity is 15 percent or less. On those days, illegally parked cars in VHFHSZ areas may be towed if their presence would prevent roadway access needed by LAFD. LAFD also has a significant air response ready to deploy, including water-dropping helicopters, and the mission of LAFD Air Operations includes brush fire suppression.⁶ LAFD also has access to additional helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, bulldozers, and fire engines through mutual aid agreements with the state, County, and other cities in the region. In addition to attacking wildfires from the sky, LAFD also has ground resources such as fire engines and trucks.

Chapter 33 of the City's Fire Code provides requirements designed to reduce risk of fire ignition during construction. These include, but are not limited to, prohibition of smoking except in areas approved by the LAFD, refueling of equipment in appropriate locations, preparation of a fire prevention program, and designation of fire watch personnel during occurrence of hazardous construction activities. The Fire Code (LAMC Section 57.4906.5.2) also requires the management of hazardous vegetation and fuel, as well as maintenance of defensible space in wildland-urban interface areas. The Fire Code also includes regulations that address building materials and construction methods for construction in VHFHSZs, that are intended to reduce exterior wildfire exposure.

There are no proposed changes to the height of the existing structure (approximately 17 feet). Thus, there are no unusual circumstances which may lead to a significant effect on the environment. The only State Scenic Highway within the City of Los Angeles is the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, State Route 27, which travels through a portion of Topanga State Park. The Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway is about 28 miles west of the subject site. Therefore, the subject site will not create any impacts within a designated as a state scenic highway. Furthermore, according to Envirostor, the State of California's database of Hazardous Waste Sites, neither the subject site, nor any site in the vicinity (1,000 feet), is identified as a hazardous waste site.

² Los Angeles Base Emergency Operations Plan 2023, October 2020 [Evacuation Functional Support Annex](#) p. 17

³ <https://dpw.lacounty.gov/dsg/DisasterRoutes/map/Los%20Angeles%20Central%20Area.pdf>

⁴ A Burning Index is a number used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to describe the potential amount of effort needed to contain a single fire in a particular fuel type within a rating area

⁵ LAFD, <https://ers.lafd.org/redflag/>, accessed March 4, 2025

⁶ LAFD, <https://www.lafd.org/about/special-operations/air-operations>, accessed March 4, 2025.

The project site has not been identified as a historic resource by local or state agencies, and the project site has not been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, the Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments Register, and/or any local register; and was not found to be a potential historic resource based on the City's HistoricPlacesLA website or SurveyLA, the citywide survey of Los Angeles. Finally, the City does not choose to treat the site as a historic resource. Based on this, the project will not result in a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic resource and this exception does not apply.