



Responses to Community Inquiries Regarding August 16, 2023 Planning Director Letter on RI-NU / Santa Clara Wastewater Facility

Published September 1, 2023

This document contains responses to several inquiries the County Planning Director has received regarding his [August 16, 2023, letter](#) to the Responsible Parties for the RI-NU / Santa Clara Wastewater Facility (SCWW) located at 815 Mission Rock Road, unincorporated area of Santa Paula (Assessor's Parcel Number 099-0-060-565). The letter directs the demolition and removal of structures and materials per County regulations, processes, and timeframes.

1. How will the demolition and removal of structures and materials be conducted?

Demolition and removal of structures and materials will require a Zoning Clearance approved by the Planning Division and a Building Permit approved by the Building & Safety Division, which also includes approvals by other County agencies. Per the Planning Director's August 16, 2023 letter, items identified for removal included, but not limited, to baker tanks, clarifier tanks, poly tanks, storage containers, and other materials. The means and methods for demolition and removal must be defined by the applicant for review and approval by the County. Both permitting processes are ministerial actions based upon compliance with regulatory standards and therefore, is not a discretionary action.

The Zoning Clearance will require a plot plan showing the structures and materials to be removed and what fencing and site security measures will be maintained.

In summary, the Building Permit for Demolition and Removal Activity will require:

1. A plot plan showing the same information on the Zoning Clearance plot plan, including:
 - a. Street locations,
 - b. Existing setbacks of structures,
 - c. Location of utility connection points at the building, and service/meter locations
2. Photos of equipment or structure to be demolished, showing building height, proximity to surrounding structures, trees, etc.
3. Information on proposed demolition method, i.e., use of large equipment, or by hand, other means, or combination thereof, etc.

4. Review from the following Department/agencies:
 - a. Planning
 - b. Fire Department
 - c. APCD (Air Pollution Control District) for dust control
 - d. IWMD for construction waste recycling and landfill diversion
 - e. Public Works Watershed Protection District for stormwater or other materials.

2. Will the activity of demolition and removal be safe to the surrounding community?

Yes. By way of background, the history of the site clean-up that occurred immediately following the November 18, 2014, explosion on the property is outlined below:

Federal Government Action

Under Technical Direction Document (TDD) No. 0002/1302-T2-R9-14-11-0002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tasked the Weston Solutions, Inc. (WESTON®), Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) to support EPA's Emergency Response (ER) at the SCWW. The ER was initiated on November 18, 2014, to mitigate the potential for imminent and substantial threats to public health or welfare or the environment from a vacuum truck explosion and the resulting fire.

Under direction of the EPA On-Scene Coordinator, START personnel conducted oversight and documentation of the response to the vacuum truck explosion including the resulting fire and emergency removal activities at the SCWW facility. SCWW contracted Patriot and Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH) to conduct emergency assessment and removal activities at the site. Patriot/CTEH solidified all pooled wastes from the site and transported them for disposal. All affected divisions and sectors on the site were neutralized with sodium sulfite solution and then power washed clean. All power washed areas were swipe tested for oxidizers and pH prior to considering them "cleared." Santa Paula Fire Department Engine 82 and Ventura County Fire Department Engine 26 were both neutralized and decontaminated prior to being released to their respective fire departments. All tanks and totes on site were inventoried and labeled. Totes and small containers were staged on plastic in a bermed area by hazard category, and the site fences were repaired to limit unauthorized access. On January 9, 2015, ER activities were completed and EPA and START demobilized from the site.

[EPA – Weston Report](#)

County Action

Additionally, the County Planning Director suspended operations of the SCWW and issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) after the November 18, 2014 explosion and fire in order to authorize on-going clean-up and recovery efforts related to this emergency event in accordance with Section 8111-1.2.1.c(1) of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

Condition No. 14 of the EUA required a written summary be submitted to the Ventura County Environmental Health Division (EHD) upon completion of the clean-up activities that included: (1) a compilation of the daily reports; (2) an accounting of the materials removed from the tanks, (3) the amount of water added to the materials removed; and (4) the amount of sorbent (mulch) used (each by weight). A copy of these log sheets was attached to the January 30, 2018, Final Report and was provided to the EHD Staff for review. EHD Staff indicated to the Planning Division that Condition No. 14 of the EUA was met and the clean-up activities were successfully completed. Additionally, the Ventura County Fire Department conducted a site inspection of the facility on January 18, 2018, and confirmed the removal of all hazardous materials on the property and approved a voluntary revocation of the facility's Fire Code Hazardous Materials Permit (No. FCP16-00016).

[County EUA Final Letter](#)

Conclusion

The SCWW facility has been fenced and inoperable since the above clean-up and recovery efforts concluded in May 2018, and has continued to be fenced during the permitting process of the Modification to Conditional Use Permit (CUP) LU06-0011 that as of July 28, 2023, was cancelled and withdrawn. Per the Planning Director's August 16, 2023 letter, the property owner must apply for and receive approval of a County Building Permit to demolish and remove on-site structures and materials. As noted in Inquiry No. 1 above, various County agencies will be reviewing the application materials to determine the means and methods for the demolition and removal, pursuant to any state and local requirements.

3. Status of Property Owner Response and Next Steps

As of September 1, 2023, there has been no response from the responsible parties. The property owner has 30 days to file for the required Zoning Clearance and Building Permit Applications, which is on or before September 18, 2023. Failure to apply for the Zoning Clearance and Building Permit will result in the Planning Division referral to the Code Compliance Division for commencing enforcement actions.