



Staff Report

File #: 21-0641

**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: 7/12/2021

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

SPA2021-0001: Specific Plan Amendment 2021-0001 to the El Cerrito Specific Plan (SP91-2) to allow cold storage warehouse operations in Planning Areas 1 and 2 of the Light Industrial Zone generally located at the northwest corner of Temescal Canyon Road and Tom Barnes Street. (Applicant: Latitude Business Park, LLC)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Plan and APPROVAL of SPA2021-0001 to the City Council, based on the findings contained in the staff report and the conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

Planning Areas (PA) 1 and 2 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan (SP91-2) is the project location of the Latitude Business Park. Latitude Business Park covers 74.80 acres in PA 1 and PA 2 located at the northwest corner of Temescal Canyon Road and Tom Barnes Street. The Latitude Business Park is an already approved project that is currently under construction. The Latitude Business Park was previously approved by the city by a precise plan application (PP2019-0001) that reviewed 15 buildings having a total combined building area of 1,074,771 square feet on the approximately 75-acre site. Additionally, a parcel map application (PM 37608) was processed on the property to create 13 lots. An environmental analysis in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was also prepared in conjunction PP2019-0001 and PM 37608 to evaluate environmental conditions and potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the project. The Corona City Council at its meeting on April 1, 2020, adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH# 2020019017) and approved PP2019-0001 and PM 37608 prepared for the Latitude Business Park, as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission at their meeting on February 24, 2020.

The Latitude Business Park Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) did not include an evaluation of cold storage warehouse in the areas of air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation and energy efficiency. A condition of approval was added to PP2019-0001 for the Latitude Business Park that said, *The city will not issue a building permit for the project until an amendment to the El Cerrito Specific Plan is approved to prohibit cold storage warehouse uses in Planning Areas 1 and 2 (Light Industry). If, in the future, an owner of property within PA1 or PA2 desires to have cold storage warehouse uses permitted as an allowed use in PA 1 and PA 2, an amendment to the specific plan would be required along with any additional analysis that may be required under the California Environmental Quality Act.*

Previous Specific Plan Amendment (SPA2020-0001)

Pursuant to the condition of approval for the Latitude Business Park, SP91-2 was amended by SPA2020-0001 to prohibit cold storage warehouse in the LI zone unless a specific plan amendment in addition to an environmental analysis under CEQA is prepared to assess air quality emissions and health risks from business operations and transportation involving Transportation Refrigeration Units. SPA2020-0001 was adopted by the City Council on September 16, 2020, via Ordinance 3320.

The developer of the Latitude Business Park has since started construction on the project site. The project site has been entirely graded and several of the buildings are currently under construction. The developer now has interest from tenants to occupy the buildings with cold storage warehouse operations.

Proposed Specific Plan Amendment (SPA2021-0001)

The developer of the Latitude Business Park is proposing to amend the specific plan to add cold storage warehouse up to a combined floor area of 175,000 square feet between Planning Areas 1 and 2 in the LI zone as a permitted land use, which is in Section 12.11.2 (A) and (B) of SP91-2. The amendment will also remove cold storage warehouse as a prohibited use in Section 12.11.2 (D). This is the reason for SPA2021-0001.

Previous Environmental Analysis

The previous Latitude Business Park MND adopted on April 1, 2020, covered the entire project, which included project construction and project operation. At the time of the preparation of the Latitude Business Park MND, the project site was vacant and undeveloped. The project has since progressed based on project approvals and is currently under construction. The proposed amendment, SPA2021-0001, does not change the site design approved for the project, the total combined building square footage, or the number of buildings. The architectural design of the buildings remains the same in addition to the landscape coverage, parking lot design and circulation access points. The purpose of SPA2021-0001 is to assess the project's operational changes associated with cold storage warehouse, which was not previously analyzed. The MND associated with SPA2021-0001 will therefore focus its discussion on air quality and health risk, transportation, noise, greenhouse gas emissions and energy use and conservation. (Exhibit D)

PROPOSED SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

SPA2021-0001 is an application to amend the El Cerrito Specific Plan (SP91-2) to allow cold storage warehouse operations in the Light Industrial (LI) Zone. The amendment proposes to amend the

permitted uses for PA 1 and PA 2 listed in Section 12.11.2 of SP91-2. PA 1 and PA 2 are both zoned LI and allow for various industrial and manufacturing land uses.

The proposed amendment is shown below in the redline changes to Section 12.11.2 of SP91-2.

12.11.2 Permitted uses and Development Standards.

The LI, Light Industrial District shall be subject to the provisions of CMC Title 17, Chapter 17.44, Industrial Zones- M-1 Zone, and the Community Development Department's Commercial and Industrial Design Guidelines, with the following exceptions:

A. Permitted Uses in PA-1 of the LI District:

The following uses shall be permitted in PA-1 in addition to those uses listed in CMC Title 17, Chapter 17.44.030:...

Cold storage warehouse (up to a combined floor area of 175,000 square feet between Planning Areas 1 and 2) provided that the building includes electric power plugs that will power Transportation Refrigeration Units when parked at the loading docks. [SPA2021-0001].

B. Permitted Uses in PA-2 of the LI District:

The following uses shall be permitted in PA-2, in addition to those uses listed in CMC Title 17, Chapter 17.44.030:...

Cold storage warehouse (up to a combined floor area of 175,000 square feet between Planning Areas 1 and 2) provided that the building includes electric power plugs that will power Transportation Refrigeration Units when parked at the loading docks. [SPA2021-0001].

D. Prohibited Uses.

The following uses are expressly prohibited in the LI District:

Residential uses

Cold storage warehouse: To allow cold storage warehouse in the LI District, a specific plan amendment is required in addition to environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act to assess air quality emissions and health risk from business operations and transportation involving Transport Refrigeration Units.

A copy of the entire sections is provided as Exhibit A.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Per Section 15070 of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 6.02 of the City's Local Guidelines, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project because the Initial Study identified that the project's potentially significant effects to the environment are capable of being mitigated to a point where no significant effects would occur. The updated health risk assessment submitted for the Latitude Business Park resulting from cold storage warehouse operations indicated additional mitigation not previously required in the Latitude Business Park MND was necessary with respect to air quality. The MND prepared for SPA2021-0001 required the following mitigation measure to be implemented into the project:

Mitigation Measure 5-1

The revised project shall install electric power plugs at the warehouses with cold storage that will power Transportation Refrigeration Units (TRU) when docked at the loading docks. TRUs shall also be limited to operate on diesel for only 5 minutes per day while onsite. The electric power plugs shall be shown on the tenant improvement building plans for the warehouses occupied with cold storage equipment.

The additional analysis done for noise, trip generations, greenhouse gases and energy did not result in additional impacts or additional mitigation measures from that previously discussed and required by the Latitude Business Park MND adopted on April 1, 2020. Therefore, based on the project mitigation measure identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration for SPA2021-0001, there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the City, that the project may have a significant or potentially significant effect on the environment. The Mitigation Negative Declaration is recommended for adoption (Exhibit D).

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant paid \$13,823 in application processing fees associated with this request.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 20-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. As of the preparation of this report, staff has received three inquiries from the nearby residents regarding the proposed request and if the proposed request results in physical changes to the already approved project that is under construction.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The project area associated with SPA2021-0001 is already zoned Light Industrial. Industrial and manufacturing land uses involve various types of operations associated with this industry. In addition to the land uses allowed by the El Cerrito Specific Plan for PA 1 and PA 2, the land uses allowed by the Industrial Zones in Chapter 17.44 of the Corona Municipal Code are also allowed for this area. The permitted land uses table in Section 17.44.030 of CMC Chapter 17.44, allows food processing and packaging, warehouse and distribution, truck terminals and wash, packaging businesses, parcel

delivery service, and a host of other uses similar to cold storage warehouse (Exhibit C). Cold storage warehouse is normally used in operations involving food packaging and delivery. Therefore, the request to allow cold storage warehouse in PA 1 and PA 2 of SP-91-2 is compatible with other allowed uses.

The project site is within an urbanized setting and surrounded by existing development. The following describes the surrounding land uses.

North: The project site's north perimeter is adjacent to La Gloria Street/Liberty Avenue. The properties north of the project site are in the unincorporated area of Riverside County, but within the city's sphere of influence. Beyond these streets are single family residences to the northwest; however, a plant nursery and a manufacturer of stone products (such as fountains and other outdoor garden products) are located near the northeast perimeter of the site.

East: Temescal Canyon Road is adjacent to the project site's east perimeter with undeveloped land and an improved storage facility located beyond this street.

South: Tom Barnes Street is adjacent to the project site's south perimeter with The Crossing shopping center located beyond. The shopping center contains about 1.1 million square feet of commercial/retail buildings with associated parking and landscaping.

West: Interstate 15 is adjacent to the project site's west perimeter.

Buffers associated with the project have also been incorporated into the site. For example, topographically, the project site is lower in elevation than the county properties to the north and Interstate 15 to the west. The northerly and westerly perimeters of the project site have slopes at a 2:1 ratio that face the inside of the property and the slopes will be landscaped, including trees. The project site has two entrances for vehicular access located on Tom Barnes Street. No vehicular access is available from Liberty Avenue and La Gloria Street to the north.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR SPA2021-0001

1. An initial study (environmental assessment) has been conducted by the City of Corona to evaluate the potential for adverse environmental impacts. The initial study identifies potentially significant effects on the environment, but:

- a. The project applicant has agreed to revise the project to avoid these significant effects or to mitigate the effects to a point where it is clear that no significant effects would occur, as reflected in the Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit B.*
- b. There is no substantial evidence before the City that the revised project may have a significant effect.*

2. The plan systematically implements and is consistent with the General Plan for the following

reasons:

- a. SPA2021-0001 expands upon the land uses allowed by the specific plan for the Light Industrial zone to promote a range of services and employment opportunities in the city, which aligns with General Plan Goal LU-12 to have the development and maintenance of industrial land uses that provide a wide range of employment opportunities for Corona's residents and that provide sufficient goods, services and revenues to sustain the city's economy.*
 - b. SPA2021-0001 provides support to other industries that rely on products associated with cold storage delivery, which aligns with General Plan Policy LU-12.2 to allow for the development and integration of businesses and services that support and are ancillary to the primary industrial function and employee needs (e.g. production support, financial institutions, business services, restaurant).*
 - c. The project site associated with SPA2021-0001 aligns with General Plan Policy 12.9 to require that heavy truck and vehicular access for industrial land uses be effectively placed and managed to ensure that it is safe and efficient for the present use and that it minimizes noise, odor, vibration, traffic, queuing back onto streets or existing or adjacent properties and other safety impacts on adjoining uses. Truck and vehicular access associated with SPA2021-0001 will be from Tom Barnes Street which was designed to carry commercial deliveries and vehicular access associated with the commercial operation to the south and the industrial land uses anticipated in the LI zone to the north, which is the project site. Additionally, trucks trips associated with the project site are not allowed to exit northbound on Temescal Canyon Road from Tom Barnes Street and are required to use Cajalco Road to access the freeway.*
3. The Plan 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. SPA2021-0001 affects Planning Areas 1 and 2 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan, which is zoned Light Industrial; therefore, cold storage warehouse is limited to these two planning areas of the specific plan.*
4. The Plan 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 project's boundaries for the following reason:
 - a. SPA2021-0001 adds cold storage warehouse at a limited capacity as an allowed use in the LI zone for Planning Areas 1 and 2, which is required to be developed in accordance with the development standards required by the specific plan to ensure the orderly development of the site.*

5. The Plan provides for the appropriate orientation and relationship between land use within and adjacent to the project for the following reason:
- a. SPA2021-0001 would affect property already zoned Light Industrial and would not change the orientation of land uses already established by the specific plan.*
6. SPA2021-0001 is consistent with the findings required under Section 14.5 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan:
- a. The proposed amendment is consistent with the City of Corona General Plan for the following reasons:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 expands upon the land uses allowed by the specific plan for the Light Industrial zone to promote a range of services and employment opportunities in the city, which aligns with General Plan Goal LU-12 to have the development and maintenance of industrial land uses that provide a wide range of employment opportunities for Corona's residents and that provide sufficient goods, services and revenues to sustain the city's economy.*
 - ii. SPA2021-0001 provides support to other industries that rely on products associated with cold storage delivery, which aligns with General Plan Policy LU-12.2 to allow for the development and integration of businesses and services that support and are ancillary to the primary industrial function and employee needs (e.g. production support, financial institutions, business services, restaurant).*
 - iii. The project site associated with SPA2021-0001 aligns with General Plan Policy 12.9 to require that heavy truck and vehicular access for industrial land uses be effectively placed and managed to ensure that it is safe and efficient for the present use and that it minimizes noise, odor, vibration, traffic, queuing back onto streets or existing or adjacent properties and other safety impacts on adjoining uses. Truck and vehicular access associated with SPA2021-0001 will be from Tom Barnes Street which was designed to carry commercial deliveries and vehicular access associated with the commercial operation to the south and the industrial land uses anticipated in the LI zone to the north, which is the project site. Additionally, trucks trips associated with the project site are not allowed to exit northbound on Temescal Canyon Road from Tom Barnes Street and are required to use Cajalco Road to access the freeway.*
 - b. The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of the El Cerrito Specific Plan for the following reason:*
 - i. One objective of the specific plan is to maintain compatibility between land uses within the specific plan. The LI zone for PA1 and PA2 identifies specific land uses*

allowed in these planning areas in addition to the industrial land uses allowed by Chapter 17.44 of the Corona Municipal Code. Cold storage warehouse proposed by SPA2021-0001 is compatible with other industrial land uses allowed by CMC Chapter 17.44, which include food processing and packaging, warehouse and distribution, truck terminals and wash, packaging businesses, and parcel delivery service.

- c. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Preannexation Policy for El Cerrito as set out in Section 2.3 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan for the following reason:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 does not conflict with the Preannexation Policy for El Cerrito as set out in Section 2.3 of the El Cerrito Specific Plan, because the land use amendment does not change the zoning and land uses regarding density, lot sizes and the keeping of animals previously permitted for certain properties under the county's zoning ordinance.*
- d. The proposed amendment provides for adequate circulation to, from and within the El Cerrito area because:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 would adhere to the circulation improvements and access constructed for the area and for Planning Areas 1 and 2.*
- e. The proposal provides public service levels capable of adequately serving the Specific Plan area because:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 does not deviate from the types of land uses intended in the LI zone, which was already considered by the specific plan at the time of its adoption.*
- f. The public and private open space system is neither disrupted nor depleted because:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 does not result in changes to the plan's public or private open space because the amendment affects Planning Areas 1 and 2 of the LI zone.*
- g. The proposed amendment is compatible with surrounding designations, will not create future land use incompatibilities, and provides adequate buffers, because:*
 - i. SPA2021-0001 will operate within the development standards established for the LI zone as adopted by the specific plan.*

PREPARED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Locational and Zoning Map
2. Proposed Amendment
3. Conditions of Approval
4. Copy of Corona Municipal Code Chapter 17.44 Land Use Table.
5. SPA2021-0001 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration.
6. Updated Air Quality Assessment dated June 2, 2021.
7. Updated Operational Health Risk Screening dated June 2, 2021.
8. Trip Generation Assessment dated June 18, 2021
9. Updated Noise Analysis dated June 2, 2021.
10. Updated Greenhouse Gas Emissions dated June 2, 2021.
11. Updated Energy Use and Conservation Update dated June 2, 2021.
12. Applicant's letter dated May 24, 2021.
13. Latitude Business Park MND adopted April 1, 2020 available at
<https://www.coronaca.gov/government/departments-divisions/building/projects>