



Staff Report

File #: 21-0700

**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: 7/12/2021

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

PP2020-0005: Precise Plan application is for the review of 25,715 square feet of commercial retail, service and food space on 8.95 acres in the C-3 (General Commercial) zone proposed by change of zone 2020-0002, located on the southwest side of Foothill Parkway at Chase Drive. (Applicant: Chris Bowen, GF Investments, Inc., 110 N. Lincoln Avenue, Suite 202, Corona, CA 92882)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission adopt Resolution No. 2572 GRANTING PP2020-0005 based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of Property: 8.95 acres

Existing Zoning: A (Agricultural)

Proposed Zoning: C-3 (General Commercial)

Existing General Plan: Low Density Residential (3-6 du/ac)

Proposed General Plan: GC (General Commercial)

Existing Land Use: Vacant

Proposed Land Use: Commercial

Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:

N: R-1-7.2 zone (Single Family Residential)/undeveloped land

E: Foothill Parkway with R-1-7.2 and R-1-8.4 zones (Single Family Residential) located beyond

S: Agricultural zone/commercial nursery and Open Space (OS) zone/open space land

W: Agricultural zone/undeveloped land

BACKGROUND

Site History

The project site is part of the Skyline Village mixed-use project, which is comprised of two undeveloped parcels totaling 17.02 acres, which are located on the southwest side of Foothill Parkway at Chase Drive. The parcels were annexed into the City of Corona in 2018 with the Skyline Heights annexation and were given an A (Agricultural) zoning and a Low Density Residential (LDR) general plan designation. The Agricultural zone permits a variety of agricultural uses, and residential uses when ancillary to a primary agricultural use. The LDR general plan designation permits residential development to occur at a density ranging from 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

The project site is currently undeveloped and has an approximately 130-foot-high manufactured slope with terrace drains bordering Foothill Parkway to the east. The site is bordered by undeveloped land to the north, west, and south. A commercial nursery borders the site to the southwest and currently has vehicular access through the project site from Foothill Parkway. The Skyline Heights residential subdivision, TTM 36544, is located generally west of the project site.

Project Background

GF Investments is proposing to develop the project site for commercial purposes in conjunction with a residential condominium plan to the west on the adjoining parcel. The residential component consists of 78 attached condominium units on 8.07 acres. This plan is being reviewed separately by CUP2020-0001. The commercial component, which is the reason for PP2020-0005, consists of 25,715 square feet of commercial retail, service and food space on 8.95 acres.

The proposed project is associated with a General Plan Amendment (GPA2020-0003), Change of Zone (CZ2020-0002), and a Tentative Tract Map (TTM 36791). The General Plan Amendment and Change of Zone establish a general plan designation and zoning appropriate for the project's proposed residential and commercial land uses. The General Plan Amendment changes the site's existing General Plan designation from Low Density Residential (LDR, 3-6 du/ac) to Medium Density Residential (MDR, 6-15 du/ac) on 8.07 acres, and to General Commercial on 8.95 acres. The Change of Zone corresponds to the changes by GPA2020-0003 and proposes to change the site's existing A (Agricultural) zone to R-3 (Multiple Family Residential) on 8.07 acres, and C-3 (General Commercial) on 8.95 acres. TTM 36791 proposes to create two lots on the site to allow for each area of development to be contained within its own lot.

The project was initially reviewed by city staff as DPR2020-0003 and DPR2020-0008 in February and July 2020. The applicant formally submitted all five applications on October 2, 2020, including the tentative tract map. The applications were reviewed by staff at the Project and Environmental Review Committee meeting on October 22, 2020 and determined to be incomplete. The applicant subsequently submitted the revised application materials and pending technical studies, with the applications being deemed complete on June 15, 2021, at which time the project was scheduled for a July 12, 2021 Planning and Housing Commission review.

Code Requirements

The C-3 zone requires precise plan (PP) review for new commercial developments, which is subject to the approval of the Planning and Housing Commission. The commercial project proposed by PP2020-0005 is subject to the property development standards established in Chapter 17.33 of the Corona Municipal Code (CMC).

Infrastructure Committee and Community Meetings

The project was presented to the City Infrastructure Committee meeting on February 6, 2019. At that time, the project was only a design concept, and showed commercial uses across the entire 17 acres site. The uses included a three-story Class A office building, grocery store, farmers market, restaurants, retail and commercial service space, and a gas station. The plan also included outdoor space for events. Issues that were discussed at the meeting included noise emitting from the outdoor events, glare from the gas station signage, and establishing a connectivity from the project site to nearby trails. The Committee encouraged community outreach to be conducted with the Orchard Glen residences to the south of the project site and with the residences located in the Chase Drive area to the east. Overall, the Committee was receptive to the concept, and the project received support from the members of the public who attended the meeting.

The currently proposed commercial area does not include the original concept's gas station. As a result, the community concerns with the gas station and glare from the illumination of the station's pylon signs is moot. All project identification signs as currently proposed will not produce glare because they are backlit. The conceptual signage plan is attached as Exhibit 3.J.

With respect to trail connectivity, the project is maintaining an existing trail access that is located along the northerly perimeter of the project site. TTM 36791 proposes to establish an easement over the portion of the trail that is within the project site for public use.

On November 11, 2020 the applicant conducted a community informational meeting through Zoom. The applicant sent flyers to properties located within a 1,000-foot radius from the project site. Attached as Exhibit 3.L is a copy of the flyer. Prior to this meeting, the applicant reached out to the public on social media websites, including Facebook and various trail websites, to obtain feedback on the project's design and uses. The applicant had also reached out to local businesses and business leaders for their input.

On December 2, 2020, the Infrastructure Committee was provided an update on changes that were made to the project by the applicant, including revisions to include 78 condominiums, and over 27,000 square feet of commercial and retail use, including a food hall and outdoor dining. The architecture for the commercial buildings had also been revised to reflect a style the applicant references as "mammoth rustic woods". The Committee expressed general support for the concept, while noting the importance of tying the project's architecture in with the mining history of the surrounding area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Site Plan

The site plan for the overall development is attached as Exhibit 3.A. The commercial center is on the eastern half, occupying 8.95 acres. The primary access to the commercial center is a private street that extends from Foothill Parkway and bisects the commercial site, creating two pads. The street leads to the parking lots adjacent to each development pad.

The design concept for the commercial center features several buildings clustered on the northerly pad and a large two-story building on the southerly pad. The northerly pad is a retail plaza with indoor/outdoor space. The plaza features a standalone coffee shop, a retail shop, a multi-tenant building for food/restaurant and retail uses, outdoor dining, lawn seating, and a mini dog park. The southerly pad will be developed for a two-story foodhall with 19,915 square feet of commercial space for more formal uses, including restaurants, offices, produce, retail, bar, and salon uses. A beer garden and outdoor dining are also proposed on the southerly pad. The project proposes a pedestrian bridge over the project's access road to allow for patrons to safely cross the roadway between the two pads. The bridge will be constructed of steel and is 12 feet wide by 160 feet long.

The commercial pads are approximately 30 to 42 feet higher than the adjacent grade along Foothill Parkway, which will allow patrons elevated views of the city. The northerly pad is supported by a proposed 30-foot-high retaining wall along the pad's northerly perimeter. The southerly pad sits above an existing 2:1 slope.

A trash enclosure is provided on each of the commercial pads. The design of the trash enclosures is required to meet the city's standards in terms of size and allowable construction materials. The enclosures are required to be topped with a cover, and the gaps between the enclosure walls and the cover need to be fully enclosed to prevent unwanted access or dumping. The trash enclosures will be reviewed for compliance with all applicable code requirements during the plan check process.

The layout of the buildings complies with the applicable building setback requirements prescribed by the CMC for the C-3 zone. The General Commercial general plan designation that is proposed for the commercial lot has a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit of 0.5. Based on the size of the commercial lot (8.95 acres), the lot is allowed up to 194,931 square feet of floor area. The commercial center's total floor area is 25,715 square feet, which is below the site's FAR limit.

Architecture and Floor Plan

The architecture for the commercial center has a blend of rustic and contemporary designs. The exterior materials include wood, timber, metal panels, plaster, steel, and stone. The colors are earth-toned. The architecture is consistent with the architecture proposed for the residential buildings. The following provides more detailed information regarding the individual buildings:

The coffee shop (Bldg. A1) and bike shop (Bldg. A2) are two stories and incorporate metal shipping containers into the design of the structures. The coffee shop is 35 feet in height and has indoor and outdoor seating on both floors. The bike shop is 40 feet in height and has retail on the first floor and balcony seating on the second floor. The bike shop includes a tower element with LED screens. The project is conditioned to install automatic dimmers for the LED screens for the nighttime hours. The project also has several trees that are proposed within the plaza that would help to screen glare from the LED screens from Foothill Parkway. The food/restaurant/retail building (Bldg A3) is a multi-tenant

building. The two-story foodhall (Bldg B) is 38 feet in height and has tenant space on the first floor for restaurants, produce, retail, bar, and deli uses. The second floor has tenant space for offices and hair/nail salons. Located on the north side of the foodhall is a beer garden. On the east side is an outdoor dining court that overlooks Foothill Parkway.

The conceptual architectural and floor plans for the buildings are attached as Exhibits 3.D through 3.G. Artistic renderings of the commercial center are attached as Exhibit 3.H.

Parking

Corona Municipal Code Chapter 17.76 (Off-Street Parking) establishes the parking requirements for commercial developments, which is based on floor area and use. The commercial center's overall parking requirement is 193 parking spaces. The commercial center provides two parking lots that are capable of providing the required parking spaces. The project's parking is summarized in the table below.

Skyline Village Commercial Parking

| Building | Use | Floor Area | Required Parking Ratio | Required Parking |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A1 | Coffee shop | 1,568 | 1/100 | 16 |
| A2 | Retail shops/bike shop | 1,837 | 1/250 | 8 |
| A3 | Food/Restaurant | 1,195 | 1/100 | 12 |
| A3 | Retail shops | 1,200 | 1/250 | 5 |
| B/B1 | Foodhall - Food/Beer garden | 7,465 | 1/100 | 74 |
| B | Foodhall - Deli (take-out only) | 1,000 | 1/250 | 4 |
| B | Foodhall - Retail/Produce | 1,250 | 1/250 | 5 |
| B | Foodhall - Retail/Merchandise | 1,000 | 1/250 | 4 |
| B | Foodhall - Day Spa/Nail Salon | 4,700 | 1/100 | 47 |
| B | Foodhall - Office | 4,500 | 1/250 | 18 |
| | | TOTAL | REQUIRED | 193 |
| | | TOTAL | PROVIDED | 193 |

Landscaping Plan

The preliminary landscape plan for the project is attached as Exhibit 3.I. The plan consists of climate adaptive plant materials that require low to medium water usage. The plant materials were chosen for multiple purposes, including their ability to provide site wide coverage, slope stabilization, parking lot shade, and enhancements to the project entries. Maintenance and longevity of the plant materials were taken into consideration. All landscape areas will conform to current City of Corona landscape design guidelines for commercial developments and the project's Fuel Modification Plan, which has been reviewed by the Fire Department.

The project site contains a USGS blueline stream along the northern perimeter of the site. The blueline stream was identified by the project's biological analysis prepared by Searl Biological

Services (dated Dec. 17, 2020) as an ephemeral wash that receives and carries flow during storm events. The stream is considered "jurisdictional", as such the applicant would need to obtain certain permits from the Army Corp of Engineers and California Department of Fish & Wildlife if development encroaches or disturbs the area of the blueline stream. The project proposes complete avoidance of the stream; therefore, no jurisdictional permits are required. However, the project is proposing to create 2:1 slopes along the southern edge of the blueline stream. In order to avoid indirect impacts to the blueline stream, the project's Mitigated Negative Declaration requires that temporary fencing be installed and maintained between the project development area and the blueline stream area during construction. In addition, the landscaping for the 2:1 slopes and all areas adjacent to the stream shall avoid using certain invasive plant species. The list of plant species to avoid is identified under Appendix E of the biological analysis. The slopes and areas adjacent to the stream shall only be landscaped with native plant species. City staff will coordinate with the applicant's biological consultant to ensure that these areas are appropriately landscaped.

Signage

Two project entry monument signs are proposed at the northwest and southwest corners of the project entrance on Foothill Parkway and Chase Drive. The monument signs are 4 feet in height, and has a cut-out of corten steel to identify the project name "Skyline Village" and community logo. A project identification sign is proposed on the retaining wall facing Foothill Parkway and on the bridge. The sign is 5 feet by 30 feet, and includes corten steel letters. All signs will be backlit. The signs, including building signage, are required to comply with development standards established by the Corona Municipal Code for the C-3 zone. The applicant's conceptual signage proposal is attached as Exhibit 3.J.

Access and Public Improvements

The project site will have vehicular access from Foothill Parkway via a new 54-foot-wide private street that will be shared by both lots to be created by TTM 37691. The street bisects the commercial lot and terminates at the residential lot. The street is aligned with Chase Drive to create a four-way signalized intersection. The improvements for the street include 8-foot-wide raised center median with one westbound lane, and one eastbound lane, curb and gutter, and a 5-foot wide sidewalk on both sides of the road.

Foothill Parkway is classified as a secondary 4-lane street per the General Plan. The section of Foothill Parkway adjacent to the project site has an overall right-of-way width ranging from 112 to 113 feet and is improved with 78 feet of paved roadway width. The southwesterly side of the street adjacent to the site is improved with landscape parkway and a 10-foot-wide asphalt concrete sidewalk. The section of Foothill Parkway from the northerly limits of the project site to Chase Drive is required to be widened an additional two (2) feet to accommodate a new dedicated right-turn lane, which will allow for right turns from Foothill Parkway into the project entrance.

A 28-foot-wide emergency access road is proposed at the southeasterly corner of the site to provide a second point of access for the project. The road also provides access to the neighboring properties to the west and southwest, which are landlocked behind the project site. This secondary entrance road is off-site and located within an adjacent city-owned property that fronts Foothill Parkway. A portion of the entrance also encroaches into open space property that is maintained by the HOA of

the Orchard Glen residential community located south of the project site. The recommended Conditions of Approval require the applicant to acquire the city-owned property or obtain an easement from the city for the off-site entrance, and to obtain an easement from the Orchard Glen HOA for the encroachment into their open space area.

Retaining Walls and Trail Access

To create level buildable pads the project requires the construction of two large geogrid reinforced retaining walls along the north and south perimeters of the site. The north wall extends from Foothill Parkway to the westerly limits of the project site, and ranges from approximately four (4) feet to thirty (30) feet in height. The south wall is located mostly within the residential lot, and ranges from approximately three (3) to twenty (20) feet in height. The exterior facade of the retaining walls is an earth-colored, segmented block that allows for vines to be planted into the wall to soften its appearance (Exhibit 3.K). The conditions of approval require the wall to have a textured finish (e.g. splitface block) and be treated with an anti-graffiti coat.

A 2:1 slope and a 12-foot-wide paved maintenance road are proposed at the base of the north retaining wall, from Foothill Parkway to the project's west boundary line. The maintenance road provides access to the slopes and retaining wall for maintenance by the project's homeowners association and/or property owners association. The applicant is proposing to allow the road to be used as public trail access, and will be establishing through the tentative tract map process a public trail access easement. This trail access easement is depicted as Easement F on the preliminary precise grade plan (Exhibit 3.C).

The project will provide a publicly accessible sidewalk along the exterior side of the gated residential site, which will connect the trail/maintenance road to the commercial center. The sidewalk is intended to provide trail users a more direct and shorter route between the trail and the proposed commercial uses.

The retaining walls, slopes, easements and maintenance road are shown on the preliminary grading plan, in Exhibit 3.C.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

An Initial Study (IS) prepared for the project identified that the project could result in potentially significant impacts to the environment in the areas of geology, biological resources, hazardous materials, cultural resources, and tribal cultural resources. However, the IS identified that all of the project's potentially significant impacts are capable of being mitigated to less than significant. Therefore, per Section 15070 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and Section 6.02 of the City's Local Guidelines, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the project.

Based on the measures in the project's MND, there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the City, that the project would have a significant or potentially significant effect on the environment. The Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended for adoption (Exhibit 4).

As stated previously, the project contains a USGS blueline stream along the northern perimeter of

the site. The blueline stream is considered “jurisdictional”, and subject to certain permits from the Army Corp of Engineers and California Department of Fish & Wildlife if development encroaches into or disturbs the blueline stream. The design of the project avoids the blueline stream; therefore, no jurisdictional permits are required.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant has paid the applicable application processing fees.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 20-day public notice was mailed to all property owners within a 1,000-foot radius of the project site, as well as advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted at the project site. It should be noted that the city’s public noticing radius requirement is 500 feet. However, the applicant elected to increase the noticing radius to a conservative 1,000 feet in order to include the nearest residential properties that are located beyond Foothill Parkway to the east of the project site, and in the Orchard Glen community located south of 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 the applicant is proposing to construct on the project site, to provide access from Foothill Parkway to Mr. Lee’s properties. As discussed in the EASEMENT section of the TTM 36791 staff report, the road is located along the southerly perimeter of the project site and provides access to Mr. Lee’s properties, to the adjacent nursery to the south, and serves as an emergency road for the project site. The proposed 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 commercial project is capable of complying with the applicable codes and requirements in the Corona Municipal Code, including building setbacks, parking, and landscaping. The buildings do not exceed the 40-foot height limit allowed for commercial buildings in the C-3 zone. The project complies with the General Plan’s floor area ratio limit for the General Commercial (GC) designation. The commercial center’s architecture is stylish and complements the surrounding area.

The current view of the site from Foothill Parkway is an engineered hillside. The commercial center maintains slopes along Foothill Parkway, and the slopes will continue to be the dominant visual feature of the site. The slopes will be landscaped to enhance the view of the site from Foothill Parkway.

The project site is separated from existing residential neighborhoods by streets, hillsides, and open space. Therefore, the commercial activity that would come from the project site is not expected to create any visual, lighting, or noise impacts to the nearby residential neighborhoods. The project was also analyzed for potential environmental impacts, and all potential impacts identified will be

mitigated.

The project supports trail use by providing public trail access on the property. The project is consistent with multiple General Plan goals and policies, which are outlined in the findings below.

The Planning Division recommends approval of PP2020-0005 based on the following findings of approval and conditions of approval attached in Exhibit 3.B.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR PP2020-0005

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 3.B.*
 - b. There is no substantial evidence before the City that the revised project may have a significant effect.*
2. All the conditions necessary to granting a Precise Plan as set forth in Section 17.91.070 do exist in reference to PP2020-0005 for the following reasons:
 - a. The proposal is consistent with the General Commercial land use designation of the General Plan because this land use permits commercial uses.*
 - b. The proposal complies with the C-3 zone because the proposed commercial center is permitted in the C-3 zone and the site plan is capable of meeting all applicable property development standards and codes requirements that are established in the Corona Municipal Code for the C-3 zone.*
 - c. The proposal has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and all applicable requirements and procedures of the act have been followed. As justified in Finding # 1, a Mitigated Negative Declaration is recommended for adoption as the Initial Study identifies potentially significant effects on the environment, but 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.*
 - d. The site is of a sufficient size and configuration to accommodate the design and scale of the proposed development, including buildings and elevations, landscaping, parking and other physical features of the proposal, as demonstrated in Exhibit 3.A of this report.*

- e. *The design, scale and layout of the proposed development will not unreasonably interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments, will not create traffic or pedestrian hazards, and will not otherwise have a negative impact on the aesthetics, health, safety or welfare of neighboring uses because the proposal complies with the City's development standards under the Corona Municipal Code. Furthermore, the project will construct the necessary public improvements including a new dedicated right-turn lane on Foothill Parkway to the project site.*
- f. *The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood because it utilizes building materials that are commonly used for residential homes, will enhance the visual character of the neighborhood by improving vacant undeveloped property, and will provide for harmonious, orderly and attractive development of the site by complying with all necessary codes and requirements under the Corona Municipal Code.*
- g. *The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants and visiting public as well as its neighbors through good aesthetic use of materials, texture, and color that is aesthetically appealing and will retain a reasonably adequate level of maintenance, as demonstrated by the project plans attached herein.*

3. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan for the following reasons:

- a. *The project is a commercial retail and food center, which is permitted under the General Commercial general plan designation.*
- b. *As demonstrated by the project plans attached to this report, the project supports Land Use Policy LU-5.9, which requires the project to adhere to the design and development guidelines established by the General Plan and Corona Municipal Code.*
- c. *The project is consistent with Land Use Policy LU-7.3, which encourages 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 project is part of a mixed-use development that integrates two different land uses (residential and commercial) that support each other while also supporting trail activity.*
- d. *The project is consistent with Parks and Recreation Policies PR-6.2 and PR-6.3, by maintaining trail access into the Cleveland National Forest while avoiding impacts to natural habitats.*
- e. *The proposal is required to provide adequate water storage to meet fire flow requirements, which complies with Infrastructure and Utilities Policies 1.5 and 1.9.*

4. The proposal is consistent with the C-3 zone for the following reasons:

- a. The proposal complies with the C-3 zone because the proposed commercial center is permitted in the C-3 zone, and the site plan is capable of meeting all applicable property development standards and codes requirements that are established in the Corona Municipal Code for the C-3 zone.*

PREPARED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: JAY EASTMAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Resolution No. 2572
2. Locational and Zoning Map
- 3.A Site plan
- 3.B Conditions of Approval
- 3.C Preliminary Grading Plan
- 3.D Coffee Shop Plans (Bldg A1)
- 3.E Retail/Bike Building Plans (Bldg A2)
- 3.F Multi-tenant Building Plans (Bldg A3)
- 3.G Foodhall Plans (Bldg B)
- 3.H Renderings
- 3.I Landscaping and Fences/Walls
- 3.J Signage
- 3.K Retaining Wall Details
- 3.L Neighborhood Information Meeting Flyer
- 3.M Applicant's letter, dated April 9, 2021
4. Environmental documentation

Case Planner: Sandra Yang (951) 736-2262