



Staff Report

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**File #:** 23-0558

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**REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

**DATE:** 09/20/2023  
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Planning & Development Department

**SUBJECT:**

SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT 2022-0006 TO THE NORTHEAST CORONA SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDING THE SIGNAGE REGULATIONS UNDER SECTION 4.5.10 IN THE SUPPORT COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (APPLICANT: CPI PROPERTIES)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This staff report asks the City Council to approve Specific Plan Amendment 2022-0006 (SPA2022-0006) to the Northeast Corona Specific Plan amending the signage regulations referenced in Section 4.5.10 in the Support Commercial District. The amendment would increase the allowable sign area of a freeway pylon sign from 200 square feet to 350 square feet, increase the allowed height of a freeway pylon sign from 50 feet to 70 feet, allow a height of 55 feet for a pylon sign, allow for electronic message centers, and increase the number of allowed tenants on a parcel identification sign from four tenants to six tenants.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

**That the City Council:**

- a. Approve Specific Plan Amendment 2022-0006, as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission.
- b. Introduce, by title only, and waive full reading of consideration of Ordinance No. 3375, first reading of an ordinance approving an amendment to the Northeast Corona Specific Plan (SP81-2) to: (1) increase the maximum allowable sign area and maximum sign height and to allow electronic message center on freeway pylon signs, (2) establish a maximum sign height for a pylon sign, and (3) allow up to six tenants to be advertised on a parcel identification sign in the Support Commercial District.

**BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

Specific Plan Amendment 2022-0006 (SPA2022-0006) is a request by CPI Properties, to amend the signage regulations in the Northeast Corona Specific Plan (SP81-02) for the Support Commercial (SC) District. CPI Properties owns the Los Arcos Plaza, which is a commercial center located at 161-191 N. McKinley Street. The zoning of the property is SC of SP81-02 and is identified as Planning Area 7A. The applicant's request is the result of a roadway improvement project on McKinley Street that will ultimately provide an elevated grade separation over the railroad that is to the south of the commercial center.

The Los Arcos Plaza is situated at the northeast corner of McKinley Street and Sampson Avenue, and abuts the 91 Freeway on the north side. The McKinley Grade Separation Project currently underway will alter the roadway adjacent to the site, which will minimize the center's visibility from McKinley Street. To obtain better advertisement for the center due to the realignment of McKinley Street adjacent to the property and the raised elevation of the grade separation bridge over the railroad, the applicant is requesting to update the center's signage and increase the size and height of the freeway pylon sign that is allowed in PA 7A. The request also includes allowing an electronic message center on the sign, establishing a sign height for a pylon sign, and increasing the number of advertised tenants allowed on a sign.

Applicant's Proposed Sign Program

The applicant's new sign program proposes the following:

1. Replace the center's existing 50-foot-tall freeway-oriented pylon sign with a new 70-foot-high freeway-oriented pylon sign and increase the sign area from 130 square feet to 338 square feet. The new sign is proposed to have a 200 square feet electronic message center (EMC), and 138 square feet of static sign area.
2. Construct one (1) new monument sign at the following location:
  - Corner of McKinley Street and Sampson Avenue. The proposed sign will be 4 feet 4 inches tall, approximately 12 square feet, and allow up to 6 tenants.
3. Construct one (1) new pylon sign at the following location:
  - New driveway entrance on Loop Road (center's west perimeter). The proposed pylon sign will be 55 feet high, approximately 90 square feet, and allow up to six tenant spaces.

The center's existing 35-foot high, 100 square-foot pylon sign facing McKinley Street is being removed due to the construction of the roadway improvements on McKinley Street.

The amendment proposed for the freeway pylon sign is solely for Planning Area 7A within the Support Commercial District, and would not be applicable to other properties in the SC District.

**ANALYSIS:**

The amendments proposed by the applicant are shown below. Deleted text is shown in red with a strikethrough and added text in blue and underlined.

**"Section 4.5.10 SIGNS**

*Signs shall be regulated and controlled as specified under Section 17.74 of the Corona Municipal Code for the SC District properties; except for modifications as herein stated:....*

*C. The maximum area of parcel identification sign shall be 100 square feet and may list up to six (6) tenants, unless as specified below.*

*I. The following signage is permitted in the SC District within those portions of Planning Area 7A located east of McKinley Street, south of the Riverside Freeway and north of Sampson Avenue: 1) One (1) pylon center identification sign may be constructed along the Riverside Freeway frontage; the maximum height of the sign shall be ~~fifty (50)~~ seventy (70) feet (~~SPA-90-8 and SPA02-006~~) and shall not exceed a maximum face area of ~~200~~ 350 square feet. The sign area can be a static copy and/or electronic message center. 2) A pylon sign allowed pursuant to CMC Chapter 17.74 shall not exceed a height of fifty-five (55) feet."*

The increased height of the sign correlates with a proportionately larger sign area, both of which provide better visibility of tenant names from the freeway. While the applicant's proposed freeway sign is 70 feet tall, the 91 Freeway is elevated by approximately 27 feet from the grade elevation of the commercial center where the sign is proposed. As such, only 43 feet of the sign's upper section will be visible from the freeway.

The Northeast Corona Specific Plan does not currently limit the maximum number of tenants that can be advertised on commercial signs in the Support Commercial (SC) land use designation, therefore the sign regulations fall back on the Municipal Code, which limits the number of static, tenant signs to four. The applicant is proposing to allow static tenant signs of up to six on the monument and pylon signs. Staff reviewed the sign regulations for various commercial zones that are regulated by the Municipal Code and specific plans, and the number of tenants that are allowed on a monument or pylon sign range vastly from 3 to 11 tenants. Staff believes the applicant's request is consistent with other commercial zones.

Maintaining the shopping center's visibility to commuters is an appropriate consideration, given that the center is expected to be impacted by the McKinley Grade Separation Project. The amendment will also help keep the Los Arcos Plaza competitive with other shopping centers in proximity to the project site, and potentially help keep tenant vacancy low, as the amendment will increase the exposure of the center's tenants.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The applicant paid the application processing fees of \$3,893.28 to cover the cost of the Specific Plan Amendment.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

This action is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities, Class 1) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.27 of the City of Corona adopted Local Guidelines for Implementing CEQA. The proposed text amendment to the Northeast Corona Specific

Plan involves a negligible expansion of the signage regulations that will not have an impact on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION ACTION:**

At its meeting of August 21, 2023, the Planning and Housing Commission considered the subject matter and took the following action:

Motion was made, seconded (Siqueland/Sherman) and carried with Commissioner Woody voting "No" that the Planning and Housing Commission find the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and recommend approval of SPA2022-0006 to the City Council, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval. The minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting are included as Exhibit 4.

**PREPARED BY:** JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**Attachments:**

1. Exhibit 1 - Ordinance No. 3375
2. Exhibit 2 - Locational and zoning map
3. Exhibit 3 - Planning and Housing Commission staff report
4. Exhibit 4 - Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of August 21, 2023