

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: Merced

2222 M St

Merced, CA 95340

From: (Public Agency): City of Merced

678 W. 18th Street

Merced, CA 95340

(Address)

Project Title: VTSM #1330 (Environmental Review #24-04)

Project Applicant: Benchmark Engineering for Baxter Ranches, LLC, and Stonefield Home, Inc.

Project Location - Specific:

Southwest corner of M Street and Bellevue Road

Project Location - City: Merced

Project Location - County: Merced

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map to subdivide approximately 35 acres into 215 single-family lots.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Merced

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Benchmark Engineering for Baxter Ranches, LLC, and Stonefield Home, Inc.

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15162
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is consistent with the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan (SCH #9212055). There are no significant changes to the project that would create impacts that were not evaluated as part of the General Plan EIR. Therefore, the project remains consistent with the previous environmental reviews.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Francisco Mendoza

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 209-385-6929

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  Date: 4/17/2024 Title: Senior Planner

▪ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

**The California Environmental Quality Act
(CEQA) Section 15162 Findings:**

Application: Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map #1330 - Environmental Review#24-08

Assessor Parcel Number or Location: Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 224-300-005, 224-300-010, 224-300-011, and 224-300-012.

Previous Initial Study/EIR Reference: This site was previously reviewed through Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Bellevue Ranch Master Development Plan (SCH #9212055). The current proposal to construct a residential subdivision is consistent with the previous environmental review and the project remains in conformance with the City's *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

Original Project Date: The Environmental Impact Report was approved on May 15, 1995.

Section A - Previous Studies

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project that will require major revisions of the previous project EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects?

Yes	No
	X

Comment/Finding: The proposed project is consistent with the previous environmental review. No substantive changes are proposed. The total number of units being constructed is less than originally proposed.

2. Substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects?

Yes	No
	X

Comment/Finding: There have been no changes in the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that would require major revisions in the previous EIR. There are no new significant environmental effects or substantial increases in the severity of previously identified environmental effects, and the area under consideration remains the same area previously evaluated.

3. New information of substantial importance that was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, has been revealed? (If "Yes" is checked, go to Section "B" below)

Yes	No
	X

Comment/Finding: There is no new information of substantial importance that was not known and could not have been known with the reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was adopted.

Section B - New Information

A) The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

B) Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

C) Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

D) Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>


Comment/Finding: All previously identified mitigation measures will be enforced with this project including payment of Public Facility Impact Fees. Therefore, the resulting impacts are no greater than those previously analyzed and the previously imposed mitigation measures remain sufficient to address all impacts from this project.

On the basis of this evaluation, in accordance with the requirements of Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. It is found that subsequent negative declaration will need to be prepared. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. It is found that an addendum Negative Declaration will need to be prepared. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. That a subsequent EIR will need to be prepared. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 4. No further documentation is required. |

Date: April 17, 2024

Prepared By:



Francisco Mendoza-Gonzalez,
Senior Planner