



Staff Report

File #: 23-0710

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 09/20/2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT:

VARIANCE 2022-0001 TO ALLOW FOR AN INCREASE IN SIGN AREA FOR A PROPOSED OFF-SITE DIRECTIONAL SIGN FOR THE LOS ARCOS PLAZA, LOCATED AT 161-191 N. MCKINLEY STREET (APPLICANT: CPI PROPERTIES, LLC) (NOT AN ADVERTISED PUBLIC HEARING)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve Variance 2022-0001 (V2022-0001), to allow for an increase in the size of an off-site directional sign for the Los Arcos Plaza. Directional signs are limited to a size of six square feet and V2022-0001 will allow a directional sign to have a size of 77 square feet for the Los Arcos Plaza. The site of the Los Arcos Plaza will be visually impaired once construction is completed for the grade separation on McKinley Street. The directional sign is intended to provide visible directions to the commercial plaza from McKinley Street.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Take no action, thereby affirming the Planning and Housing Commission's action granting V2022-0001, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

OR

- b. Set the item for review at a subsequent

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The directional sign will serve as a wayfinding sign to the Los Arcos Plaza commercial center, located at 161-191 N. McKinley Street, on a parcel of land that will be separated from the shopping center. The subject parcel will be created due to the construction of the McKinley Grade Separation project.

The McKinley Grade Separation Project area extends from the 91 Freeway to the north, to Magnolia Avenue to the south. The project will construct a bridge on McKinley Street that will span over the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) line and Sampson Avenue. The Los Arcos Plaza is located on the east side of McKinley Street and the north side of Sampson Avenue, which is immediately in front of the future bridge and a future road (Loop Road) that will connect McKinley Street to Sampson Avenue. Construction of the bridge is currently underway and is expected to be completed by the summer of 2024.

The City is currently in negotiations with CPI Properties to acquire the southwest portion of the Los Arcos Plaza, which is needed to construct Loop Road and a future water detention basin. The water detention basin is located between the bridge and Loop Road and is where the applicant wants to construct their directional sign for the shopping center. Loop Road will eventually become part of the City's public right-of-way and the water detention basin will eventually become City property.

ANALYSIS:

Variance 2022-0001 is an application to vary from Section 17.74.040(A) of the Corona Municipal Code to allow for an increase in sign area for an off-site directional sign for the Los Arcos Plaza. The directional sign is proposed to be located on a future remnant parcel separate from the shopping center that will be created as a result of the construction of the McKinley Grade Separation project. The remnant parcel will not be part of the Los Arcos Plaza and will be owned by the City.

Per Section 17.74.040 (A), a directional sign 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. Directional signs are allowed either off-site or on-site. Per CMC 17.74.040(A), when directional signs are placed on-site the sign area of the directional sign shall not be counted toward the maximum allowed sign area for the property.

Per the applicant's request letter, the variance is being requested in order to construct a 40-foot-high off-site directional sign on a parcel that would be separate from the Los Arcos Plaza and from the businesses located within the center. The proposed directional sign is shown to the west of the Los Arcos Plaza, across Loop Road. The sign is designed to be V-shaped, depicting the Los Arcos Plaza name and directions to the center. The total sign area is 77 square feet per side. The applicant is requesting a variance to exceed the code's maximum allowable directional sign area of 6 square feet by 71 square feet.

There are special circumstances applicable to this project based on the construction of the McKinley Street bridge, including, but not limited to, the acquisition of a portion of the Los Arcos Plaza site adjacent to McKinley Street, the new street right-of-way configuration of Loop Road via McKinley Street, and the construction of a solid concrete support wall for the grade separation bridge adjacent to McKinley Street. Since the center will no longer have street frontage on McKinley Street, the center is expected to be visually impaired by the McKinley Grade Separation Project. Therefore, the increased sign area of the proposed off-site directional sign is appropriate so that the directions to the site can be easily seen by the public.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant paid the application processing fees of \$5,628 to cover the cost of the Variance.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is Class 11 categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15311 (Accessory Structures) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.27 of the City of Corona adopted Local Guidelines for Implementing CEQA. This project is a variance from the Corona Municipal Code (CMC) to allow for minor alterations in the development standards for signage, which will accommodate a new directional sign for the Los Arcos center. The proposed change involves a negligible expansion of use from what was already authorized by the CMC. 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 (Alexander/Vernon) and carried with Chair Woody voting "No", that the Planning and Housing Commission adopt Resolution No. 2611 granting V2022-0001 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 5.

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Locational and zoning map
2. Exhibit 2 - Proposed location of directional sign
3. Exhibit 3 - Sign Plan for V2022-0001
4. Exhibit 4 - Planning and Housing Commission Staff Report
5. Exhibit 5 - Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of August 21, 2023