



Staff Report

File #: 24-0175

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 03/25/2024

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

SPA2023-0006: Specific Plan Amendment to the North Main Street District Plan, Section 4.3, to allow for building materials sales with indoor and outdoor storage in the Transit Commercial (TC) District. (Applicant: Daniel Delaney, Ganahl Lumber Company, 1220 E. Ball Road, Anaheim, CA 92805)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend APPROVAL of SPA2023-0006 to the City Council, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval, and find the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND

Ganahl Lumber Company, applicant, currently operates a building material sales business at 100 W. Blaine Street. The applicant also owns and utilizes the adjacent property to the immediate west at 299 N. Sheridan Street and the property across the BNSF railroad to the south at 201 Depot Drive as yards for outdoor storage of building materials (i.e., lumber). A site map of the properties is attached as Exhibit 1. The applicant intends to purchase an adjoining 1.09-acre property at 150 Depot Drive and expand the building materials operations. The property contains an existing 5,463-square-foot commercial building and associated parking lot. The property is governed by the North Main Street Specific Plan which zones the property Transit Commercial (TC). Building materials sales with indoor and outdoor storage is a prohibited use in the TC District. The applicant is requesting to amend the specific plan to permit the use in the TC District.

Ganahl Lumber has been operating at its current location since 1991 when the properties were originally zoned M-1 (Light Manufacturing). In 2000, the city adopted the North Main Street Specific Plan which rezoned the Ganahl Lumber properties, the property at 150 Depot Drive, and the nearby properties on the west and east sides of Main Street, between Blaine Street and Grand Boulevard, to

Transit Commercial (TC). The TC District was created to encourage the development of mass transit, carpooling and related uses in this area. The North Main Street Land Use Plan is attached as Exhibit 2. With the adoption of the specific plan, *building material sales with indoor outdoor storage* was made a prohibited use in the TC District. However, Ganahl Lumber was allowed to continue to operate at the site as a nonconforming use since the use existed at the site before the adoption of the specific plan. Ganahl Lumber continues to be a thriving business in the city and owns all the properties associated with the operation of their business. Ganahl Lumber has no intention of ceasing operations in the city or at its current location.

The building at 150 Depot Drive is listed on the Corona Register of Historic Resources as a historic landmark. The landmark listing does not prevent the use of the property but does place restrictions on alterations to the building. At this time, the applicant does not intend to make any alterations to the building. Should the applicant decide to make any exterior alterations to the building in the future, the alterations would be subject to the city's review process for alterations to historic resources under Section 17.63.120 of the Corona Municipal code.

The proposed specific plan amendment, SPA2023-0006, was initially reviewed by staff at the Project and Environmental Review Committee on October 05, 2023. The application was deemed complete on March 12, 2024, and subsequently scheduled for the March 25, 2024 Planning and Housing Commission meeting.

CODE REQUIREMENTS

The authority for amendment of Specific Plans is embodied in Section 65453 of the California Government Code, Section 17.53.110 of the Corona Municipal Code, and Section 6.1.7 of the North Main Street Specific Plan. Section 6.1.7 reads in part:

Major amendments to the North Main Street District Specific Plan shall be processed by the City of Corona as follows: Once the proposed amendment has been submitted to the Planning Department, City Staff shall make a determination on the completeness of the amendment package, and then issue public notice of the upcoming public hearings. In addition, City Staff will prepare a staff report on the amendment and forward it to the Planning Commission for review. The Planning Commission, in turn, will forward the amendment with their recommendation(s) to the City Council for a final decision. The City Council may elect to: 1) approve the amendment unconditionally; 2) approve the amendment with conditions; 3) deny the amendment; or 4) send the amendment back to City Staff for further refinement and/or modification.

Furthermore, an amendment to the North Main Street Specific Plan shall only be approved if the findings of approval provided under Section 6.1.7 can be made. The findings for approving this specific plan amendment are provided in the Finding of Approval section of this report.

PROPOSED SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

SPA2023-0006 proposes to amend Section 4.3 of the North Main Street Specific Plan to allow building material sales with indoor and outdoor storage a permitted use in the TC District. Exhibit 3 contains the proposed amendment to Section 4.3. New text is shown in red. Deleted text is shown in a strikethrough format.

Sec. 4.3 PERMITTED USES IN EACH DISTRICT:

The following table sets forth the uses permitted in each district within the North Main Street Specific Plan Area:

TABLE 3—PERMITTED USES									
P=Permitted Use C=Conditional Use Permit MCUP=Minor Conditional Use Permit X=Not Permitted A=Accessory Use S=Special Use T=Temporary Use AHO ¹³ =Affordable Housing Overlay	District¹³								
LAND USE	CR	TR	TC	BP	BPO	I	SFC	UDR	MU
RETAIL COMMERCIAL USES									
Building material sales (indoor storage only)	P	P	X P	X	X	X	X	X	X
Building material sales (outdoor storage only)	X	X	X ¹¹ P	X	X	X	X	X	X

TABLE 3 NOTES:

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¹¹Ganahl Lumber is permitted to continue its current operation as a pre-existing non-conforming use.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

A Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempted from CEQA when it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have significant effects on the environment (Common Sense Exemption). This amendment is solely a text revision to the city's specific plan to allow for building material sales with indoor and outdoor storage as a permitted use in the TC District. The proposed text revision will not result in significant effects on the environment. The Notice of Exemption is attached as Exhibit 6.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid the applicable application fees to cover the cost of the Specific Plan Amendment application.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 10-day public notice was advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News. Additionally, a 10-day public

notice mailer was sent to property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of 150 Depot Drive. As of the preparation of this report, the Planning and Development Department has not received any responses from the public regarding the proposed specific plan amendment.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The TC District is located where Main Street, Grand Boulevard, the BNSF railroad and State Route 91 converge. It was originally envisioned that the parcels within the TC District would be developed with mass transit, carpooling and transit-oriented uses such as offices, retail and restaurants to meet the needs of commuters and transit users. Since the adoption of the North Main Street Specific Plan, the TC parcels on the east side of Main Street have been developed with a Metrolink station, an associated parking lot and parking structure, and a bus transit center. The TC parcels on the west side of Main Street have remained occupied by Ganahl Lumber, an automobile/stereo repair business at 170 Depot Drive, and a vacant commercial building at 150 Depot Drive which was previously occupied by various eating and bar establishments. Ganahl Lumber has continued to operate successfully at its current location and has no plans to relocate. There are also no plans to develop any of the parcels on the west side of Main Street for transit-oriented uses. Using the property for building materials sales and storage, as proposed by the applicant, is practical given its location adjacent to the applicant's existing business, the railroad and freeway. Also, the property sits at a lower elevation than Main Street due to the grade separation over the railroad and has no direct access from Main Street. The site is also tucked behind another building from Grand Boulevard. Its limited visibility from the surrounding streets makes the property ideal for the storage of materials.

The property is surrounded by the BNSF railroad to the north, Main Street to the east, and other commercial developments to the west and south. The proposed use on the property is compatible with the surrounding developments and is an extension of a use that already exists in the area. Therefore, the land use proposed by SPA2023-0004 is not expected to be impactful to the surrounding area.

The Planning and Development Department recommends approval of SPA2023-0004, subject to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit 4 and findings of approval below.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR SPA2023-0006

1. A Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality (CEQA), which states that a project is exempted from CEQA when it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have significant effects on the environment (Common Sense Exemption). This amendment is solely a text revision to the city's specific plan to allow for building material sales with indoor and outdoor storage as a permitted use. The proposed text revision will not result in significant effects on the environment.
2. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.53.090(B)(1)(a) and Section 6.1.7(1) of the North Main Street Specific Plan, the plan or amendment systematically implements and is consistent with the General Plan for the following reason:

- a. SPA2023-006 is consistent with Land Use Policy LU-11.1, which encourages a comprehensive range of commercial uses that serve local neighborhoods and community to meet the needs of Corona residents and businesses. This text revision essentially provides an avenue for future building material retail establishments to expand its storage capacity to meet the need of local and regional customers' demands.*
3. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.53.090(B)(1)(B) and Section 6.1.7(2) of the North Main Street Specific Plan, the plan or amendment provides for the development of a comprehensively planned project that is superior to development otherwise allowed under the conventional zoning classifications for the following reason:
 - a. SPA2023-0006 provides the opportunity for building material retail establishments in the Transit Commercial zone by right. SPA2023-0006 expands the permitted uses list for the Transit Commercial District and will result in a more cohesive development with retail services near transit corridors with minimal impacts.*
4. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.53.090(B)(1)(C) and Section 6.1.7(3) of the North Main Street Specific Plan, the plan or amendment provides for the construction, improvement, or extension of transportation facilities, public utilities and public services required by the long-term needs of the project and/or other area residents, and complements the orderly development of the City beyond the projects' boundaries for the following reason:
 - a. SPA2023-0006 is solely a text amendment to the permitted uses in the North Main Street Specific Plan and does not affect the infrastructure that has been planned, constructed or required as part of the specific plan.*
5. Pursuant to CMC Section 17.53.090(B)(1)(d), the plan provides for the appropriate orientation and relationship between land use within and adjacent to the project for the following reason:
 - a. SPA2023-0006 proposes building material sales as a land use in the TC District that is compatible with the existing commercial uses in the immediate area, as this use currently exists in the TC District, and the other properties zoned TC located on the east side of Main Street are already developed for transit oriented uses, which includes the Metrolink station and parking structure, and bus transfer station.*

PREPARED BY: BRYAN MARTINEZ, ASSISTANT PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: EVA CHOI, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA VANIAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Locational Map
2. North Main Street Land Use Plan
3. Proposed Specific Plan Amendment to Section 4.3
4. Conditions of Approval
5. Applicant's letter dated August 24, 2023
6. Environmental Documentation

Case Planner: Bryan Martinez (951) 736-2268