



Staff Report

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**File #:** 24-0073

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**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT**

**DATE:** 1/22/2024

**TO:** Honorable Chair and Commissioners

**FROM:** Planning and Development Department

**APPLICATION REQUEST:**

**ZTA2023-0006:** Zone Text Amendment to Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code, Section 17.74.040 (A), to establish regulations for directional signage for properties affected by public improvement projects initiated by the City. (Applicant: Carlos Padilla, CPI Properties, LP - 13551 Magnolia Avenue, Corona, CA 92879).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**That the Planning and Housing Commission** recommend the APPROVAL OF ZTA2023-0006 to the City Council, based on the findings contained in the staff report, and find the project exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b) (3).

**BACKGROUND**

CPI Properties ("applicant") owns the property located at the northeast corner of McKinley Street and Sampson Avenue. The property is 5.3 acres and is developed as a commercial center (Los Arcos Plaza) that consists of commercial services and restaurants. The original condition of the applicant's property had frontage on McKinley Street and unobstructed visibility. A portion of the property owned by the applicant, which is being bifurcated from the rest of the property, is being acquired by the City through eminent domain proceedings to support the new roadway alignment on McKinley Street. The grade separation that will be constructed over the railroad tracks located just south of the applicant's property will result in an elevated bridge with a solid concrete support wall extending in front of the applicant's property on McKinley Street. When completed, the grade separation will obstruct the visibility of the applicant's property from McKinley Street.

Because of the extent of public improvements to support the McKinley Grade Separation project, which will change the size, access to, and visibility of the applicant's property from its original condition, the applicant is requesting that directional signage for properties affected by public improvement projects have regulations for directional signage that is different from the current regulations prescribed by Section 17.74.040(A) of the city's Sign Ordinance (Chapter 17.74 of the

Corona Municipal Code).

On July 13, 2023, the applicant submitted a letter of request to the Planning and Development Department to amend Section 17.74.040(A) of the CMC. The amendment proposes regulations that would allow a property to have a directional sign up to 100 square feet in size and 40 feet in height if the property is bifurcated as a direct result of an eminent domain proceeding in connection with a public improvement project initiated by the City and the property's visibility is directly and significantly obstructed after the completion of the public improvement project. The amendment also proposes to allow the directional sign to advertise no more than two tenants or businesses on the property to which the directional sign pertains. The proposed amendment is attached as Exhibit 1.

On August 21, 2023, staff presented the applicant's request to the Planning and Housing Commission to obtain direction from the Commission on whether to proceed with the amendment. At the meeting, the Commission directed staff to proceed with the applicant's request which would need to come back before the Commission as a formal Zone Text Amendment application and reviewed and considered at a public hearing.

On October 18, 2023, the applicant formally submitted a Zone Text Amendment application to the Planning and Development Department to amend Section 17.74.040(A) (Exhibit 1). As directed by the Commission, the zone text amendment (i.e., ZTA2023-0006) is being brought back to the Commission for consideration.

The Commission previously granted the applicant a variance (V2022-0001) on August 21, 2023 to have a 77-square-foot directional sign instead of a six-square-foot directional sign as currently allowed under the code. The 77-square-foot sign area includes a 32-square-foot Los Arcos Plaza name sign panel and a 45-square-foot sign panel that provides direction to the Los Arcos Plaza (Exhibit 4). There is no advertisement of tenants or businesses on the sign associated with the variance. As proposed by the applicant, the zone text amendment would allow a maximum of one directional sign per parcel. As such, if the zone text amendment is approved, the applicant could install one directional sign pursuant to either CMC 17.74.040(A), as amended by the zone text amendment (Exhibits 1 and 3), or the approved V2022-0001, but not both.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

The proposed amendment to CMC Section 17.74.040(A) describing directional signage is shown below. The proposed language is shown in an underlined format.

### **17.74.040 Exemptions.**

*The provisions and regulations of this chapter and title shall not apply to the following signs, nor shall the area of such signs be counted toward the maximum allowable sign area for any premises or use.*

*(A) **Directional sign.** The city has a compelling interest in permitting directional signs in order to promote traffic safety. Except as provided in subsection (1) below, signs used to give directions to traffic or pedestrians or to give instructions as to special conditions shall not exceed a total of six square feet in area per sign and shall be permitted on-site in addition to the other signs listed in this*

section.

(1) One directional sign up to a maximum area of 100 square feet and a maximum height of 40 feet is permitted if all of the following criteria are met:

(a) The parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is bifurcated as a direct result of an eminent domain proceeding in connection with a public improvement project initiated by the City.

(b) The visibility of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is directly and significantly affected by the public improvement project initiated by the City.

(c) The directional sign is located on land which had been a part of the parcel of land that was bifurcated as a direct result of the public improvement project initiated by the City.

(d) The directional sign is located within 175 feet of the closest edge of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains and gives directions only to the parcel.

(e) The directional sign identifies no more than 2 nonresidential tenants or businesses operating on the parcel to which the directional sign pertains.

(f) A maximum of one directional sign shall be permitted per parcel to which the directional sign pertains.

(g) No part of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is zoned or used for residential purposes.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

Per Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), ZTA2023-0006 is exempt from CEQA based on the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This amendment solely involves text revisions to the City's Zoning Ordinance in the Corona Municipal Code, and there is no possibility that the amendment will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project (Exhibit 5).

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for the zone text amendment.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS**

A 10-day public notice was advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News. As of the preparation of this staff report, the Planning and Development Department has not received any response from the public regarding the public notice.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The proposed text amendment to the City's Sign Ordinance provides a clear understanding of the minimum conditions to be met when considering directional signage. The criteria established by the amendment narrow the type of directional signs that can be granted pursuant to very detailed standards, specifically to a parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is bifurcated as a direct result of an eminent domain proceeding in connection with a public improvement project initiated by the City.

The proposed text amendment will allow a parcel which has been impacted by eminent domain the opportunity to maintain much needed visibility from directional signage that is warranted so that the directions to the subject parcel can be easily seen by the public and emergency personnel. Additionally, the criteria being established by this amendment is consistent with several General Plan Goals and Policies including: 1) General Plan Policy LU-11.4 to "Maintain appropriate areas in the city for heavy commercial uses, while development standards in these areas should respect operational characteristics of these uses, they should promote aesthetic improvements and traffic safety and minimize impacts."; and 2) General Plan Policy ED-1.2 to "Encourage the expansion of existing businesses in Corona, if possible, and extend efforts at business retention."

Therefore, the Planning and Development Department recommends approval of ZTA2023-0006, based on the following findings of approval.

### **FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL OF ZTA2023-0006**

1. A preliminary exemption assessment has been conducted by the City of Corona and it has shown that this project does not require further environmental assessment because under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), common sense exemptions apply to actions that have no possibility of significant environmental effect. This action amends language in the municipal code, and there is no possibility that the adoption of the ordinance will have a significant effect on the environment.
2. The proposed amendment is consistent with the General Plan for the following reasons:
  - a. *General Plan Policy LU-11.4 supports having development standards for areas with heavy commercial uses that respect operational characteristics of these uses while promoting aesthetic improvements and traffic safety and minimizing impacts.*
  - b. *General Plan Policy ED-1.2 encourages the expansion of existing businesses in Corona, if possible, and extends efforts at business retention.*
3. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code for the following reason:
  - a. *Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code is the City's Zoning Ordinance which governs the development standards of land uses in the city. The zone text amendment continues to enhance upon the City's development standards to ensure the public health, safety and welfare of uses, which is the intent of Title 17.*
4. The proposed amendment will provide for the public health, safety, and welfare for the following reason:
  - a. *The proposed amendment permits specialized criteria established by the proposed text which narrows the types of directional signs that can be granted pursuant to very detailed standards, specifically to a parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains*

*is bifurcated as a direct result of an eminent domain proceeding in connection with a public improvement project initiated by the City. The proposed text amendment is not expected to cause any visual, noise, glare, pollution, dust, odor, or traffic impacts to a business site or its surroundings. Therefore, the amendment continues to protect the well-being of public health, safety, and welfare of the general public.*

**PREPARED BY:** ROCIO LOPEZ, CONSULTING PLANNER

**REVIEWED BY:** EVA CHOI, SENIOR PLANNER

**REVIEWED BY:** SANDRA VANIAN, PLANNING MANAGER

**SUBMITTED BY:** JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**EXHIBITS**

1. Proposed Amendment to CMC Section 17.74.040(A)
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Directional Sign, as Proposed per ZTA2023-0006
4. Directional Sign, as Approved per V2022-0001
5. Environmental Documentation

Case Planner: Rocio Lopez (951) 736-2293

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT**

The proposed amendment to CMC Section 17.74.040(A) describing directional signage is shown below. The proposed language is shown in an underline.

### **17.74.040 Exemptions.**

*The provisions and regulations of this chapter and title shall not apply to the following signs, nor shall the area of such signs be counted toward the maximum allowable sign area for any premises or use.*

*(A) **Directional sign.** The city has a compelling interest in permitting directional signs in order to promote traffic safety. Except as provided in subsection (1) below, signs used to give directions to traffic or pedestrians or to give instructions as to special conditions shall not exceed a total of six square feet in area per sign and shall be permitted on-site in addition to the other signs listed in this section.*

*(1) One directional sign up to a maximum area of 100 square feet and a maximum height of 40 feet is permitted if all of the following criteria are met:*

*(a) The parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is bifurcated as a direct result of an eminent domain proceeding in connection with a public improvement project initiated by the City.*

*(b) The visibility of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is directly and significantly affected by the public improvement project initiated by the City.*

*(c) The directional sign is located on land which had been a part of the parcel of land that was bifurcated as a direct result of the public improvement project initiated by the City.*

*(d) The directional sign is located within 175 feet of the closest edge of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains and gives directions only to the parcel.*

*(e) The directional sign identifies no more than 2 nonresidential tenants or businesses operating on the parcel to which the directional sign pertains.*

*(f) A maximum of one directional sign shall be permitted per parcel to which the directional sign pertains.*

*(g) No part of the parcel of land to which the directional sign pertains is zoned or used for residential purposes.*

# **EXHIBIT 1**



# Project Conditions

## City of Corona

**Project Number: ZTA2023-0006**

**Description: Proposed Amendment to CMC Section 17.74.040(A) -**

**Applied: 10/18/2023**

**Approved:**

**Site Address: 161 161 N MCKINLEY ST CORONA, CA 92879**

**Closed:**

**Expired:**

**Status: RECEIVED**

**Applicant: CARLOS R PADILLA**

**Parent Project:**

**13551 MAGNOLIA AVE, CORONA CA, 92879**

**Details:**

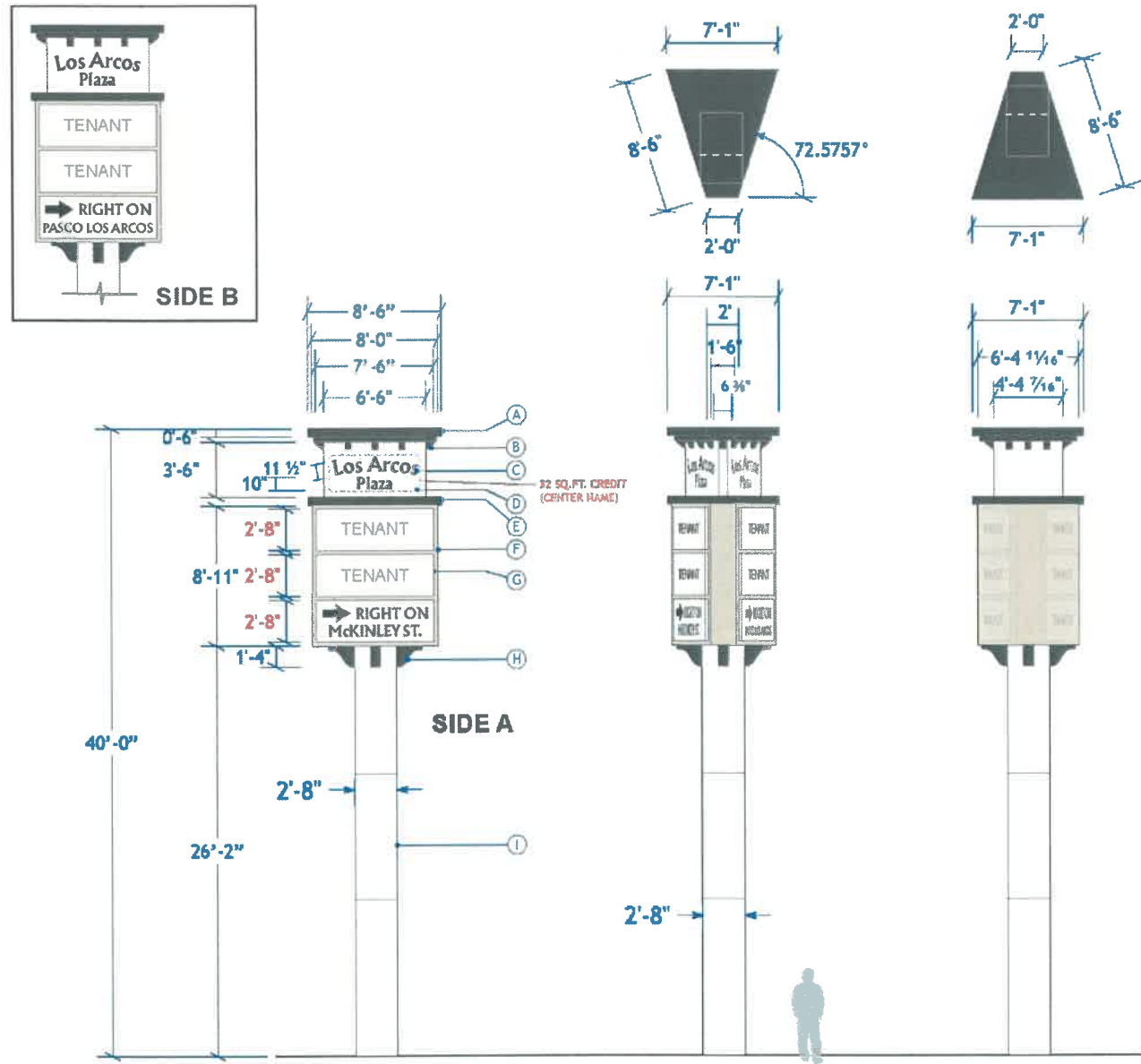
### LIST OF CONDITIONS

| DEPARTMENT  | CONTACT              |
|---|----------------------|
| <b>PLANNING</b>   |                      |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold the City of Corona and its directors, officials, officers, employees, volunteers and agents free and harmless from any and all claims, demands, causes of action, proceedings, costs, expenses, liabilities, losses, damages or injuries of any kind, in law or equity, in any manner arising out of, pertaining to, or incident to any attack against or attempt to challenge, set aside, void or annul any approval, decision or other action of the City of Corona, whether such approval, decision or other action was by its City Council, Planning and Housing Commission or other board, director, official, officer, employee, volunteer or agent. To the extent that Government Code Section 66474.9 applies, the City will promptly notify the applicant of any claim, action or proceeding made known to the City to which Government Code Section 66474.9 applies and the City will fully cooperate in the defense. The Applicant's obligations hereunder shall include, without limitation, the payment of any and all damages, consultant and expert fees, and attorney's fees and other related costs and expenses. The City shall have the right to retain such legal counsel as the City deems necessary and appropriate.</li> <li>2. Nothing herein shall be construed to require City to defend any attack against or attempt to challenge, set aside, void or annul any such City approval, decision or other action. If at any time Applicant chooses not to defend (or continue to defend) any attack against or attempt to challenge, set aside, void or annul any such City approval, decision or other action, the City may choose, in its sole discretion, to defend or not defend any such action. In the event that the City decides not to defend or continue the defense, Applicant shall be obligated to reimburse City for any and all costs, fees, penalties or damages associated with dismissing the action or proceeding. If at any time both the Applicant and the City choose not to defend (or continue to defend) any action noted herein, all subject City approvals, decisions or other actions shall be null and void. The Applicant shall be required to enter into any reimbursement agreement deemed necessary by the City to effectuate the terms of this condition.</li> <li>3. Prior to construction of the directional sign associated with ZTA2023-0006, the applicant shall submit the necessary plans and obtain the necessary permits from the Planning and Building Divisions.</li> </ol> |                      |
| <b>PUBLIC WORKS</b>   | <b>Maria Miranda</b> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Placement of directional sign and footings, within drainage basin, shall be installed with a minimum 10 feet separation from the edge of any storm drain facility. Approval of sign location and details of footing installation will be done through a Building Permit.</li> <li>2. Prior to issuance of grading permit, the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Public Works Director that the proposed project will not unreasonably interfere with the use of any easement holder of the property.</li> <li>3. The ongoing maintenance of the sign shall be the responsibility of the applicant/shopping center owner. An agreement between the city and applicant for the off-site directional sign shall be done through the eminent domain proceedings.</li> </ol>  |                      |

# EXHIBIT 2

# LOS ARCOS PLAZA

**SIGN #2 UNDER A SEPARATE APPLICATION AND SUBJECT TO SEPARATE APPROVAL**

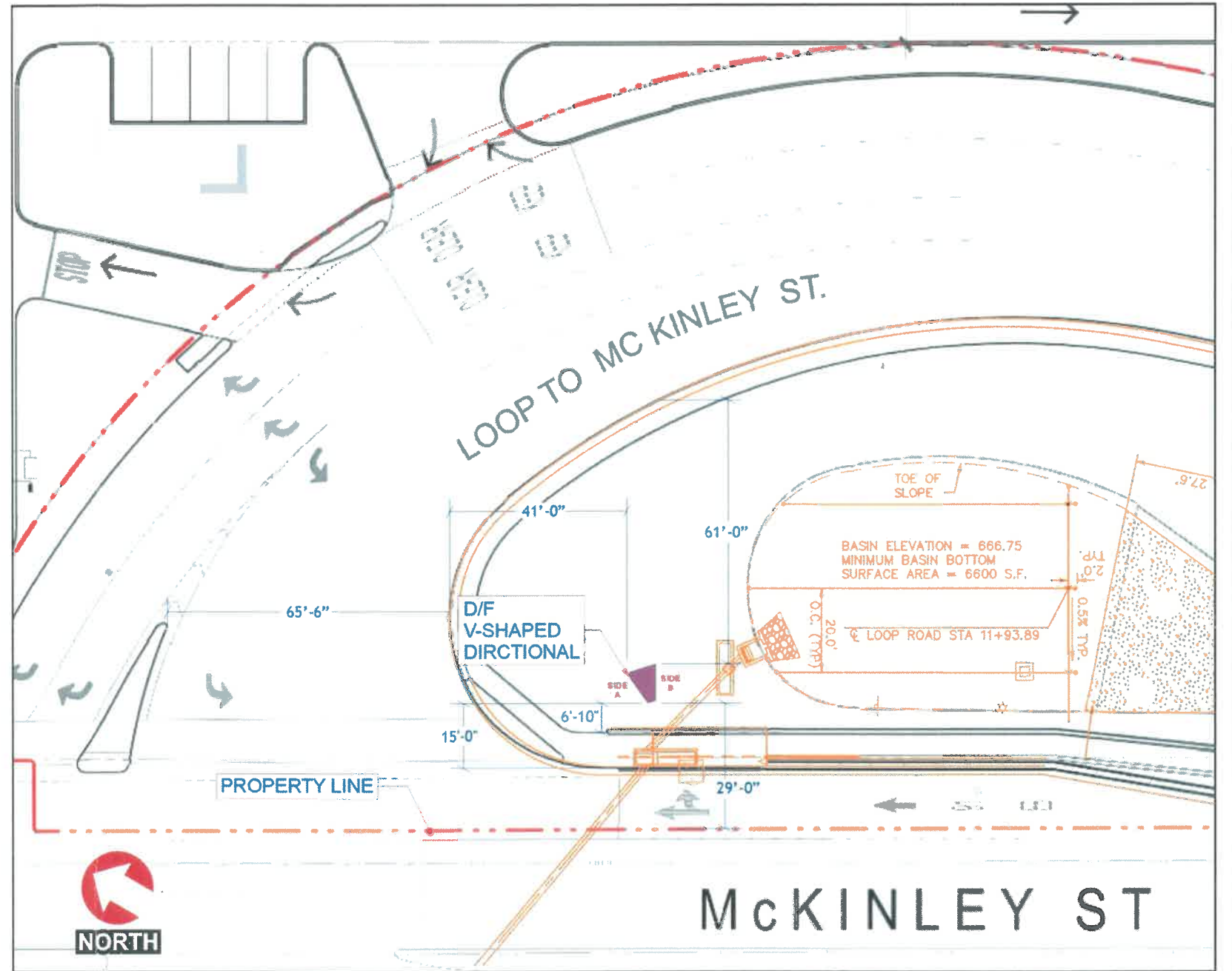


**ILLUMINATED; D/F DIRECTIONAL SIGN 64 SQ.FT. FRONT VIEW BACK VIEW 2**

SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"  
SIGN #2

96

- A. ALUMINUM TOPPER; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS. (COLOR TBD)
- B. ALUM. CORNICE ACCENTS; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS (COLOR TBD)
- C. FRONT-LIT INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED CHANNEL LETTERS. WHITE ACRYLIC FACES DECORATED W/ 3M TRANSLUCENT VINYL FILM; (COLOR TBD.)
- D. ALUMINUM CABINET; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING COLOR.(COLOR TBD).
- E. ALUMINUM ACCENTS; PAINTED TO MATCH.
- F. ALUMINUM CABINETS; PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS; (COLOR TBD.)
- G. ALUMINUM TENANT PAN FACES; 4" DEEP W/ ROUTED OUT TENANT COPY W/ 1/2" TRANSLUCENT WHITE PUSH-THRU ACRYLIC LETTERS. DECORATED W/ 3M TRANSLUCENT VINYL. (COLOR TBD.)
- H. ALUM. CORNICE ACCENTS; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS (COLOR TBD)
- I. ALUMINUM CLADDING; POLE COVERS. PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENT. COLOR TBD.



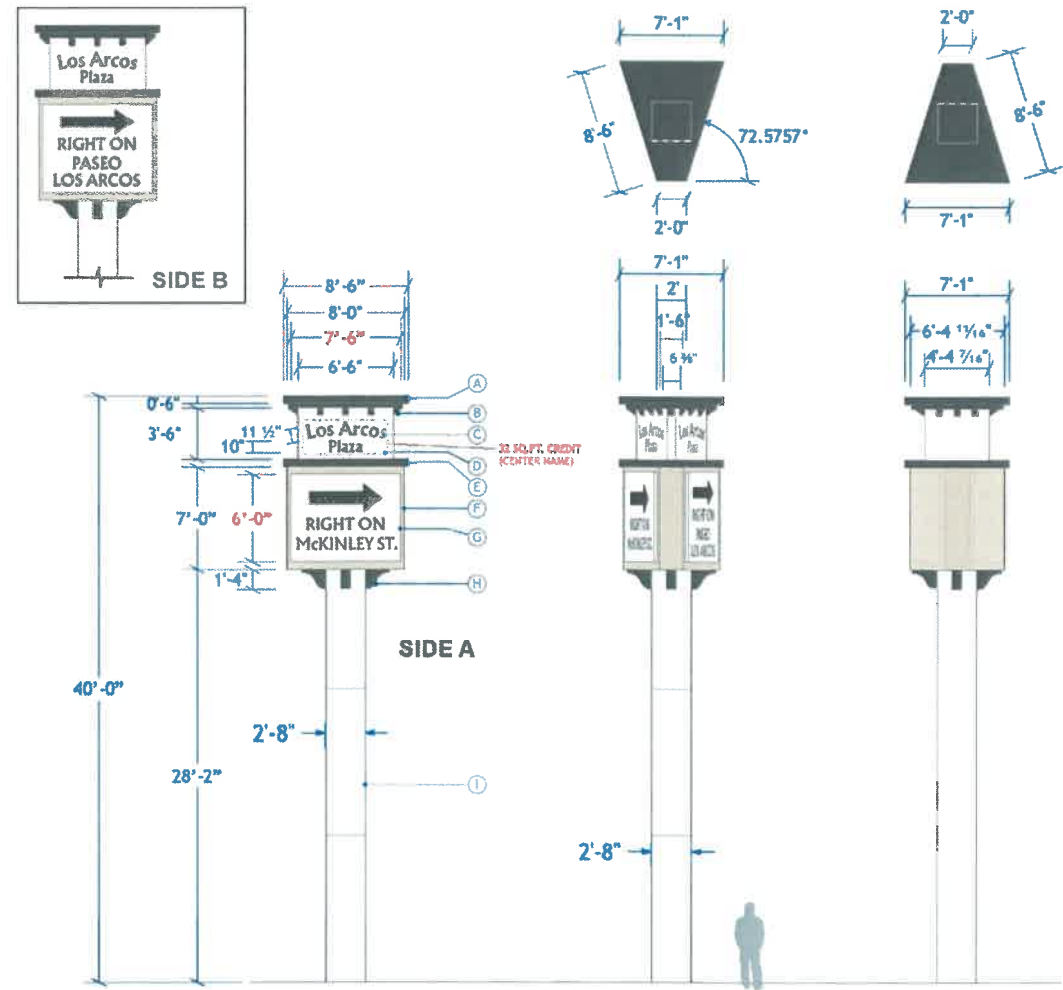
SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED;  
COLOR SCHEDULE

|                        |                        |       |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| BLACK MAGIC<br>SW 6991 | RIVERS EDGE<br>SW 7517 | WHITE |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------|



LOS ARCOS PLAZA

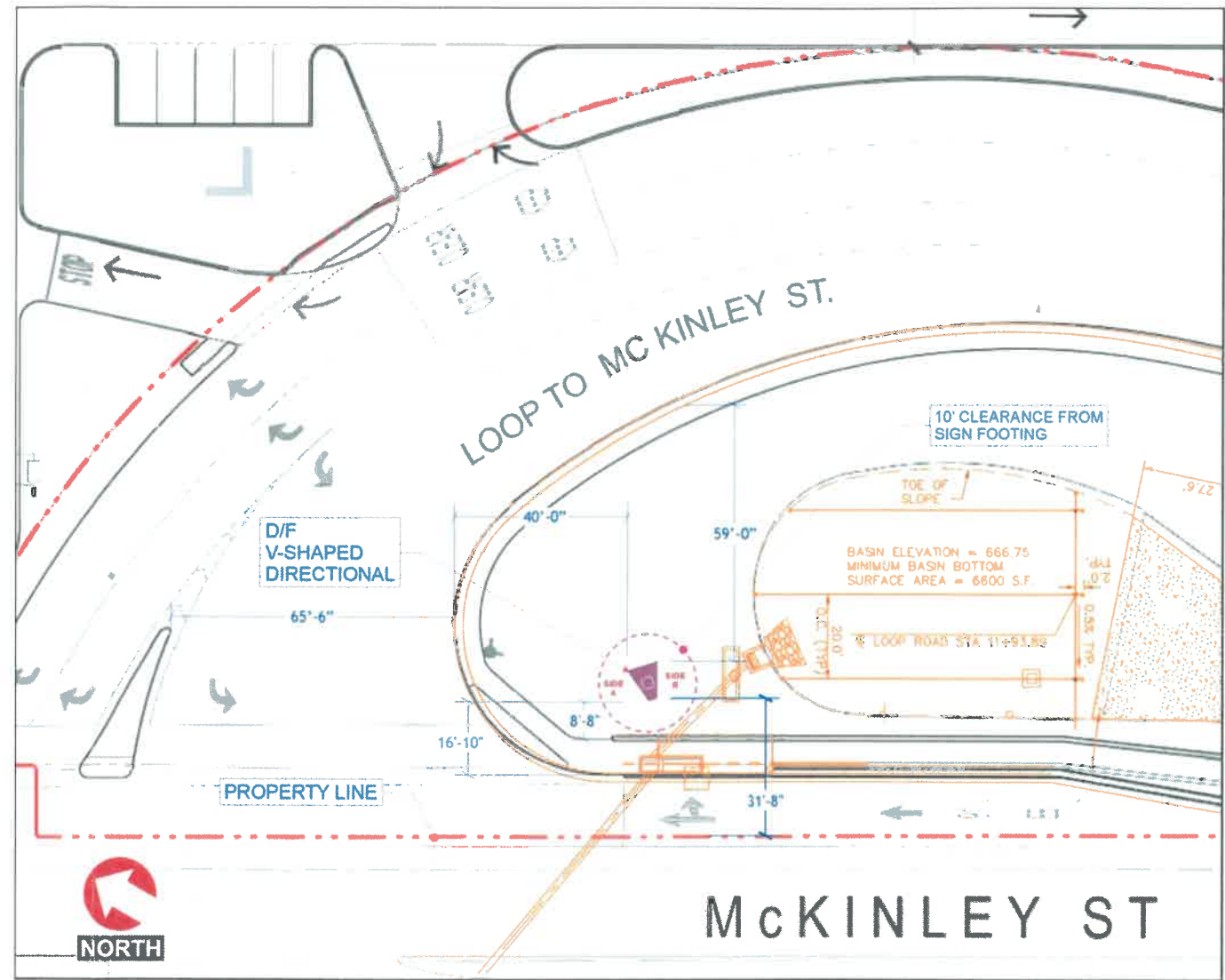


ILLUMINATED; D/F DIRECTIONAL SIGN 45 SQ.FT. FRONT VIEW BACK VIEW 2  
 SCALE: 3/32" = 1'-0"  
 SIGN #2

- A. ALUMINUM TOPPER; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS. (COLOR TBD)
- B. ALUM. CORNICE ACCENTS; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS (COLOR TBD)
- C. FRONT-LIT INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED CHANNEL LETTERS. WHITE ACRYLIC FACES DECORATED W/ 3M TRANSLUCENT VINYL FILM; (COLOR TBD.)
- D. ALUMINUM CABINET; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING COLOR.(COLOR TBD).
- E. ALUMINUM ACCENTS; PAINTED TO MATCH.
- F. ALUMINUM CABINETS; PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS; (COLOR TBD.)
- G. ALUMINUM PAN FACES; 4" DEEP W/ ROUTED OUT DIRECTIONAL COPY W/ 1/2" TRANSLUCENT WHITE PUSH-THRU ACRYLIC LETTERS. DECORATED W/ 3M TRANSLUCENT VINYL. (COLOR TBD.)
- H. ALUM. CORNICE ACCENTS; CLADDING PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENTS (COLOR TBD)
- I. ALUMINUM CLADDING; POLE COVERS. PAINTED TO MATCH BUILDING ACCENT. COLOR TBD.

**\*NOTE; DIRECTIONAL SIGN SIDE A IS GRABBING THE ATTENTION OF THE VEHICLES EXISTING THE EAST BOUND FREEWAY OFF RAMP**

SIGN #2 UNDER A SEPARATE APPLICATION AND SUBJECT TO SEPARATE APPROVAL



SCALE: 1/32" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED; COLOR SCHEDULE

|                        |                        |       |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| BLACK MAGIC<br>SW 6991 | RIVERS EDGE<br>SW 7517 | WHITE |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------|



## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>TO:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office of Planning and Research<br/>P. O. Box 3044, Room 113<br/>Sacramento, CA 95812-3044</p> | <p>FROM: Name: City of Corona<br/>Planning and Development<br/>Department</p> <p>Address: 400 S. Vicentia Avenue</p> <p>Telephone: (951) 736-2293</p> |
| <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Clerk (Riverside County)</p> <p>Address: 2724 Gateway Drive<br/>Riverside, CA 92507</p>            |   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Project Title:  | ZTA2023-0006  |
| 2. Project Applicant:  | Carlos Padilla, CPI Properties, LP - 13551 Magnolia Avenue, Corona, CA 92879  |
| 3. Project Location – Identify street address and cross streets or attach a map showing project site (preferably a USGS 15' or 7 1/2' topographical map identified by quadrangle name):  | City wide   |
| 4. (a) Project Location – City: Corona   | (b) Project Location – County: Riverside  |
| 5. Description of nature, purpose, and beneficiaries of Project:   | Zone Text Amendment to Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code, Chapter 17.74 (Signs), Section 17.74.040 (A) (Exemptions), to establish regulations for directional signage for properties affected by public improvement projects initiated by the City. |
| 6. Name of Public Agency approving project:  | City of Corona  |
| 7. Name of Person or Agency undertaking the project, including any person undertaking an activity that receives financial assistance from the Public Agency as part of the activity or the person receiving a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement of use from the Public Agency as part of the activity: | Carlos Padilla, CPI Properties, LP - 13551 Magnolia Avenue, Corona, CA 92879  |
| 8. Exempt status: (check one)  |   |
| (a) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial project.  | (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); State CEQA Guidelines § 15268)  |
| (b) <input type="checkbox"/> Not a project.  |   |
| (c) <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Project.  | (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); State CEQA Guidelines § 15269(b),(c))   |
| (d) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption.<br>State type and section number:   | Categorical exemption under Section 15061(b) common sense exemption of the State Guidelines for the California  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), applicable to actions that have no possibility of significant environmental effect.  |
| (e) <input type="checkbox"/> Declared Emergency.                                | (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); State CEQA Guidelines § 15269(a))  |
| (f) <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Exemption.<br>State Code section number: |  |
| (g) <input type="checkbox"/> Other. Explanation:                                |  |
| 9. Reason why project was exempt:   | The project is a text amendment to the Corona Municipal Code, Title 17, Chapter 17.74 (Signs), Section 17.74.040 (A) (Exemptions), to allow for minor alterations to directional signage. This action amends language in the municipal code, and there is no possibility that the adoption of the ordinance will have a significant effect on the environment. |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 10. Lead Agency Contact Person:<br>Telephone:  | Rocio Lopez, Consulting Planner<br>(951) 736-2293 |
| 11. If filed by applicant: Attach Preliminary Exemption Assessment (Form "A") before filing.   |   |
| 12. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>   |   |
| 13. Was a public hearing held by the Lead Agency to consider the exemption? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/><br>If yes, the date of the public hearing was: June 26, 2023 |   |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date:

Rocio Lopez  
Name

Title: Planning Consultant

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date Received for Filing: [Click to enter date](#)

(Clerk Stamp Here)

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