



Legislation Text

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**PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

DATE: 8/26/2019

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

GPA2019-0001: An application to amend the General Plan designation of four properties totaling approximately 0.50 acres from Low Density Residential (LDR) to Office Professional (OP) and establish the Office Professional and Mixed Use Downtown (MUD) designation on approximately 0.56 acres of public rights-of-way to facilitate the development of a medical office park on a total of 3.48 acres located on the south side of West Sixth Street, between Sheridan Street and Belle Avenue. (Applicant: Richard, Boureston Development, 650 Town Center Drive, Suite 890, Costa Mesa, CA 92626)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Mitigation Monitoring Plan and **APPROVAL of GPA2019-0001**, based on the findings contained in the staff report, and adopt Resolution No. 2538 granting GPA2019-0001 as part of Cycle I of General Plan Amendments for 2019.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of property: 1.06 acres

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

Proposed General Plan: OP (Office Professional) and MUD (Mixed Use Downtown)

Specific Plan: Downtown Corona Revitalization Specific Plan (SP98-01)

Existing Zoning: SF (Single Family District) on 0.50 acres
Public rights-of-way on 0.56 acres

Proposed Zoning: D (Downtown District)

Existing Land Use: Vacant and parking lot for the Corona Public Library

Proposed Land Use: Medical office buildings

Surrounding Land Uses / Zoning:

S: Vacant land and parking lot / D and CS Districts of SP98-01

N: Vacant land and parking lot / D and CS Districts of SP98-01

E: Corona Public Library / CS District of SP98-01

W: Single-family residences / TC (Transitional Commercial District) of SP98-01

BACKGROUND

The project site is comprised of two blocks containing 13 parcels located on the south side of West 6th Street between Sheridan Street and Belle Avenue. The two blocks are physically separated by 7th Street which will be vacated adjacent to the project site so that the land area can be included as part of the project's on-site improvements. Two alleys which are located between the parcels will also be vacated adjacent to the project site and included within the project boundary. In total, the project site is 3.48 acres which will be developed with two medical office buildings totaling 58,900 square feet. The development also includes on-site parking to serve the buildings and on-street parking located on Belle Avenue adjacent to the project site.

The project site consists of 12 vacant parcels and one developed parcel containing a parking lot for the Corona Public Library which is located east of the project site. The parking lot and the adjacent vacant property (315 W. 7th Street) located directly west of the parking lot are currently under the ownership of the City of Corona. The remaining 11 vacant parcels are under the ownership of the Corona Housing Authority.

On November 7, 2018, the city entered into a Development and Disposition Agreement with the applicant, Boureston Companies, to allow the applicant to acquire the 11 properties owned by the Corona Housing Authority. The applicant is also acquiring the two city-owned properties. All 13 properties are currently under escrow and, per the terms of the Agreement, the sale of the properties will be finalized once the applicant has obtained project approval.

The Agreement establishes certain milestones for the construction of the project which will be phased. Phase 1 will be the construction of Building A which is located closest to Sixth Street and Phase 2 will be the construction of Building B which is located on the southern portion of the project site closest to the Corona Regional Medical Center. The Agreement requires the applicant to complete construction of the building associated with Phase 1 and all necessary related off-site public improvements within 36 months after the close of escrow. The building associated with Phase 2 is required to be completed within 36 months of the first certificate of occupancy issued for the building in Phase 1. However, the Agreement does not prevent the applicant from constructing both buildings at the same time under Phase 1. Building A is intended to be occupied by City of Hope, a cancer treatment center. Building B will be a medical office building occupied by multiple tenants specializing in specific medical practices.

To make up for the loss of the 49 parking spaces within the library's off-site parking lot, the city will be entering into a shared parking agreement with the applicant to allow library patrons to utilize the new on-street parking spaces proposed on Belle Avenue which will have 54 parking spaces. Library patrons will be able to utilize the parking spaces during the evenings and weekends when the library is heavily trafficked. This agreement was discussed at the Infrastructure Committee meeting on July 31, 2017. The Committee was receptive to the proposed on-street parking as it would provide parking that is much needed, and the spaces are also at a safe walking distance to the library. The Committee also discussed the appearance of the buildings from Sixth Street with then-Council Member Jason Scott directing that if the rear elevations of the buildings face Sixth Street they should receive as much architectural detail along the backs as the fronts.

The 13 parcels have varied General Plan land use designations and zoning under the Downtown

Corona Revitalization Specific Plan. Due to this, the project requires a General Plan Amendment (GPA2019-0001) which would bring the parcels under two General Plan designations and a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA2019-0001) which would bring the parcels into one consistent zoning. Additionally, the project requires a parcel map (PM 37565) to merge the 13 lots into two lots and precise plan (PP2019-0003) to review the site plan and architecture of the project.

The project was initially reviewed by staff through the city's Development Plan Review (DPR) process in November 2018. The applicant officially submitted the GPA, SPA, parcel map, and precise plan applications to the city on March 15, 2019. The applicant was issued an application incomplete letter due to missing or incomplete application items. The applicant over time submitted the required application materials to staff with the applications finally considered complete on July 23, 2019, and cleared for public hearing before the Planning and Housing Commission on August 26, 2019.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The proposed General Plan Amendment will enable the development of two medical office buildings on the project site. As indicated, the 13 parcels have varied land use designations under the General Plan map. As shown in Exhibit C, the six properties located on the north block (north side of 7th Street) between Sheridan Street and Belle Avenue are currently designated as Mixed Use Downtown (MUD). The four properties located on the south block on the south side of 7th Street between Sheridan Street and the alley are currently designated as Low Density Residential (LDR, 3-6 du/ac). This area is 0.50 acres. The three properties located east between the alley and Belle Avenue are designated as Office Professional (OP). The project is a medical office use which is permitted under the MUD and OP designations; however, the use is not permitted under the LDR designation. Therefore, the applicant is seeking to change the General Plan designation of the four LDR-designated properties on the south block to OP in order to allow the area to be developed in conjunction with the other parcels. The OP designation would be consistent with the existing OP properties located on the same block.

For the segment of 7th Street and the two alleys that will be vacated, which is 0.56 acres, a General Plan designation needs to be established over these public rights-of-way in order to provide consistency with the land use designation being established on the adjoining parcels. The MUD designation will be established over the alley located on the north block to be consistent with the existing MUD designation on this block. The OP designation will be established over 7th Street and the alley located on the south block to be consistent with the OP designation on this block. Exhibit A illustrates the proposed General Plan designations that will be established across the project site.

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 E).

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant paid \$6,331.00 in application processing fees for the General Plan Amendment

application.

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 and posted at the project site. As of the preparation of this report, staff has received calls from two property owners of two residential properties located on Sheridan Street south of Eighth Street. The property owners requested clarification on the location and use of the project with one property owner expressing support for having the City of Hope in the Corona.

Staff also received a letter of protest from Mr. John Vazirian who owns the automobile dealership and three residential properties located to the west of the project site. The letter is attached in Exhibit F. Mr. Vazirian's concern is related directly to the design of the project and is not related to the General Plan amendment but is being included with this staff report for informational purposes. Mr. Vazirian indicates that Building A would visually obstruct his business and future commercial development on his properties from Sixth Street. His letter includes three site plans depicting alternative layouts of Building A that would reduce visual impacts to his properties. Staff has spoken to Mr. Vazirian and informed him that his properties including the residential properties are zoned Transitional Commercial which requires only an 8-foot front yard setback. Therefore, any future commercial development proposed on his properties could be built as close as 8 feet from the Sixth Street right-of-way line. This setback is closer to Sixth Street than the setback that is being proposed for Building A which is designed to have a 10-foot setback from Sixth Street with the majority of the building being set back 20 feet from Sixth Street. Also, the medical office buildings could be built up to a height of 60 feet which is allowed in the Downtown District but the applicant has chosen to design them as two-story buildings with a height of approximately 40 feet. It is also worth mentioning that this segment of 6th Street is intended for commercial development and the city's development standards do not require the preservation or protection of views along the street from certain distances. The development standards are adopted by the city to provide equal application of the standards to all property owners that develop their property in accordance with the zoning.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed amendment is intended to facilitate the development of a medical office park on 3.48 acres. The project site is surrounded by commercial, medical, residential, and quasi-public type uses which are compatible with the proposed land use. While there are residences located to the west of the project site, they are separated from the project site by Sheridan Street which provides a clean transition between the two areas. Also, it is not uncommon for residential development to be located in the vicinity of medical offices and hospitals, especially in historic downtown areas.

The amendment is consistent with the land use changes proposed by the accompanying specific plan amendment SPA2019-0001. Finally, development of the project site through the General Plan amendment fulfills Policy I.B.9 of the Downtown Corona Revitalization Specific Plan which is to establish an area in the southwest quadrant of the Grand Boulevard Circle that facilitates medical/professional offices. Therefore, GPA2019-0001 is recommended for approval.

FINDINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF GPA2019-0001

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.*
 - b. *There is no substantial evidence before the City that the revised project may have a significant effect.*
2. GPA2019-0001 is internally consistent with the elements of the General Plan, including the goals and policies stated therein for the following reasons:
 - a. *The amendment is consistent with Land Use Policies 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 in that it supports the diverse needs of Corona's residents by accommodating uses that help sustain Corona as a cohesive, distinct, and self-sustaining community, and minimize the need for Corona's residents to travel to surrounding communities for services and employment.*
 - b. *The amendment is consistent with Growth and Development Policy 1.4.3 as it would allow for the development of vacant lands within the City on the periphery of existing development that complements the scale and pattern of existing uses, protects development and population from natural hazards, and where it is logical and feasible to extend infrastructure improvements.*
 - c. *The amendment is consistent with Downtown Corona Policy 1.17.6 as the project is designed with a centralized parking lot that can be shared by multiple tenants within the two medical office buildings.*
 - d. *The amendment is consistent with Downtown Corona Policy 1.17.7 in that it would allow for the development of a medical office park that is attractive in architectural design and landscaping and creates an image conducive to economic revitalization in accordance with the Downtown Corona Revitalization Specific Plan.*
 - e. *The amendment is consistent with Downtown Corona Policy 1.17.9 because it promotes the consolidation of individual lots for the development of cohesive and well-designed commercial and mixed-use projects that maintain the area's character of low-rise and pedestrian-oriented buildings with distinctive storefronts.*

PREPARED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Locational and Zoning Map
2. Resolution No. 2538
3. Exhibit A - Propose General Plan Amendment.
4. Exhibit B - Aerial Map.
5. Exhibit C - Existing General Plan Designation.
6. Exhibit D - Site Plan.
7. Exhibit E - Environmental Documentation.
8. Exhibit F - Public Correspondence.

Case Planner: Sandra Yang (951) 736-2262