



Staff Report

File #: 22-0762

PLANING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 09/26/2022

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Planning & Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

CUP2022-0002: Conditional Use Permit application to establish a 1,200-square-foot automated carwash tunnel proposed as part of an electrical vehicle charging station with 52 charging spaces in the C-3 (General Commercial) zone, located at 1335 and 1341 W. Sixth Street. (Applicant: Matt Stowe, ARG Devco, 2060 Placentia Avenue #3, Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of Resolution No. 2593 GRANTING CUP2022-0002, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of Property: 2.42 acres

Existing Zoning: C-3 (General Commercial)

Existing General Plan: GC (General Commercial)

Existing Land Use: Vacant

Proposed Land Use: Electric charging station, market and carwash

Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:

N: R-1-7.2 / Single family residences

E: C-3 / Commercial and office buildings

S: C-3 / Commercial buildings

W: C-3 / Chuck Wagon Restaurant and R-1-7.2 / Vacant residential property

BACKGROUND

Conditional Use Permit 2022-0002 (CUP2022-0002) is for the establishment of a 1,200-square-foot automated carwash tunnel proposed as part of an electrical vehicle (EV) charging station with 52 charging spaces on 2.42 acres located on the north side of Sixth Street, approximately 450 feet west of Sherman Avenue. The EV charging station also includes an 8,000-square-foot market. The

project site is comprised of three parcels zoned C-3 (General Commercial). Per Corona Municipal Code (CMC) § 17.33.010, the zone is intended for *“higher intensity commercial uses that serve the community and subregional needs, with an emphasis on convenient automobile access, while incorporating efficient, safe and attractive on-site pedestrian circulation. The C-3 designation is generally applied to areas appropriate to serve the entire community, including shopping centers, automotive service and repair, theaters and drive-thrus.”* Two of the parcels are long with narrow frontages on Sixth Street. The third parcel is a landlocked parcel located directly behind the adjacent Chuck Wagon restaurant property. In order to develop the site as proposed, the applicant will combine all three parcels into a single lot through the city’s administrative lot line adjustment process.

The C-3 zone requires a conditional use permit (CUP) for carwashes. The review of conditional use permit CUP2022-0002 is limited to the review of the carwash use. The rest of the commercial development, including the EV charging spaces, market, access point, overall parking, landscaping and architecture are being reviewed separately under a precise plan (PP2022-0001) for approval.

The project site is surrounded by commercial properties zoned C-3 to the west, east and south. Located to the north of the project site are single family residential properties zoned R-1-7.2. Located to the northwest of the site is a vacant property zoned R-1-7.2

The project was initially reviewed by the Development Plan Review staff on November 1, 2021 as DPR2021-0020. The applicant formally submitted the precise plan and conditional use permit applications to the City on March 22, 2022, which were reviewed by the Project and Environmental Review Committee on April 14, 2022. The applications were deemed complete by the committee and subsequently scheduled for the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of September 26, 2022.

The applicant conducted community outreach by mailing out an informational flyer to the property owners of properties that are located within a 500-foot radius of the project site. The flyer was mailed out on July 7, 2022. A copy of the flyer is attached as Exhibit 7.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site Plan

The applicant’s proposed site plan is attached as Exhibit 3. The project is designed with the market located on the front portion of the property near Sixth Street, 27 non-EV parking spaces and 40 EV charging spaces located behind the market. 7 employee parking spaces are located behind the EV charging stalls, to the north. The proposed carwash is located at the rear of the site, to the northwest. Next to the carwash are 3 “finishing” spaces and 12 EV charging spaces for vans. Vehicular access to the site will be provided by a single 30-foot-wide driveway located on Sixth Street.

The carwash tunnel is designed with the openings oriented in a west-east direction so that there is no direct interface between the openings and residences to the north. The C-3 zone requires a minimum 20-foot landscape setback along yards that abut residential zones. The project provides

this setback along the north and northwest perimeters, where the site abuts residential zones. The Corona Municipal Code requires carwashes and detailing/finishing areas to be set back a minimum of 25 feet from residential zones. The carwash and finishing spaces provide more than 25 feet of setback from the adjacent residential zones. Additional buffering along both perimeters includes several 24-inch box trees and a new six-foot high block wall, which the applicant will install with the development of the charging station.

Operations

The EV charging station will provide self-serve and valet services. Customers that want valet service can drop off their vehicle in the valet lane adjacent to the market, at the front of the site. Car wash staff will then drive the vehicle to the carwash, and once cleaned, park it to an EV charging space while the customer waits in the market. Customers that do not want valet service can drive directly to a charging space, but will not be able to go directly to the carwash, as carwash and finishing services will only be provided through the valet. Since the staff onsite will be managing the carwash, queuing issues are not expected to occur at the entrance of the carwash. The anticipated hours of operation for the carwash are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Architecture

The carwash tunnel is rectangular in shape and covered by matte black metal panels. The design matches the architecture of the market building, which has clear glass walls separated by a simple posts and beam frame, covered by the same matte black metal panels. The overall look and design of the development is modern and minimalistic. Developments in the C-3 zone are not subject to any particular architectural theme or design guidelines. The conceptual elevation plans are attached as Exhibit 4.

Parking

The Corona Municipal Code requires full-service carwashes to provide a minimum of 10 parking spaces. The market is required to provide 32 parking spaces, which is based on a code requirement of 1 parking space per 250 square feet of building area. Therefore the overall combined parking requirement is 42 parking spaces. The proposed project provides 89 parking spaces on-site, including the 3 finishing stalls.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Section 15332 of the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project because the project qualifies as a Class 32 (Infill Development Projects) categorical exemption under CEQA. The project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning requirements, and would not result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality impacts.

Potential noise impacts associated with the operations of the project were analyzed in the Rove Corona Project Noise Impact Study prepared by MD Acoustics (dated March 15, 2022), an acoustic engineering firm. The purpose of the study was to ensure that the daily operations of the overall development including the carwash and finishing spaces would not impact the nearby existing residents to the north and future residential development to the northwest. The Corona Municipal Code sets a maximum allowable exterior noise level of 55 dBA for stationary noise for residential land

uses between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Based on the noise study, operational noise levels at the residential properties are anticipated to be between 48 dBA to 53 dBA, which are below the code's 55 dBA exterior noise standard. The noise study was conducted based on a worst-case scenario which assumed all project equipment (wash tunnel blower, vacuum, inverters and transformers) would be operating simultaneously. In reality, the noise is expected to be intermittent and cycle on/off depending on customer usage. Any noise from the carwash operations would be reduced by the perimeter block wall that will be constructed along the perimeters of the site adjacent to the residential properties. Furthermore, the Corona Municipal Code's supplemental site development standards for automotive related uses do not permit carwash facilities to use honking horns, intercoms or any other methods involving noise to notify their customers that the vehicle are ready for pickup.

FISCAL IMPACT

The are not fiscal impacts to the City, as the applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 10-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 500-foot radius of the project site, as well as advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted at the project site. As of the preparation of this report, the Planning Division staff has not received any comments from the public in response to the public notice.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed carwash is permitted in the C-3 zone by a conditional use permit and is consistent with the General Commercial General Plan designation. The design of the project, including setbacks, floor area ratio, building height, and landscaping comply with the development standards for the C-3 zone. The project also complies with the city's carwash provisions established under Section 17.72.080 of the Corona Municipal Code. The provisions ensure that the carwash is well designed, drying spaces don't interfere with the project's required parking, a 25-foot setback is provided from the carwash to all adjacent residential zones, and honking horns, intercoms or other amplified noise are not used to notify customers that their car is ready. Additionally, the project provides 86 available parking spaces, plus 3 finishing stalls, for a total of 89 parking spaces, which exceeds the 42 spaces required.

The layout of the site with the carwash placed at the rear property behind the market provides for an attractive development because it screens the carwash activities from street view. The carwash services will be managed by the on-site staff, which eliminates vehicular queuing issues at the entrance of the carwash. The carwash tunnel is oriented in a west-east direction which eliminates having the openings facing directly towards the residences to the north. The orientation of the tunnel, installation of 24-inch box trees and a new six-foot high block wall help to reduce noise impacts to the nearby sensitive land uses while protecting their privacy. Furthermore, potential impacts related to noise were analyzed and recommends no noise mitigation.

The project's traffic impact was also analyzed in a traffic impact analysis. No traffic related impacts were identified, and no mitigation is warranted.

The Planning Division recommends approval of CUP2022-0002, based on the findings listed below and staff's recommended conditions of approval attached as Exhibit 8.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR CUP2022-0002

1. A Notice of Exemption has been prepared pursuant to Section 15332 of the State Guidelines for CEQA because the project qualifies as a Class 32 (Infill Development Projects) categorical exemption under CEQA. The project, which consists of an electric vehicle charging facility, 8,000-square-foot market, 1,200-square-foot automated carwash tunnel, is less than 5 acres in size, is consistent with the General Plan and zoning requirements, has no value as natural habitat, has adequate utilities and public services, and would not result in any significant traffic, noise, air quality or water quality impacts.
2. All the conditions necessary for granting a Conditional Use Permit as set forth in Section 17.92.110 of the Corona Municipal Code do exist in reference to CUP2022-0002 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposal will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience or general welfare, and will be in harmony with the various elements and objectives of the city's General Plan because the project meets or exceeds the development standards for properties that are zoned C-3 and provides adequate access from Sixth Street.*
 - b. *The proposed use would not be detrimental to other and existing and permitted uses in the general area of the project site because the use would be surrounded by other commercial uses that are similar or compatible with the proposed carwash use. For the adjacent sensitive residential land uses, the project is incorporating adequate setbacks, trees, and a six-foot high block perimeter block wall as buffers to mitigate noise and protect the privacy of the residences. The project relates properly to existing and proposed streets and highways as it is designed with access from Sixth Street.*
 - c. *The proposed use as conditioned complies with the development standards of the C-3 zone which allows carwashes by a conditional use permit.*
3. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan for the following reason:
 - a. *The proposed project implements the General Plan's General Commercial designation, which allows a range of commercial uses that serve the local neighborhoods, the community and visitors.*
 - b. *The overall project including the carwash has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.08, which does not exceed the General Plan's FAR limit of 0.5 established for the General Plan designation.*
 - c. *General Plan Policy LU-5.11 states: Require projects to implement appropriate building orientation, setbacks, buffering, privacy and vehicle access as well as mitigate potential impacts associated with noise and lighting in order to be compatible with adjacent land uses. The project is consistent with Policy LU-5.11 by having the carwash tunnel oriented in a manner that does not have the openings of the tunnel facing directly towards the existing residences to the north. The project also provides enhanced setbacks and buffering in the form of trees and a new six-foot high block wall between the project site and residential properties to the north and northwest.*

4. The proposal is consistent with the C-3 zone for the following reasons:
- a. The carwash is permitted in the C-3 zone with the approval of a conditional use permit.*
 - b. The carwash and overall project as designed meets all applicable development standards for the C-3 zone including setbacks, parking, floor area ratio, building height, and landscaping coverage.*

PREPARED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS:

1. Resolution No. 2593
2. Locational and zoning map
3. Site plan
4. Carwash Elevations
5. Applicant's Letter Dated March 8, 2022
6. Applications Operation Overview
7. Applicant's Informational Flyer
8. Conditions of Approval
9. Environmental documentation