



Legislation Text

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PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: 9/9/2019

TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Community Development Department

APPLICATION REQUEST:

CUP2018-0014 (CONTINUED): Conditional Use Permit application to establish and operate a 4,375-square foot public charter school within an existing commercial building located at 700 North Main Street in the CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01). (Applicant: Bill Calleja of Pivot Charter School, 700 North Main Street, Corona, CA 92880).

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of Resolution No. 2536 **GRANTING CUP2018-0014**, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE SUMMARY

Area of Property: 16.7 acres

Existing Zoning: CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01)

Existing General Plan: GC (General Commercial)

Existing Land Use: Commercial Center

Proposed Land Use: Public charter school

Surrounding Zoning/Land Uses:

N: CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01)/Commercial center

E: MU (Mixed Use) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01)/Commercial center

S: FP1(Primary Flood Plain) Zone/ Temescal Creek Channel

W: SFC (Single-Family Condominium) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01)/ Condominium homes

BACKGROUND

Pivot Charter School is currently located at 4300 Green River Road, Suite 108 in the City of Corona. The school has operated at their existing site for approximately 4 years. Pivot Charter School is relocating to 700 North Main Street and will be providing the same educational instruction that is

being provided at their current location. Per the North Main Street Specific Plan private schools are allowed in the CR zone with a conditional use permit.

The commercial center known as North Main Plaza was constructed in 1971 and contains 231,688 square feet of multi-tenant commercial space within six separate buildings. The subject 4,375-square foot commercial tenant space was previously occupied by Payless Shoe Source and has remained vacant for some time.

The applicant officially submitted the CUP application to the city on October 23, 2018 which was reviewed by city staff at the Project Review Committee (PRC) meeting on November 15, 2018. The applicant was issued an application incomplete letter due to missing information that was required to complete the application. The applicant over time submitted the required items to staff with the application finally considered complete on July 1, 2019 and cleared for public hearing before the Planning and Housing Commission on July 22, 2019.

July 22, 2019 Public Hearing

The project was initially reviewed by the Planning and Housing Commission at a public hearing on July 22, 2019. The Commission continued the public hearing on the application to August 12, 2019 to allow the applicant time to address concerns raised at the meeting related to the project's on-site circulation, parking, trip generation, and student attendance including drop-off and pick-up locations. At the applicant's request, the application was further continued to August 26, 2019 and finally to September 9, 2019, to allow the applicant additional time to address the concerns.

Since the original public hearing, the applicant has submitted additional information to staff to address the concerns raised at the hearing. The following sections in this report have been updated to include additional information:

- Operations
- Access, Circulation, and Parking

The following section has been added with new information:

- Circulation Patterns For Drop-off and Pick-up Activity

Also, Exhibits E through L and Exhibit M are new attachments to the report.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CUP2018-0014 is an application to establish and operate a 4,375-square foot public charter school within an existing commercial building located at 700 North Main Street in the CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (Exhibit A1).

Site Plan

The 16.71-acre commercial center is located west of Main Street and south of Parkridge Avenue. As shown in Exhibit A1, the northernmost portion of the site contains three of the center's four anchor retail providers, which are Smart & Final, Big Lots, and Burlington Coat Factory. The fourth anchor retail provider, dd's Discount, is located in the southern portion of the site. Four small stand-alone commercial retail and restaurant structures are located near the easterly portions of the site adjacent to both Main Street and Parkridge Avenue. The commercial center's common parking lot area is

situated primarily in the central portion of the site.

As shown in Exhibit A2, the tenant space to be occupied by Pivot Charter School is located within the “L” shaped multi-tenant building at the southernmost portion of the commercial center. The commercial building is approximately 41,940 square feet and is sectioned into five tenant spaces ranging in size from 1,800 square feet to 23,100 square feet. The public charter school will be the third largest tenant space at 4,375 square feet in area. No changes are proposed to the exterior of the building. Only improvements will be made to the interior of the building which will be reviewed by city staff through the city’s plan check process.

Floor Plan

The floor plan for the public charter school is depicted in Exhibit C. Pivot Charter School will offer educational services for kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and high school aged students. As shown on the floor plan, the proposed public charter school contains a lobby area, storage rooms, office area, an elementary classroom with its own restroom, a separate junior high and high school classroom area, restrooms, billing area and a utility room. The elementary classroom will have 11 student desks, and the junior high and high school classroom area will have 60 student desks.

Operation

As stated in the applicant’s letter (Exhibit D), Pivot Charter School is a non-profit organization governed by the State of California. The public charter school offers educational services for small groups of students through a blended learning program using online curriculum coupled with on-site based support. The school will operate Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon; however, the students will not arrive all at the same time. Instead, the students’ drop-off and pick-up times are staggered as shown in Table A. This new information was provided by the applicant to clarify the students’ schedules.

TABLE A
Pick-Up and Drop-Off Times¹

Students	Drop-Off Times	Pick-Up Times
High School	8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Middle School	9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Elementary	9:30 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	12:30 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.

1. Pivot Charter School Circulation Patterns For Drop-Off And Pick-Up Activity (Urban Crossroads, July 2019)

Additionally, the school will offer a specialized schedule, as needed, for students who need on-site support on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pivot Charter School currently has 130 students enrolled with an estimated growth of five students a year for the next four years, not to exceed 150 students. Many of the students engage in their on-line curriculum at home and do not attend the school site. Pivot Charter School will have approximately 11 elementary aged students, 24 middle school students, and 36 high school students along with eight staff maximum on-site on a daily basis.

Student attendance numbers for the existing Corona facility located on Green River Road are shown in Exhibit E. The attendance numbers provided represent the average number of students who came to the site, by grade level, for each month for the school years September 2016 through June 2019. The highest attendance numbers that came to the supplemental site-based program for both

elementary and junior high students is 10, while the highest attendance number of high school students is 28.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

The project site is provided with vehicular access from Main Street, Parkridge Avenue and Cota Street. There are four existing driveways located on Main Street, two existing driveways located on Parkridge Avenue, and two existing driveways located on Cota Street behind the center. All vehicular access points and parking spaces are shared among the tenants within the commercial buildings at the subject property. The surrounding streets are fully improved; therefore, no additional improvements are required.

Pivot Charter School is not a traditional campus style school, but because of the different age groups who will be attending the facility, staff is applying the Corona Municipal Code's established parking ratios for traditional schools which are the following:

- Elementary or Junior High School: 1 space/employee
- High School: 1 space/employee, plus 1 space/6 students

As discussed under the Floor Plan section of this report, the elementary classroom will have 11 student desks, and the junior high and high school classroom area will have 60 student desks. Based on the number of desks that will be provided for each age group, the applicant anticipates having no more than 71 students in total on site at any given time. However, the parking ratios above do not require parking to be provided for elementary and junior high students since these age groups are not of driving age, but employees working for these two age groups are required to be provided with parking. For the high school age group, both students and employees are required to be provided with parking. Since Pivot Charter School combines junior high and high school students together in one classroom these two age groups are being parked together. As shown in Table B below, the total number of employees that will be on site is 8, and the total number of junior and high school students will be 60. In total, the school is required to provide 18 parking spaces.

TABLE B
Parking Summary for Pivot Charter School

AGE GROUP	NO. OF EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS	PARKING RATIO	REQUIRED PARKING
Kindergarten	2 employees	1 space/employee	2
Junior High and High School	6 employees and 60 students	1 space/employee plus 1 space/ 6 students	16
TOTAL			18

The shopping center has a mixed of commercial and service type uses including retail, office, a veterinarian, gym, and restaurants which are parked at various parking ratios that were established for the center at the time it was originally constructed. The shopping center has reciprocal access and parking that is shared among center tenants. The required number of parking spaces for the previous retail tenant was 12 spaces and the school requires a net of 6 spaces. Based on the existing uses within the center and the proposed school the shopping center is required to have 769

spaces. The center currently provides 818 parking spaces, which is a surplus of 49 parking spaces.

Trip Generation Assessment

A trip generation assessment was prepared by Urban Crossroads (April 2019), to determine how many vehicular trips the proposed school would add to the commercial center. To determine this, Urban Crossroads estimated what a typical retail use which is already an approved use for the building would generate compared to what the school would generate in order to determine the net difference between the two uses.

It is estimated that a retail use would generate a total of 165 trips per day, with approximately 5 trips in the AM peak hour, and 17 trips in the PM peak hour. The proposed school is anticipated to generate a total of 183 trips per day on a typical weekday, with approximately 109 trips in the AM peak hour and 14 trips in the PM peak hour. As shown, the school would generate 18 additional average daily trips and 104 additional trips in the AM peak hours than compared to a retail use. This increase, however, does not result in a significant impact to the existing level of service in the area or to the center's entry points. The center has multiple shared access points from the surrounding roadways and ample parking to serve the school and existing uses within the center.

Circulation Patterns For Drop-off and Pick-up Activity

In response to the on-site circulation and parking concerns raised at the July 22, 2019 public hearing, the applicant had an analysis prepared to analyze the project's circulation patterns during drop-off and pick-up times (Urban Crossroads, July 2019) to show how the school's operations would impact the shopping center's on-site circulation. The study is attached as Exhibit F. Exhibit M contains additional information with time-lapse photographs of the parking lot in front of the school's proposed suite. Per the analysis, the students' drop-off and pick-up times will be staggered as shown in Table A. In a given 15-minute period, it is anticipated that there will be approximately 25 vehicles arriving to the site for drop-off and pick-up. Note that 25 vehicles is a conservative estimate. The drop-off and pick-up process is estimated to take up to 5 minutes per vehicle. During the 15-minute pick-up time, it is anticipated that up to 15 parking spaces in the parking area in front of the school's suite will be utilized by Pivot Charter School (9 vehicles picking up students, 4 parked student vehicles, and 2 parked visitors). However, it is anticipated that during the majority of the school operational hours, only 6 of the 15 spaces are expected to be occupied.

In order to free up more desirable parking spaces that are located at the front of the commercial center, the applicant's parking policy (Exhibit G) is proposing to have the 8 staff members park in the existing parking spaces located along the back side of commercial center's main anchor tenant Burlington Coat Factory. Note that the school has not obtained landlord approval to designate this area for staff parking; however, this area is not expected to be an issue since the parking area behind Burlington Coat Factory is underutilized.

The applicant will provide 9 designated student drop-off and pick-up parking spaces. Six of the designated spaces will be located to the east of the Pivot Charter School building, perpendicular to Main Street and three spaces will be located in front of Pivot Charter School. As shown in Exhibit H, the applicant has secured the 9 designated parking spaces with the landlord for the purpose of student drop-off and pick-up. A condition of approval has been added to the Conditions of Approval in Exhibit B requiring staff to park in this designated area.

Students who drive themselves and park will be encouraged to utilize parking spaces located north of

the school to alleviate the desirable parking spaces located adjacent to the public Charter School and the adjacent tenants. As indicated in the School Safety Plan for Student Drop off, pick Up, and Parking (Exhibit I), families will be provided with a Student and Parent handbook which will include the parking plan. To ensure student safety, parents are required to walk their students to their classroom. Furthermore, with the exception of elementary students, parents of junior high and high school students may drop off and pick up their students using the designated short-term parking spaces when a teacher/supervisor is present.

Signage

The proposed public charter school will be advertised on the existing pylons within the center. Although no separate signs are being proposed as part of the CUP2018-0014 application, all future signs for the public charter school are subject to review by the Community Development Department Planning and the Building Divisions in which separate permits will be required.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Per Article 19 Categorical Exemptions, Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) Class 1 categorical exemption of the State Guidelines for implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.22 of the City's Local CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project because the project consists of establishing and operating a public charter school within an existing commercial building located in a commercial center that is fully developed with adequate parking, access, and utilities. The public charter school will be contained entirely inside the building, and no expansion is proposed to the commercial building. Therefore, there is no possibility that the proposal will have a significant effect on the environment. The Notice of Exemption is attached as Exhibit N.

FISCAL IMPACT

The applicant paid \$7,482.00 in application processing fees for the conditional use permit.

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 Community Development Department staff has received seven letters of support from the existing tenants and the commercial center owner's representative at the current location for Pivot Charter School located at 4300 Green River (Exhibit J). Additionally, three letters of support have been received from the surrounding tenants of Pivot Charter School located at 700 North Main Street (Exhibit K).

STAFF ANALYSIS

The project site is fully developed with multiple commercial buildings, landscaping and parking lot, and all the necessary public infrastructure has been constructed adjacent to the property. No changes are proposed to the exterior of the building and only interior tenant improvements are required by the applicant. The intended use and hours of operation will experience off-peak parking demands at different times of the day from other tenants that share the commercial center. The project site is capable of accommodating the number of parking spaces required by the Corona Municipal Code for the new public charter school and the existing commercial uses at the project site. The subject property also has sufficient access from surrounding roadways.

CUP2018-0014 helps fulfill General Plan Goal 1.11 and Policy 1.11.1, which encourage a diversity of

viable commercial districts and corridors that contain uses supporting residents, business, and visitor needs. CUP2018-0014 also helps fulfill General Plan Policy 1.11.3, which promotes and pro-actively recruits new businesses that fill gaps in the range of goods and services currently available and are needed by the City's residents and act as catalysts for attracting other retailers to the City. Therefore, based on the following findings and conditions of approval attached as Exhibit B, CUP2018-0014 is recommended for approval.

FINDINGS OF APPROVAL FOR CUP2018-0014

1. A preliminary exemption assessment has been conducted by the City of Corona and it has shown that this project does not require further environmental assessment because the project qualifies as a Class 1 categorical exemption under CEQA per Section 15301 of the State Guidelines and Section 3.22 of the City of Corona adopted Local Guidelines for implementing CEQA. The proposed conditional use permit will only establish the right to operate a public charter school within an existing commercial building located in a commercial center that is fully developed. Furthermore, the public charter school will not require an expansion to the building as it is capable of accommodating the proposed use. Therefore, there is no possibility that the proposal will have any significant effects on the environment.
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 CUP2018-0014 for the following reasons:
 - a. *The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety convenience and general welfare, and is in harmony with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan, as the proposal supports the diverse needs of the Corona's residents. The proposed use will be conducted solely within an existing commercial building which met all the applicable development standards that existed at the time the property was initially developed. Furthermore, the applicant will be required to demonstrate compliance with all current building and fire codes that are applicable to the proposed use of the building through the city's plan check process.*
 - b. *The proposed use is not detrimental to other existing and permitted uses in the general area of the project site and relates properly to the surrounding roadways because the public charter school will be located entirely inside an existing commercial building. The subject property is adjacent to and is otherwise surrounded by other similar uses and properties located in similar zones. Furthermore, the public charter school has sufficient access from Main Street and Parkridge Avenue.*
 - c. *Reasonable conditions as necessary are being imposed to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and to establish full compliance with the applicable development standards of the CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01) and Corona Municipal Code in terms of building setbacks, building height, parking, and landscaping.*
3. The proposal is consistent with the General Plan for the following reasons:

- a. *The proposed project contributes to the achievement of General Plan Goal 1.11, which encourages a diversity of viable commercial districts and corridors that contain uses supporting residents, business, and visitor needs and contribute revenue to the City to fund external services. The proposed school will help support the needs by offering educational services that will provide a high quality of life for Corona's residents.*
 - b. *CUP2018-0014 fulfills General Plan Policy 1.11.1, which encourages having a comprehensive range of uses in the city that provide services to meet the diverse needs of Corona's residents. The proposed school as allowed by CUP2018-0014 will help promote the commercial center and attract a variety of quality commercial tenants to the center to meet and support the diverse needs of Corona's residents, visitors, and businesses.*
 - c. *CUP2018-0014 fulfills General Plan Policy 1.11.3, which promotes and pro- actively recruits new businesses that fill gaps in the range of goods and services currently available and are needed by the City's residents and act as a catalyst for attracting other retailers to the City. The proposed school will fill a gap by providing a use that provides educational services to the City's residents.*
4. The proposal is consistent with CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01) for the following reason:
- a. *The proposed use complies with the CR (Commercial Retail) District of the North Main Street Specific Plan (SP99-01) as public charter schools are permitted by a conditional use permit. Also, the proposed use is in harmony with the other existing uses within the commercial building and surrounding properties. The property is in compliance with the development standards that were in place at the time of development with respect to setbacks, minimum parking requirements and access.*

PREPARED BY: HARALD LUNA, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA YANG, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBMITTED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

EXHIBITS

1. Resolution No. 2536
2. Locational and Zoning Map
3. Exhibits A1 & A2 - Overall Site Plan and Focused Site Plan.
4. Exhibit B - Conditions of Approval.
5. Exhibit C - Floor Plan.
6. Exhibit D - Applicant's letter describing the operations of Pivot Charter School.
7. Exhibit E - Pivot Charter School Riverside On-site Attendance Numbers.
8. Exhibit F - Pivot Charter School Circulation Patterns for Drop off and Pick up Activity prepared by Urban Crossroads dated July 31, 2019.

9. Exhibit G - Pivot Charter School Riverside Parent, Student, and Staff Parking Policy.
10. Exhibit H - Landlord/Applicant Certificate of Approval.
11. Exhibit I - Pivot Charter School Safety Plan for Student Drop off, Pick Up, and Parking.
12. Exhibit J - Letters of support from tenants and landlord at 4300 Green River Road (Green River Promenade).
13. Exhibit K - Letters of support from tenants at 700 North Main Street (North Main Plaza).
14. Exhibit L - Letter from founder and chairman of the board of Pivot Charter School dated July 30, 2019.
15. Exhibit M - Letter from Pivot Charter School dated August 21, 2019, addressing the school's anticipated impacts to the parking lot.
16. Exhibit N - Environmental Documentation.

Case Planner: Harald Luna (951) 736-2268