



# HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 2, 2025

SUBJECT: Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2025-0002. A request to permit Smoke Zone & Heavy Hitter, a tobacco specialty store, to establish at 14151 Hawthorne Blvd.

FROM: Gregg McClain, Planning Director

BY: Nathan Levey, Associate Planner

## PROJECT INFORMATION

SUMMARY: Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2025-0002

LOCATION: 14151 Hawthorne Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA 90250  
APN No. 4043-025-032

APPLICANT: John Aiead, Business Owner

REPRESENTATIVE: Mariam Aiead

PROPERTY OWNER: Raul Ornelas

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Chapter 17.26 of the Hawthorne Municipal Code stipulates that the establishment of a Tobacco Specialty Store requires the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) where more than twenty percent of the annual gross receipts are from the sale of tobacco products (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and smokeless tobacco) and smoking paraphernalia.

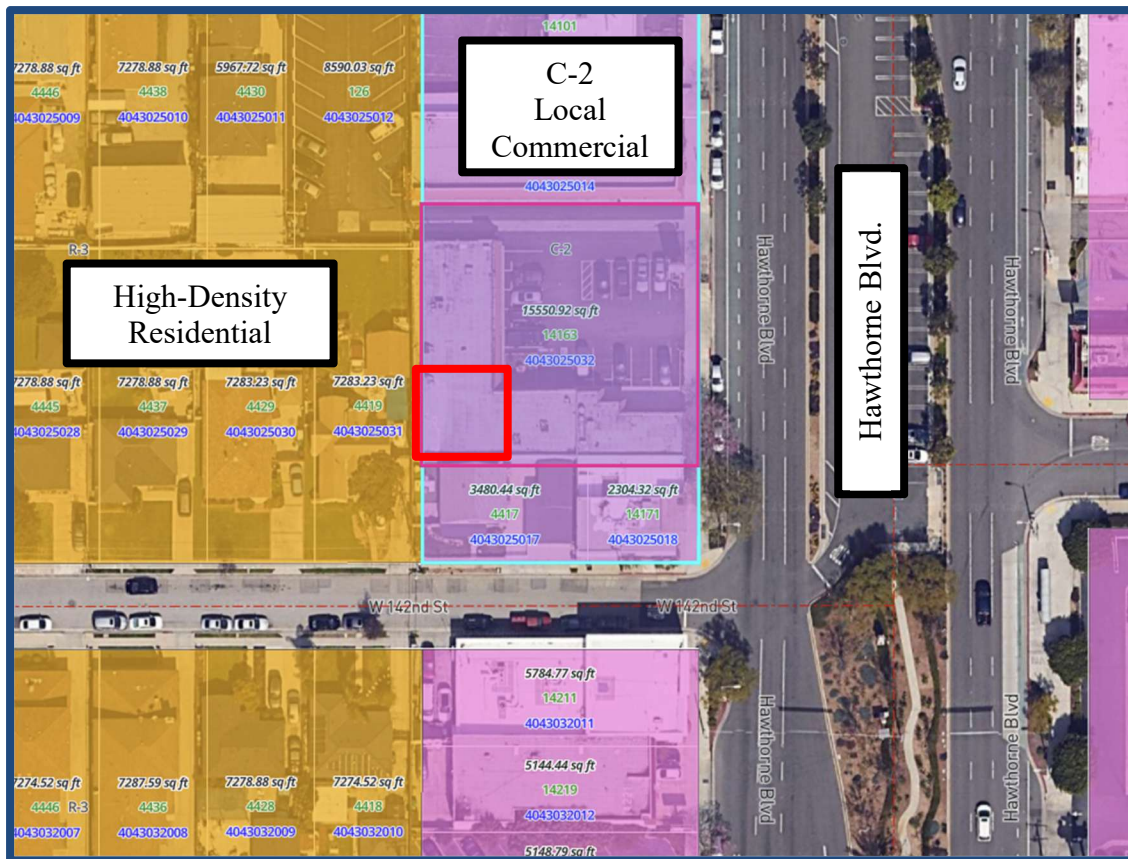
Conditional Use Permit CU-2025-0002 is a request to permit the operation of a Tobacco Specialty Store within a small commercial center.

As shown in the attached floor plan (Attachment 1), the proposed project would include sales of tobacco and tobacco related paraphernalia within an existing 1,088 square foot retail space. The applicant would like the ability to sell tobacco products and will take reasonable measures to ensure the safety and appearance of the store and patrons, as follows:

- Sale of tobacco products will only be sold to patrons 21 years of age or older.
- Photo ID's will be checked for everyone that appears to be under the age of 27.
- Sales of tobacco are not conducted via a vending machine or self-service display.
- Warning Statements are on all packages of cigarette tobacco or roll-your-own tobacco products.
- Free samples of tobacco are not offered.
- Sales of packages containing fewer than 20 cigarettes, including single cigarettes known as "loosies" are not offered for sale.
- Cashiers are trained and aware of FDA and California laws regarding the sale of tobacco products.
- The store will be cleaned regularly, inside and out, to prevent loitering.

## GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND OTHER POLICY PLANS

The subject property is located at the Hawthorne Center commercial center. The location is within the Local Commercial (C-2) zone, the General Plan identifies this location as being within the Downtown Hawthorne Specific Plan (DHSP). The DHSP designates the location as a Commercial use, which is implemented by the C-2 Zone, amongst others. The site is primarily surrounded by commercial and residential uses. There are single family homes to the west of the store location with a wide variety of commercial uses along Hawthorne Blvd.







The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and General Plan designation (Local Commercial) for the following reasons:

1. The Land Use Element of the City of Hawthorne General Plan states, *“The City shall expand current efforts to attract and enhance commercial development.”* The proposed business is an effort to attract and enhance additional business and does not introduce an incompatible land use. Approval of the CUP will allow the new business to provide additional services and products and maintain its viability as a thriving business.
2. The proposed sales will enhance and potentially boost business which helps to stimulate the economy. This is consistent with the Economic Development Element of the City’s General Plan.

These upgrades, in conjunction with routine maintenance by the Business Owner, will create an attractive commercial center.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice of the public hearing for this item was provided in accordance with Chapter 17.06 of the HMC. The Planning Department published a public hearing notice in the local paper on June 19, 2025, and mailed notification to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Staff determined that the proposed application is exempt from review under CEQA, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities. Class 1 exemptions are for projects involving negligible or no expansion of use. This includes interior or exterior alterations of a structure. The approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a tobacco specialty store would involve negligible or no expansion to the intensity of use of the site. Further, there are no unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the exemption under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The application is therefore exempt from the provisions of CEQA. Upon Planning Commission’s action, Staff will file the Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk’s office in compliance with CEQA.

## RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of the issues and conditions of approval, the proposed sales of tobacco products complies with HMC Chapter 17.26. Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt PC Resolution 2025-06 (Attachment 4) approving a CUP for the establishment of a tobacco specialty store.

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Site Plans/Floor Plans
2. Public Notice
3. Notice of Exemption
4. PC Resolution 2025-06

**Attachment 1**  
**Site Plans/Floor Plans**

# SITE PLAN

14151 Hawthorne Blvd

Hawthorne, CA 90250

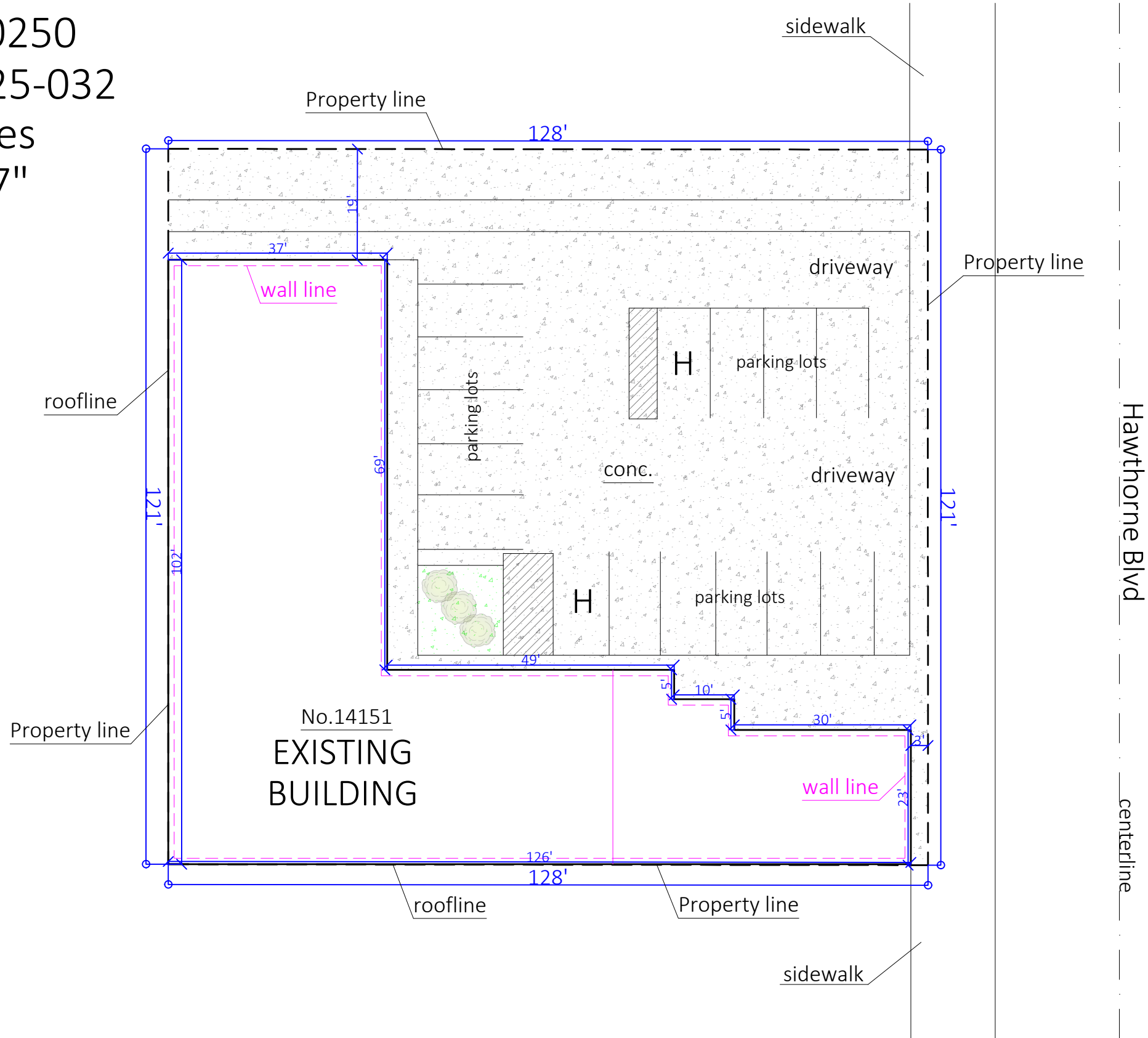
Parcel ID: 4043-025-032

Lot area: 0.36 Acres

Paper Size: 11"x17"



scale 1"=20'

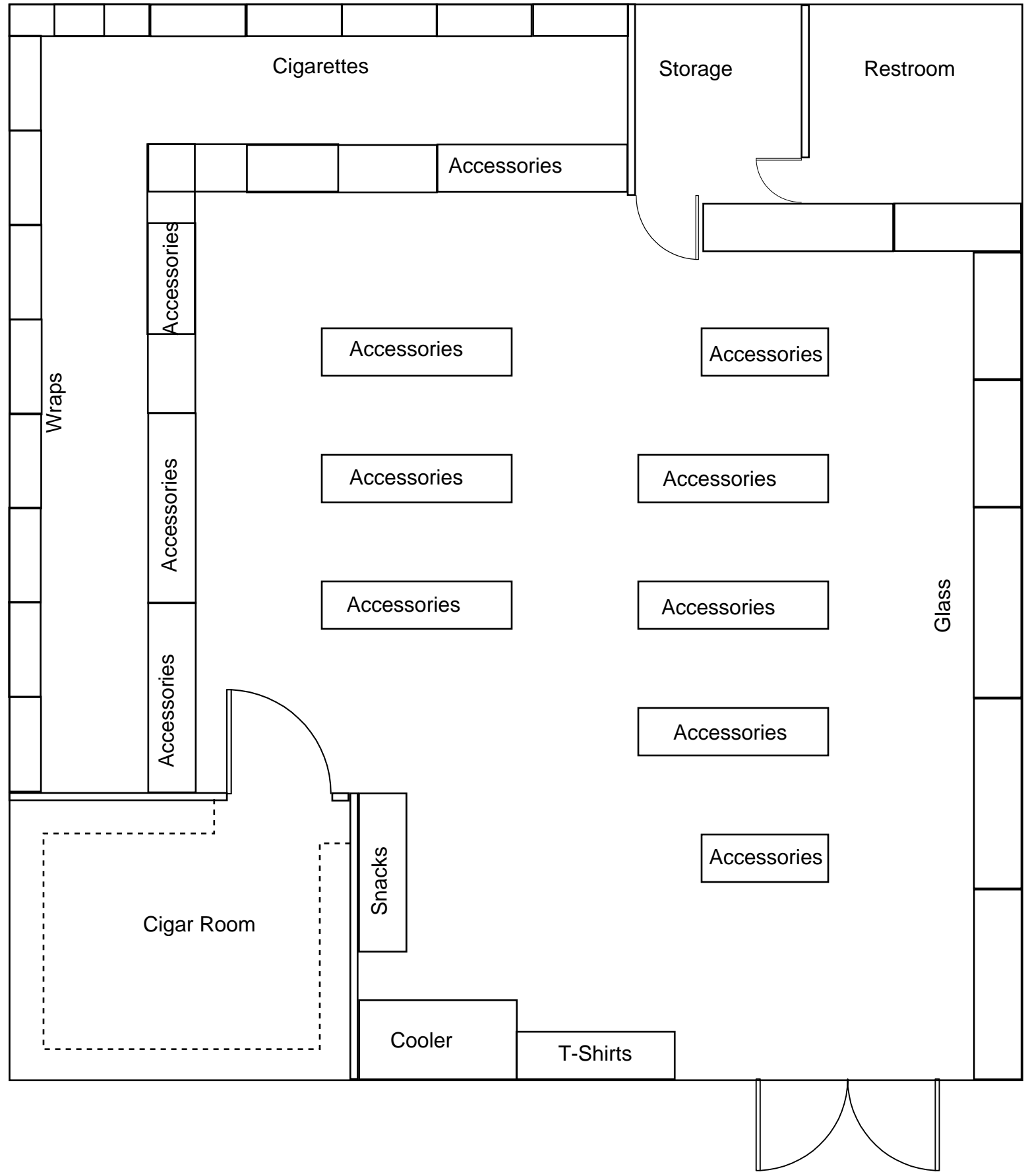


### Disclaimer

This is not a Legal Survey, nor is it intended to be or replace one.

These measurements are approximate and are for illustrative purposes only.

This work product represents only generalized location of features, objects or boundaries and should not be relied upon as being legally authoritative for the precise location of any feature, objects or boundary.



Smoke Zone & Heavy Hitter  
14151 Hawthorne Blvd.  
Floor Plan  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'

**Attachment 2**  
**Proof of Public Notice**



Herald Publications  
 531 Main St., #1160.  
 El Segundo, CA 90245  
 (310) 322-1830 • Fax (310) 322-2787

# PROOF OF PUBLICATION

(2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
 County of Los Angeles,

I declare, that I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk responsible for accepting, formatting and publishing legal notices in the **Hawthorne Press Tribune**, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published weekly in the City of Hawthorne, County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, under the date of **July 31, 1959**, Case Number **187530**; that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to-wit:

**6/19/2025**

All in the year **2025**

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at **Hawthorne**, California,

this **19** day of **June 2025**

.....  
 Signature

Code # HH-28978

This space is for the County Clerk's Filing Stamp

Proof of Publication of:

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
 CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION  
 NO. CU-2025-0002**

**PUBLIC NOTICE** is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the City of Hawthorne will hold a public hearing to consider the following matter:

**CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION NO. CU-2025-0002:** Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2025-0002 is a request to permit Smoke Zone & Heavy Hitter, a tobacco specialty store, at 14151 Hawthorne Boulevard. The business will be located in the C-2, Local Commercial zone which requires a conditional use permit to operate such use (HMC 17.26.020).

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 14151 Hawthorne Boulevard, Hawthorne, CA 90250

**MEETING DETAILS:**

**Day:** Wednesday

**Date:** July 2, 2025

**Time:** 6:00 PM

**Place:** City Council Chambers  
 4455 West 126th Street  
 Hawthorne, CA 90250

Those interested in this item may appear at the meeting and submit oral or written comments. Written information pertaining to this item must be submitted to the Planning and Community Development Department prior to 5:00 PM July 1, 2025, at 4455 West 126th Street, Hawthorne, California 90250 or emailed to nlevey@

cityofhawthorne.org. For additional information, you may contact Nathan Levey at (310) 349-2970 or at the email noted above.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** Conditional Use Permit CU-2025-0002 is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities. Class 1 exemptions are for projects involving negligible or no expansion of use. This includes interior or exterior alterations of a structure. The approval of a Conditional Use Permit to allow a tobacco specialty store would involve negligible or no expansion to the intensity of use of the site. Further, there are no unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the categorical exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2.

**PLEASE NOTE** that pursuant to Government Code Section 65009: In an action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul a finding, determination or decision of the Planning Commission or City Council, the issues raised shall be limited to those raised at the public hearing in this notice or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission or City Council at or prior to the public hearing.

Hawthorne Press Tribune Pub. 6/19/25  
 HH-28978

**Attachment 3**  
**Notice of Exemption**

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION CU-2025-0002

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

---

<b>TO:</b> County Clerk/Registrar-Recorder County of Los Angeles Environmental Filings 12400 East Imperial Highway, Room 2001 Norwalk, CA 90650	<b>FROM:</b> Planning Department City of Hawthorne 4455 West 126th St. Hawthorne, CA 90250
---	---

---

**Project Title and Location (including county):** CU-2025-0002  
14151 Hawthorne Blvd.  
City of Hawthorne, County of Los Angeles

**Project Description:** Request for approval of a conditional use permit to allow a tobacco specialty store

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** City of Hawthorne Planning Department  
**Name of Person/Agency Carrying Out Project:** Applicant: John Aihead

**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));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption: Section: 15301 Class: 1
- Statutory Exemption: Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

Conditional Use Permit No. CU-2025-0002 is Categorically Exempt per Section 15301, Class 1. The proposed project would permit a tobacco specialty store to operate. Exterior alterations would not be proposed and there is no additional square footage. As such, there would be negligible or no expansion of use. Further, no exceptions under Section 15300.2 of the CEQA State Guidelines apply and there are no unusual circumstances.

**Lead Agency Contact Person and Phone Number:**

Nathan Levey 310-349-2970

**Prepared and filed by the Hawthorne Planning Department by:**

---

Nathan Levey, Associate Planner	July 2, 2025	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Printed Name and Title</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Attachment 4**  
**PC Resolution 2025-06**

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. PC 2025-06  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT CU-2025-0002**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) AND APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION NO. CU-2025-0002 TO PERMIT THE USE OF A TOBACCO SPECIALTY STORE LOCATED AT 14151 HAWTHORNE BLVD., IN THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS AND MAKING FINDINGS IN SUPPORT THEREOF**

**WHEREAS**, John Aiead (“Applicant”), filed a complete application requesting the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the sale of tobacco (Tobacco Specialty Store) within a proposed mini-market in accordance with Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) Chapter 17.28; and

**WHEREAS**, the Application applies to a property located at 14151 Hawthorne Blvd., California, Assessor’s Parcel Number 4043-025-032 (“Property”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Land Use Element of the General Plan designates the Property as within the Downtown Hawthorne Specific Plan’s Commercial area, which is implemented through Local and General Commercial zoning and the zoning as Local Commercial (C-2), which is intended for commercial uses, such as retail, restaurants, and banks; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed sale of tobacco would take place within an existing building operating as Smoke Zone & Heavy Hitter; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Hawthorne wishes to protect and preserve the quality of the local business areas and quality of life throughout the City and to ensure that tobacco specialty stores are managed through effective land use planning; and

**WHEREAS**, based upon the information received and Staff’s review and assessment, the project was determined not to have a significant impact on the environment and is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to Section 15301 Class 1 (Existing Facilities) of CEQA. Class 1 exempts projects involving no or negligible expansion of the intensity of use of an existing facility. This includes interior or exterior alterations of a structure. Further, no exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 are applicable. The application is therefore exempt from the from the provisions of CEQA; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 2, 2025, a duly noticed public hearing on the Project was held before the Planning Commission where all interested parties were given an opportunity to be heard; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence was heard and presented from all persons in favor of the application, from all persons opposed to the application and from members of the City staff; and that the Planning Commission having heard and received all of said evidence, testimony and statements and being fully informed of the application, approves Resolution No. 2025-06.

**THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE DOES HEREBY FIND,  
DETERMINE AND RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

**SECTION 1.** The Planning Commission finds that all of the facts set forth in the Recitals are true and correct, and are incorporated herein by reference.

**SECTION 2.** Based upon independent review and consideration of the information contained in the Staff Report and the Notice of Exemption for the Project, the Planning Commission hereby finds and determines that the Project is categorically exempt as a Class 1 Project (Existing Facilities) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

**SECTION 3.** Based upon substantial evidence presented to the Planning Commission during the July 2, 2025, public meeting, including public testimony and written and oral staff reports, the Planning Commission finds as follows:

1. The proposed use is properly one for which a CUP is authorized by this code, as follows:
  - HMC Chapter 17.04 defines a Tobacco Specialty Store as a retail store where more than twenty percent of the annual gross receipts are from the sale of tobacco products (including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and smokeless tobacco) and smoking paraphernalia.
  - HMC Chapter 17.26 requires approval of a CUP for tobacco specialty stores to ensure potential concerns related to the location, surrounding uses, and type of license being sought are addressed. The consumption of tobacco or tobacco related paraphernalia on the premises, samples of tobacco, and sales via vending machine or self-service display are strictly prohibited. The majority of uses within a 300-foot radius are primarily commercial and residential uses.
2. The proposed use will not adversely affect the adjoining land uses, or the growth and development of the area in which it is proposed to be located, as follows:
  - a. The proposed market will be located within an existing strip commercial lot. Access to the store is through Hawthorne Blvd which is a completely developed commercial corridor. There is no direct access to the proposed store from the adjacent residential uses.
  - b. The requirements for sales of tobacco require that the management ensure patrons are of legal age before purchasing tobacco.
3. That the size and shape of the site proposed for the use is adequate to allow the full development of the proposed use, in a manner not detrimental to either the particular area or health and safety.
  - a. The project site is adequate to accommodate the tobacco specialty store within the existing retail space.
  - b. The on-site sales of tobacco would occur within the existing building footprint and consumption would be off-site of the premises.

4. That the traffic generated by the proposed use will not impose an undue burden upon the streets and highways designed and improved to carry the traffic in the area.
  - a. The retail building is existing and allowed by-right under the HMC. The sale of tobacco does not alter traffic demand or off-street parking requirements.
  - b. The site is adequately served by highways and streets with sufficient traffic control infrastructure to allow smooth traffic flow.
  
5. That the granting of the conditional use permit under the conditions imposed will not be detrimental to the health and safety of the citizens of the City of Hawthorne.
  - a. The applicant shall ensure all pertinent employees are trained and aware of FDA and California laws regarding the sale of tobacco products.
  - b. The sales of tobacco and/or tobacco related paraphernalia is only sold to patrons 21 years of age or older.
  - c. The applicant shall ensure and maintain the safety and appearance of the use by employing measures such as, but not limited to, adequate monitoring on the property for security, and daily cleaning within the store and parking lot.
  - d. The applicant will obtain and comply with applicable tobacco regulations and obtain required licenses.

**SECTION 4.** Based on the forgoing, the Planning Commission hereby grants Conditional Use Permit CU-2025-0002 subject to the conditions set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto.

**SECTION 5.** This resolution shall become effective ten days after its adoption, unless within that period of time it is appealed to the City Council. In the event of an appeal, this Resolution shall not become effective unless reinstated by the City Council after the hearing on the appeal. The City Council Resolution determining the appeal shall be controlling, and unless the matter is remanded to the Planning Commission, the Resolution of the City Council shall be final.

**SECTION 6.** A copy of this Resolution shall be mailed to the applicant and copies shall be filed with the City.

**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 2nd day of July 2025.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RYAN RICHARD, CHAIRPERSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
GREGG McCLAIN, SECRETARY

**EXHIBIT A**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT CU-2025-0002

**Application:** CU-2025-0002  
**Applicant:** John Aiead  
**Owner:** Raul Ornelas  
**Applicant Agent:** Mariam Aiead  
**Location:** 14151 Hawthorne Boulevard

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

*Conditions of approval are unique provisions, beyond the requirements of law, the municipal code, or standard practices that are applied to a project per Section 17.48.060 of the Zoning Code. Please note that if the design of your project or site conditions change, the conditions of approval may also change. If you have any questions regarding these requirements, please contact the City of Hawthorne.*

1. The applicant must obtain and maintain all required licenses for the sale of tobacco. The surrender, lapse, termination, suspension, by the state agency issuing Tobacco licenses shall be grounds for revocation of the CUP.
2. Signs shall be posted on the site per CA Penal Code Sections 552 through 555.5 and 11532 to prohibit loitering on the property. These signs shall be installed prior to issuance of business license.
3. In order to help reinforce the minimum required age, the Applicant shall post a prominent, permanent sign or signs stating, "No person under 21 will be sold tobacco products" and "Valid ID is required to purchase tobacco products." These signs shall be installed prior to issuance of business license.
4. The free samples and consumption of tobacco and/or tobacco related paraphernalia on the premises is prohibited.
5. Sales of tobacco products via vending machine or self-service display is prohibited.
6. Sales of packages containing fewer than 20 cigarettes, including single cigarettes known as "loosies", are prohibited.
7. The applicant shall ensure all pertinent employees are trained and aware of FDA and California laws regarding the sale of tobacco products.
8. In order to maintain the safety and appearance of the premises, the applicant shall employ measures such as, but not limited to, adequate monitoring on the property for security (interior and exterior), posting of "No Loitering" signs at the entrances and exits of the store, and daily cleaning within the store and parking lot.

**CODE REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS**

*The following is a list of code requirements and standards deemed applicable to the proposed project. The list is intended to assist the Applicant by identifying requirements that must be satisfied during the various stages of project permitting, implementation, and operation. It should be noted that this list is in addition to any approved "conditions of approval" noted above. Please note that if the design of your project or site conditions change, the list may also change. If you have any questions regarding these requirements, please contact the City of Hawthorne.*

9. Failure of the applicant to comply with conditions as set forth shall be cause for the Planning Commission to institute a Public Hearing for revocation purposes.
10. The applicant shall comply with all applicable requirements and provisions set forth by the Uniform Building Code, Uniform Fire Code, Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC), and any additional requirements by the Fire Department, Director of Building and Safety, or Director of Planning, as related to this application.
11. The applicant must conform to all Business License regulations and maintain a current city license at all times.
12. All signage on the property shall comply with Chapter 17.35 of the HMC.
13. The number of persons shall not exceed the maximum occupancy load as determined by the Fire Department. Signs indicating the occupant load shall be posted in a conspicuous place on the approved sign near the main exit from the room.
14. Emergency fire facilities shall be kept free and unobstructed at all times.
15. Per Section 8.22.050 of the Municipal Code, any graffiti painted or marked upon the premises or any adjacent area under the control of the permittee shall be removed or painted over within 24 hours of being applied.