



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 09/04/2024
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Planning and Development Department

2024-06

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT 2024-0001 TO THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDING THE GENERAL RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES (APPLICANT: CITY OF CORONA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve Specific Plan Amendment 2024-0001 as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission amending the general residential guidelines in the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan. The design guidelines are intended to guide the development of new residential structures to be compatible with the scale and character of the existing residential neighborhoods and preserve the appearance of architectural elements on existing residential structures being rehabilitated. The most noteworthy change to the general residential guidelines is the inclusion of required architectural styles in the downtown Corona neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve Specific Plan Amendment 2024-0001, as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission.
- b. Introduce, by title only, and waive full reading of consideration of Ordinance No. 3402, first reading of an ordinance approving an amendment to the Downtown

Revitalization Specific Plan (SP98-01) to amend the General Residential Guidelines (SPA2024-0001).

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan (SP98-01) covers approximately 621 acres located in the City’s historic downtown, which includes properties located within and on the outside periphery of Grand Boulevard, and along Sixth Street between Lincoln Avenue and the Flood Control Channel. The specific plan governs the land use, development standards, and design guidelines for the affected properties.

The specific plan includes an inventory of residential properties. Most of the residential properties were developed before the 1950s with several residential structures placed on the City’s Corona Register as local historic landmarks. The residential neighborhoods within the specific plan are well established and represent the age the structures were built. Vacant infill lots exist within the downtown Corona residential neighborhoods and the residential design guidelines established in the specific plan are intended to guide the development of new residential structures to be compatible with the existing residential neighborhoods.

The residential design guidelines are expressed as mandatory requirements or non-mandatory requirements in the specific plan. Over the years, new residential structures on vacant infill properties or the rehabilitation of existing residential structures have shown modern-day designs that are not compatible with the architectural elements already established in the existing neighborhoods. Since the downtown Corona residential neighborhoods include a high volume of historical structures, which contributes to the character and era of the neighborhoods, the downtown residential guidelines are being amended to provide more mandatory requirements and new architectural style standards to preserve the architectural history and appearance of the neighborhoods. The amended residential design guidelines are intended for new residential structures to be compatible with existing residential structures and the existing atmosphere of the neighborhood.

City Council Study Session

The new architectural style standards being added to the specific plan were presented to the City Council at its study session on March 20, 2024. The architectural style standards were presented in a combined presentation on the proposed revisions to the City’s Historic Resources Ordinance in Chapter 17.63 of the Corona Municipal Code (CMC). The City Council supported the addition of the architectural style standards to the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan.

ANALYSIS:

SPA2024-0001 will amend Section E, General Residential Guidelines, of Chapter IV of the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan. The redline changes to Section E are provided in its entirety in Exhibit 2.

The existing residential guidelines include rehabilitation requirements for existing residential structures in addition to acceptable exterior materials, window designs, porches and stairs, and roof design and material. The guidelines also describe building additions to existing structures and how the appearance of the addition should have the same architectural elements and design as the existing structure.

The guidelines also include requirements for new infill residential structures to incorporate traditional architectural characteristics of existing residential structures found in the neighborhood. Examples include window and door spacing, exterior materials, roof style and pitches, porches, garage placement, and decoration detail. No specific architectural style is required in the downtown Corona neighborhood, and this has resulted in the architectural style of new residential structures being subjectively scrutinized.

Most of the amendment proposed by SPA2024-0001 includes the addition of residential architectural style standards that are allowed for new residential construction and for residential rehabilitation projects that will extensively change the appearance of the existing residential structure. The architectural style standards include Mission and Spanish Revival, Colonial, Tudor, Bungalow and Craftsman Bungalow, and Ranch. The specific plan also allows the Planning and Development Director to consider an architectural style not listed in the specific plan if it demonstrates a contribution to Corona's heritage and the downtown residential neighborhood. The architectural style standards are intended to preserve the historic character of the downtown Corona residential neighborhoods as new residential structures are constructed on infill lots.

SPA2024-0001 is consistent with the purpose of the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan because the amended residential design guidelines will preserve and enhance the residential neighborhoods by requiring new residential construction to have architectural elements that reflect the historical character and environment of the existing neighborhood. This allows the City's heritage to be preserved while also accommodating new development.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

SPA2024-0001 is an application by the City. Therefore, no application fees were paid for the processing of this application.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action amends existing residential design guidelines already provided in the specific plan and there is no possibility that approving this project will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 – Ordinance No. 3402 – (clean version)
2. Exhibit 2 – Proposed Amendment Redlines
3. Exhibit 3 – Planning and Housing Commission staff report
4. Exhibit 4 – Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of August 12, 2024