



Staff Report

File #: 24-0329

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 05/01/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Planning & Development Department

SUBJECT:

SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT 2023-0001 TO THE EL CERRITO SPECIFIC PLAN (SP91-2), SECTION 12.8, TO ALLOW EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE COMMERCIAL (C) DISTRICT BY A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (APPLICANT: RIVER SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOLS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve Specific Plan Amendment 2023-0001 (SPA2023-0001) as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission to amend the El Cerrito Specific Plan to add educational schools in the permitted land uses by a Conditional Use Permit in the Commercial District. The amendment would expand the land uses allowed in the Commercial District and provide an opportunity for the applicant to establish a charter school for kindergarten, middle school, and high school students.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve Specific Plan Amendment 2023-0001, as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission.
- b. Introduce, by title only, and waive full reading of consideration of Ordinance No. 3396, first reading of an ordinance approving an amendment to the El Cerrito Specific Plan (SP91-02) to allow educational schools in the Commercial District as a conditionally permitted use (SPA2023-0001).

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The El Cerrito Specific Plan (SP91-2) includes various residential and commercial land use districts and corresponding development standards. The Commercial (C) District in the specific plan permits various commercial services and retail uses listed in Section 12.8.2 and additional uses allowed by a

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) listed in Section 12.8.3. SP91-2 permits schools for business and professional development including art, barber, beauty, dance, drama, music, and swimming but does not specifically list schools for general education. Dance academies and halls are also permitted but require a CUP.

The applicant, River Springs Charter Schools, is proposing to amend SP91-2 to establish a school for general education as a use permitted by a CUP in the C District, which is the reason for SPA2023-0001. Additionally, the applicant is concurrently processing a CUP to occupy an existing building located at 2115 Compton Avenue in the C District to operate a charter school.

ANALYSIS:

SPA2023-0001 will add educational schools to the conditionally permitted land uses listed in Section 12.8.3 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan. This section references the land uses allowed by a CUP in the C District. The process for a CUP is prescribed by Chapter 17.92 of the Corona Municipal Code.

The amendment provides a path for the adaptive re-use of traditional office and commercial retail buildings or other underutilized buildings that no longer serve the need of an on-site workforce. The amendment allows for a case-by-case review of a school for general education by a CUP in the C District of SP91-2. The CUP allows city staff to determine if specific conditions are required for the operation of the use to minimize potential impacts on nearby land uses.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant paid the application processing fee of \$5,659.28 to cover the cost of the Specific Plan Amendment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense 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 is solely a text revision to allow educational schools by a conditional use permit and there is no possibility that approving this project will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION ACTION:

At its meeting on April 8, 2024, the Planning and Housing Commission considered the subject matter and took the following action:

Motion was made, seconded (Siqueland/Alexander) and carried with Commissioner Vernon absent, that the Planning and Housing Commission recommend approval of SPA2023-0001 to the City Council based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval, and that SPA2023-0001 be exempted from the California Environmental Quality pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). The minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting are included in Exhibit 3.

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - City Ordinance No. 3396
2. Exhibit 2 - Planning and Housing Commission staff report
3. Exhibit 3 - Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of April 8, 2024