



Staff Report

File #: 21-0697

**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: 7/12/2021

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

GPA2020-0003: General Plan Amendment 2020-0003 is an application to amend the General Plan land use designation of 17.02 acres from Low Density Residential (3 to 6 dwelling units per acre) to Medium Density Residential (6 to 15 dwelling units per acre) on 8.07 acres and to General Commercial on 8.95 acres located on the southwest side of Foothill Parkway across from the intersection at Chase Drive. (Applicant: GF Investments, Inc.)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Plan and APPROVAL of GPA2020-0003, to the City Council based on the findings contained in the staff report and the conditions of approval, and adopt Resolution No. 2571 granting GPA2020-0003 as part of Cycle 1 of General Plan Amendments for 2021.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of property: 17.02 acres

Existing General Plan: Low Density Residential (LDR, 3 to 6 du/ac)

Proposed General Plan: Medium Density Residential (MDR, 6-15 du/ac) on 8.07 acres and General Commercial (GC) on 8.95 acres

Existing zoning: Agriculture

Proposed zoning: R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) & C-3 (General Commercial)

Existing land use: Vacant

Proposed land use: Residential and Commercial

Surrounding land uses:

S: Plant Nursery

N: Vacant

E: Foothill Parkway with residential beyond

W: Vacant

BACKGROUND

General Plan Amendment 2020-0003 (GPA2020-0003) is part of the Skyline Village mixed use project that includes residential and commercial on 17.02 acres located on Foothill Parkway across from the intersection at Chase Drive. The project site consists of two vacant parcels that are planned to be developed as a mixed-use village concept consisting of 78 residential condominiums on 8.07 acres at the rear of the project site and various retail and service type uses on 8.95 acres located at the front near Foothill Parkway. In addition to GPA2020-0003, the proposed development requires several development related applications to allow the land uses planned for the project. The additional applications being reviewed in conjunction with GPA2020-0003 include:

- **Change of Zone 2020-0002:** CZ2020-0002 proposes to change the zoning on 17.02 acres from Agricultural to C-3 (General Commercial) on 8.95 acres and R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) on 8.07 acres.
- **Tentative Tract Map 37691:** TTM 37691 proposes to subdivide 17.02 acres into two lots for condominium purposes for the commercial and residential land uses planned on the 8.95 acres in the C-3 zone and on the 8.07 acres in the R-3 zone.
- **Precise Plan 2020-0005:** PP2020-0005 is for the review of 25,715 square feet of commercial/retail and food space on 8.95 acres in the C-3 zone.
- **Conditional Use Permit 2020-0001:** CUP2020-0001 is to establish 78 residential condominiums on 8.07 acres in the R-3 zone.

Infrastructure Committee

The applicant initiated a conceptual development proposal on the project site in 2019. The project was initially discussed at the Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on February 6, 2019. The project at that time was entirely commercial on the project site and included a three-story Class A office building, grocery store, farmers market, restaurants, retail and commercial service spaces, and a gas station. The plan also included outdoor space for events. The Committee commented that noise and glare from lighting would need to be addressed should the development move forward and that connectivity to nearby trails from the project site should be maintained. The Committee also encouraged community outreach with the Orchard Glen residents to the south of the project site and with the residents located near Chase Drive across from Foothill Parkway. The Committee was receptive to the conceptual proposal.

The Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on December 2, 2020, was provided an update on the potential development of the project site, which involved changes since the previous meeting. The revised proposal included 78 condominiums with over 27,000 square feet of commercial and retail space plus a food hall and outdoor dining. The Committee expressed general support for the project.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The project site is 17.02 acres and designated Low Density Residential (LDR) on the General Plan land use plan. The LDR allows for residential development having a density range of 3 to 6 dwelling units to the acre (du/ac). The LDR designation is for lower density development that usually includes single family detached residential units. The project site's current zoning of Agricultural is normally for growing food crops or plant nurseries with limited residential. The project is proposing to establish 78 residential condominiums on 8.07 acres, which results in a density of 9.66 du/ac. Therefore, to allow residential at a higher density than the LDR designation, an amendment to the General Plan land use plan is required in addition to a change of zone. The Medium Density Residential (MDR) proposed by the applicant allows a residential density range of 6 to 15 du/ac, which adheres to the density of the project. The change of zone, CZ2020-0002, application proposes to replace the Agricultural zone with a R-3 zone, which allows multiple family residential, including condominiums. This also establishes consistency with the General Plan.

The project also includes retail and service type commercial land uses on 8.95 acres which is not allowed by the LDR designation nor the Agricultural zone. Therefore, to allow the commercial uses proposed for the project, the applicant is proposing to amend the 8.95 acres on the General Plan land use plan to General Commercial (GC). CZ2020-0002 also proposes to replace the Agricultural zone with the C-3 (General Commercial) zone, which establishes consistency with the General Plan.

Site Surroundings

The general surroundings of the project site include Foothill Parkway to the northeast, and other properties designated LDR on the General Plan land use plan with pockets of properties near the site designated Open Space (OS). The properties designated OS are owned by the US Forest Service. An existing single family residential development consisting of 157 houses exist south of the project site. A residential subdivision named Skyline Heights was approved in 2017 and covers 291 acres near and adjacent to the project site. Skyline Heights consists of 292 residential lots and 96 acres of natural open space. Skyline Heights is not yet constructed but its General Plan designation is LDR.

On the other side of Foothill Parkway across from the project site is existing single family residential. The General Plan designation of the properties is LDR.

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 less than significant. Therefore, based on the project mitigation measures identified in the Mitigated Negative Declaration, 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 5).

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees for this project.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 20-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 1000-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 Community Development Department received a response from Mr. Bu Lee who is the owner of the three vacant properties that are landlocked behind the project site to the west and southwest. Mr. Lee voiced his concerns regarding the access road that the applicant is proposing to construct on the project site in order to provide access from Foothill Parkway to Mr. Lee's properties. The access road is located along the southerly perimeter of the project site. The road not only provides access to Mr. Lee's properties, but it also provides access to the abutting nursery to the south and serves as an emergency fire access for the project site. The road width ranges from 12 feet to 28 feet. The easterly portion of the road extending from Foothill Parkway to the commercial parking lot is 28 feet wide. The portion that extends to the nursery is 20 feet wide. From the nursery access point to Mr. Lee's properties the road is 12 feet wide. Mr. Lee stated to staff that he would like the developer to provide him a wider road to accommodate two-way access.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The below table identifies the consistency of GPA2020-0003 to several of the goals and policies in the General Plan.

Corona General Plan Goals and Policies	Project Consistency
Goal LU-7. Residential neighborhoods that contain a diversity of housing and supporting uses to meet the needs of Corona's residents and that are designed to enhance livability and a high quality of life.	The amendment promotes medium density residential housing, which allows housing types that are different from the mostly developed single family homes in the immediate area and thereby provides housing opportunities to Corona's residents.
Policy LU-7.2. Promote the development of innovative forms of housing that increase the diversity and affordability of units to meet the needs of the population, such as mixed-use that integrate housing with commercial and other uses, live/work structures, loft housing, and other similar housing types.	The amendment allows for housing that would meet the needs of certain population and provides opportunity for commercial services to be within walking distance to residential neighborhoods.
Policy LU-7.4 Allow for the integration of land uses within residential neighborhoods that support and are complementary to their primary function as living environments, including but not limited to: schools, parks, trails, community centers, community meeting facilities, and other comparable uses that provide supporting services.	The amendment promotes residential and non-residential land uses to be integrated and provides Corona residents with leisure opportunities in proximity to housing instead of having to travel elsewhere.

Goal LU-9. Development of new residential neighborhoods that complement existing neighborhoods, contain a mix of neighborhood-supportive land uses, exhibit high quality architectural design, and ensure a high level of livability for their residents.	The proposed amendment would allow new residential development and neighborhood supportive land uses, which is required to adhere to adopted development standards and design standards that are intended to promote orderly and high-quality development.
Policy LU-9.3. Encourage the integration of a mix of housing types into new residential neighborhoods, which may include single-family homes, townhomes, row houses, live-work, and multi-family units to the extent the integration is appropriate and complements surrounding land uses.	The proposed amendment provides opportunity for new housing types within an area that is predominately single family and thereby encourages an integration of housing types into the neighborhood.
Goal H-1. Provide and maintain a balance of housing types and corresponding affordability levels to provide for the community's demands for housing within all economic segments of the City.	The proposed amendment provides people within certain income segments an opportunity for housing based on affordability.
Policy H-1.3. Provide sites for residential development so that scarcity of land does not unduly increase the cost or decrease the availability of housing for all segments of the community.	The proposed amendment maintains land within the city that would provide an opportunity for housing and at a higher density than its current density under the General Plan.

Housing Crisis Act of 2019

Senate Bill 330 amended the Housing Accountability Act and became effective January 1, 2020. The Act, pursuant to Government Code Section 66300(i)(1), states *an affected county or an affected city is not prohibited from changing a land use designation or zoning ordinance to a less intensive use if the city or county concurrently changes the development standards, policies, and conditions applicable to other parcels within the jurisdiction to ensure that there is no net loss in residential property.* This section is applicable to the city's action on amending the General Plan land use designation on 8.95 acres from Low Density Residential to General Commercial.

GPA2020-0003 proposes to replace a Low Density Residential designation with a less intensive use by proposing General Commercial in its place, which prohibits residential development. GPA2020-0003 however satisfies the no net loss in residential property by proposing Medium Density Residential in place of the Low Density Residential that exists on 8.09 acres. The Low Density Residential designation allows residential development ranging from 3 to 6 dwelling units to the acre, whereas the Medium Density Residential designation allows residential development ranging from 6 to 15 dwelling units to the acre. Therefore, the loss of residential units experienced on the 8.95 acres is being replaced on another parcel by amending the General Plan from Low Density to Medium Density, which more than doubles the amount of units initially allowed on the property.

FINDINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF GPA2020-0003

1. An initial study (environmental assessment) has been conducted by the City of Corona so as 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 4.*
 - b. There is no substantial evidence before the City that the revised project may have a significant effect.*
2. GPA2020-0003 is in the public interest and would not be detrimental to public health, safety and welfare for the following reason:
 - a. The amendment supports an additional opportunity for housing and neighborhood serving land uses, which is required to adhere to the city's development standards as adopted by the Corona Municipal Code to ensure development is orderly and supported by the necessary infrastructure.*
3. GPA2020-0003 is an internally consistent with the elements of the General Plan, including the goals and policies stated therein for the following reasons:
 - a. The amendment promotes medium density residential housing, which allows housing types that are different from the mostly developed single family homes in the immediate area and thereby provides housing opportunities to Corona's residents. This is consistent with Goal LU-7.*
 - b. The amendment allows for housing that would meet the needs of certain population and provides opportunity for commercial services to be within walking distance to residential neighborhoods. This is consistent with Policy LU-7.2.*
 - c. The amendment promotes residential and non-residential land uses to be integrated and provides Corona residents with leisure opportunities in proximity to housing instead of having to travel elsewhere. This is consistent with Policy LU-7.4.*
 - d. The proposed amendment would allow new residential development and neighborhood supportive land uses, which is required to adhere to adopted development standards and design standards that are intended to promote orderly and high-quality development. This is consistent with Goal LU-9.*
 - e. The proposed amendment provides opportunity for new housing types within an area that is predominately single family and thereby encourages an integration of housing types*

into the neighborhood. This is consistent with Policy LU-9.3

- f. The proposed amendment provides people within certain income segments an opportunity for housing based on affordability. This is consistent with Goal H-1*
- g. The proposed amendment maintains land within the city that would provide an opportunity for housing and at a higher density than its current density under the General Plan. This is consistent with Policy H-1.3.*

PREPARED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Resolution No. 2571
2. Locational and Zoning map
3. General Plan Amendment
4. Conditions of Approval
5. Environmental Documentation