



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: David Newell, Community Development Director

PREPARED BY: Mary Yaryan, Associate Planner

MEETING DATE: June 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Consideration of Design Review (DR) Application, Case PLN 24-0149 and DR 23-7007, by WEKA, Inc. to Allow the Development of a 14,800--square foot Building for Warehouse and Office Use with a Storage Yard on 4.4-acres of Land Located at 2300 E. Westward Ave., in the Industrial (I) Zoning District (APN: 532-130-021).

PROJECT APPLICANT:

Property Owner: Snipe Equipment, LLC, 236 W Orange Show Road, Suite 114, San Bernardino, CA 92408
Representative: Abel Lopez, Miller Architects

BACKGROUND:

On May 7, 2025, the Planning Commission considered Design Review cases PLN 24-0149 and DR 23-7007 for the proposed WEKA Project. At the hearing, the Commission voted 3-0 to continue the item to a date certain of June 4, 2025. The continuance was requested to allow the City and applicant to address the following:

- Coordinate with the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) and Wildlife Agencies (USFWS and CDFW) to review the biological report prepared by ELMT Consulting
- The Commission recommended adding a condition of approval related to burrowing owl protection, consistent with the requirements of the MSHCP
- Update the resolution to include formal MSHCP consistency findings

Summary of Revisions Since May 7, 2025 Hearing:

Following the Planning Commission hearing on May 7, 2025, City staff met with RCA and the Wildlife Agencies to review the biological report on May 15, 2025. The Agencies were in agreement with the conclusions outlined in the report. Several updates have been made to the project's Conditions of Approval and the resolution based on input from the RCA, Wildlife Agencies, and City departments:

- Condition of Approval #7 was revised to require a 30-day pre-construction burrowing owl clearance survey consistent with MSHCP Section 6.3.2. This replaces the prior JPR

requirement, per feedback from the May 15, 2025 coordination meeting with RCA and Wildlife Agencies.

- Public Works Conditions of Approval were updated:
 - PW.Street.08 corrected from 36' to 34' of required pavement width.
 - PW.Street.18 revised from "Divided Local" to "Divided Collector" for Westward Avenue.
 - PW.Street.19 updated from "Local Collector" to "Local" for Scott Street.
- MSHCP findings were added to the resolution to formalize consistency with the conservation plan, confirm absence of sensitive habitat, and require implementation of biological protection measures under Condition #7.

DESCRIPTION:

For full details on the project site, design, and development standards, refer to the May 7, 2025 staff report.

In summary, the applicant proposes the construction of a 14,800-square-foot building comprised of warehouse and office space, with an associated storage yard, located at 2300 E. Westward Avenue. The site is zoned Industrial (I) and is within the MSHCP Criteria Cell 0.

FINDINGS:

Design Review Standards (BZO Section 17.56.050):

The project continues to meet the four required Design Review findings (see May 7, 2025 staff report), including consistency with the General Plan, conformance to zoning standards, compatible design, and safe circulation layout.

MSHCP Findings:

The updated Resolution now includes MSHCP Findings confirming that:

- The project is located within Criteria Cell 0 of the MSHCP Plan Area.
- The site is not within a conservation or core area and does not impact riparian, vernal pool, or other jurisdictional resources.
- Although no burrowing owls or signs were found during the March 2025 biological survey, the presence of suitable habitat warrants a 30-day pre-construction survey.
- With implementation of Condition of Approval #7, the project's potential biological impacts are considered less than significant.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15332 (Class 32 – Infill Development Projects) of the CEQA Guidelines. The project meets the criteria for this exemption for the following reasons:

- The project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations, both of which identify the site for industrial use.
- The development occurs within city limits on a site less than five acres in size and is substantially surrounded by urban uses.

- The site can be adequately served by existing utilities and public services.
- The proposed use, a warehouse and office with a storage yard, is consistent with the Industrial zone and meets all applicable development standards under Banning Municipal Code (BMC) Section 17.12.030.

The site is located within a Special Linkage Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). A biological assessment was prepared by ELMT Consulting and reviewed by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The agencies confirmed that:

- The site does not support sensitive habitat or jurisdictional features such as riparian areas or vernal pools.
- Although no burrowing owls or sign were observed, the presence of suitable burrowing owl habitat requires implementation of a 30-day pre-construction survey, in accordance with MSHCP Section 6.3.2 and the 2006 Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions. This has been added as a condition of approval (Condition #7).

No further mitigation measures are required beyond compliance with MSHCP procedures.

The project is screened out from requiring a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) under the City's adopted TIA Guidelines. It does not exceed screening thresholds for vehicle miles traveled (VMT), trip generation, or safety-related concerns, and is presumed to result in less-than-significant transportation impacts.

The site was also reviewed by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) and found to be consistent with the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, subject to minor conditions, which have been incorporated into the Conditions of Approval. The project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. A Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be filed following project approval.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:

On April 25, 2025, a notice of public hearing was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the project site, notifying the public that the subject application would be considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing on May 7, 2025. The notice was also published in the *Record Gazette*, a newspaper of general circulation within the City of Banning, on April 25, 2025.

At the May 7, 2025 hearing, the Planning Commission voted to continue the item to a date certain of June 4, 2025. No additional noticing was required for the continued public hearing.

As of the time of the writing of this report, no public comments have been received either in support of or in opposition to the project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [PLN 24-0149 ALUC Approval.pdf](#)
2. [PLN 24-0149 MSHCP Report.pdf](#)
3. [PLN 24-0149 Meeting RCA May 15 2025.pdf](#)
4. [PLN 24-0149 05/07/2025 Staff Report.pdf](#)

5. [PLN 24-0149 GIS Exhibits.pdf](#)
6. [PLN 24-0149 COA_REV.pdf](#)
7. [PLN 24-0149 RESOLUTION_REV.pdf](#)