



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: David Newell, Community Development Director

PREPARED BY: Mary Yaryan, Associate Planner

MEETING DATE: May 7, 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 SF 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:

Project Summary:

This is a request to review the project, which consists of an office, warehouse, and storage yard designed to support construction operations of WEKA Inc., a underground pipeline contractor. The total building area is 14,800 square feet, with a 12,400-square-foot building pad. The warehouse will occupy 10,000 square feet, while the office space will be 4,800 square feet across two stories. The building height is 31 feet.

The applications that have been filed in conjunction with this project and the scope of the Planning Commission's review are the following:

- Design Review application, Case PLN 24-0149, DR 23-7007, for the construction of a 14,800-sq. ft. building for office and warehousing and a storage yard on the property. The Planning Commission shall review the Design Review application for conformance to the criteria listed in Banning Zoning Ordinance (BZO) Section 17.56.050.

Issues:

- The site previously had unpermitted grading; however, grading plans have since been submitted

by the property owner to address the issue.

- The property is located in a Special Linkage Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), which may impose development restrictions to protect ecological corridors and sensitive habitats. To ensure the site has no environmental impacts, a biologist's report has been received.
- The applicant is proposing the use of metal siding on the building's exterior. Per Banning Municipal Code Section 17.12.090(B)(4), metal siding is considered an undesirable design element for commercial and industrial buildings. The proposed material may not meet the City's design standards promoting high-quality architectural finishes.

DESCRIPTION:

Existing Conditions:

The project site consists of a vacant industrial parcel, previously graded, located at the intersection of Scott Street and Westward Avenue. The site is currently vacant. The property is situated within an Industrial zone, with adjacent land uses being predominantly industrial and public facilities. In the tables following are the adjacent street conditions and surrounding properties uses, general plan designations, and zoning designations.

Existing Street Improvement Conditions

<i>Street Name</i>	<i>Travel Lanes</i>	<i>Curb & Gutter</i>	<i>Sidewalk</i>
Scott St	Partial	Partial	Partial
E Westward Ave	N	N	N

<i>Site and Surrounding Property</i>	<i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>Existing General Plan Designation</i>	<i>Existing Zoning Designation</i>
Subject Property	Vacant	Industrial	Industrial
North	Vacant	Industrial	Industrial
South	Wastewater Treatment Facility	Public Facilities - Government	Public Facilities - Government
East	Vacant	Industrial	Industrial
West	Estes Trucking	Industrial	Industrial

Project Compliance with Standards:

Pursuant to BZO Section 17.12.030, the following development standards apply:

<i>Industrial Standard</i>	<i>Required/Allowed</i>	<i>Provided</i>	<i>Compliance</i>
Min. Lot Size	10,000 SF	190,793 SF	Y
Min. Lot Width (Feet)	70	637	Y
Min. Lot Depth (Feet)	100	299	Y
Min. Setbacks (Feet)	-	-	-
• Front	10	90	Y
• Side (east)	0	452	Y
• Side (west)	10	85	Y
• Rear	0	69	Y
Max. Bldg. Coverage	60%	6.5%	Y
Max. Bldg. Height	2 Stories, 50 Feet	2 Stories, 31 Feet	Y

Perimeter Wall Height	-	-	-
• North	8 Feet	8 Feet	Y
• South	8 Feet	6 Feet	Y
• East	8 Feet	8 Feet	Y
• West	8 Feet	6 Feet	Y
Trash Enclosure	Screened 6' High (bin) 3'-6" High (cans)	Screened Per City Standard	- Y Y
Mechanical Equipment	Screened	Screened	Y

Pursuant to BZO Section 17.28.040, the following parking standards apply:

<i>Use</i>	<i>SF</i>	<i>Parking Ratio</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Provided</i>	<i>Compliance</i>
Industrial Warehouse	10,000 SF	Min 2 + 1/1,000 SF	12	19	Y
General Office	4,800 SF	1/250 SF	20	20	Y
		TOTAL SPACES:	32	39	Y

Site Plan:

The proposed site plan features a two-story office (4,800 sq. ft.) positioned near Scott Street and Westward Avenue, with a 10,000 sq. ft. warehouse situated behind it. The layout ensures that public-facing functions remain at the front, while industrial operations are located toward the rear. The site meets all minimum setback requirements, including 10 feet at the front and west side, with zero setbacks on the east side and rear, maintaining compliance with Sections 17.12.100-17.12.110. The 6.5% building coverage is well below the 60% maximum, ensuring open space for circulation, landscaping, and stormwater retention. The 31-foot proposed building height is under the 50-foot, two-story limit.

The plan facilitates efficient ingress/egress with driveways from both Scott Street and Westward Avenue, allowing for smooth traffic flow and reducing congestion. The 39 parking spaces, including ADA-accessible stalls, are arranged in compliance with city regulations, with separate areas for company vehicle parking. Pedestrian access is indicated with dedicated walkways, aligning with Section 17.12.100(C) for pedestrian safety. Additionally, stormwater retention areas lessening runoff impacts. The site maintains compatibility with surrounding properties, aligning with zoning standards to ensure a functional and aesthetically integrated development.

Mass and Scale:

The proposed building features a moderate height and massing that aligns with the scale of surrounding commercial and industrial developments. The structure utilizes varying roof heights and articulated facades to reduce visual bulk and create a balanced streetscape. The inset entrance and use of different exterior materials further break up the massing, enhancing the building's compatibility with its surroundings.

The applicant is proposing the use of metal siding on portions of the building's exterior. While Banning

Municipal Code Section 17.12.090(B)(4) identifies metal siding as an undesirable design element for commercial and industrial buildings, the project incorporates architectural enhancements, such as material variation, façade articulation, and a defined entry feature, that improve the overall building design.

The project complies with Sections 17.12.090 and 17.12.150, ensuring appropriate building setbacks, height limitations, and site design standards for commercial/industrial properties. Adequate separation from property lines maintains accessibility, circulation, and buffering between adjacent uses. The proposed design integrates landscaping and parking elements that soften the building's presence while maintaining functionality and compliance with zoning regulations.

Buffers and Open Space:

The proposed development includes well-planned buffer areas located along Scott Street and Westward Avenue. These buffers incorporate a combination of fencing, trees, shrubs, and ground covers. The landscaping design ensures compliance with 17.12.120, softening the transition between parking lots and the building, while also meeting the requirement for raised planting beds and container plantings to preserve pedestrian pathways and open spaces.

The perimeter walls include the use of decorative CMU walls. These walls are designed to blend with the building's architectural style and provide screening for outdoor storage and company vehicle parking, in accordance with 17.12.130 and 17.12.140. The walls include pilasters every 25 feet to break up the visual impact and ensure aesthetic relief. The design complies with 17.24.080 by using materials that are compatible with the surrounding area.

Grading and Topography:

The grading plan for the site will involve modifying the topography to ensure effective stormwater management while maintaining accessibility. The site will be graded to direct runoff into a proposed drainage basin. This grading will also create slight slopes to ensure proper drainage away from the site and into designated stormwater infrastructure.

FINDINGS:

Design Review:

BZO Section 17.56.050 requires that the four findings be met to justify approval of a Design Review application. Staff analyzed the application against these findings for Design Review, Case PLN 24-0149 and DR 23-7007, below:

Finding A: *The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan.*

Finding of Fact: *The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan's designation for industrial development in the area, which supports warehousing and office uses. The project aligns with the city's vision for maintaining and expanding industrial operations.*

Finding B: *The proposed use is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, including the development standards and guidelines for the district in which it is located.*

Finding of Fact: *The proposed project complies with the requirements of the Industrial (I) zoning district as outlined in BZO Section 17.12.030. The project meets or exceeds all applicable development standards, including lot size, setbacks, building height, and parking requirements, ensuring conformance with the zoning ordinance for industrial uses.*

Finding C: *The design and layout of the proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future development, and will not result in vehicular and/or pedestrian hazards.*

Finding of Fact: *The design and layout of the project have been carefully planned to minimize disruptions to neighboring properties. The proposed ingress/egress points from Scott Street and Westward Avenue ensure smooth traffic flow, and the project includes dedicated pedestrian walkways, complying with city standards to promote safety.*

Finding D: *The design of the proposed project is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.*

Finding of Fact: *The design of the proposed project is compatible with the surrounding industrial neighborhood. The building's moderate height of 31 feet and its articulation, including varying rooflines and facade materials, help reduce visual bulk. Additionally, the perimeter landscaping and decorative wall treatments soften the transition to neighboring properties, ensuring that the development fits cohesively within the existing industrial uses along the adjacent streets.*

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The proposed project qualifies for a categorical exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15332 (In-fill Exemption) of the CEQA Guidelines. The project qualifies under the In-fill Exemption due to the development meeting the following conditions:

- a. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- b. The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.
- c. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.
- d. Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.
- e. The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The development is within the Industrial zone and general plan designation and conforms to zoning regulations. The proposed warehouse and office are consistent with uses planned by the zoning code, including the uses identified in Section 17.12.030, and will not generate impacts to noise, air quality or water quality, due to the project's compliance with City and state regulations and required conditions of approval. The project site is within an industrially-developed area of the City and located on a site of less than five acres.

Due to the site's location within a Special Linkage Area of the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), a biologist's report was prepared. The report concludes that the site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species, and any potential foraging or transient species use would not constitute a significant environmental impact. No mitigation

measures are required beyond compliance with MSHCP procedures, including completion of the Joint Project Review (JPR) process prior to grading.

Based on the City's adopted Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines, the project is screened out and does not require preparation of a full TIA report. The project does not exceed applicable screening thresholds related to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), trip generation, or potential safety concerns, and is therefore presumed to result in a limited impact on the transportation network and not require mitigation.

Lastly, the project was reviewed by the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC), which found the development consistent with the Airport Compatibility Plan, subject to conditions. ALUC's conditions are included in the staff's recommended conditions of approval for the project.

Based on the foregoing, the project qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA, and the attached Notice of Exemption (NOE) will be filed accordingly.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION:

On April 25, 2025, a notice of public hearing was mailed to 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. This notice was also published in the Record Gazette, a newspaper of general circulation within the City of Banning, on April 25, 2025. As of the time of the writing of this staff report, no public comments were received either for or opposed to the project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [PLN 24-0149 RESOLUTION 2025-05.pdf](#)
2. [PLN 24-0149 COAs.pdf](#)
3. [PLN 24-0149 WEKA Plans.pdf](#)
4. [PLN 24-0149 Exhibits.pdf](#)
5. [PLN 24-0149 ALUC.pdf](#)
6. [PLN 24-0149 MSHCP Report.pdf](#)
7. [PLN 24-0149 NOE.pdf](#)
8. [PHN_PLN 24-0149 Final.pdf](#)