



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 12/04/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Planning and Development Department

2024-160

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT 2024-0002 AMENDING THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SPECIFIC PLAN (SP98-01) TO COMPREHENSIVELY AMEND THE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS, DESIGN GUIDELINES, AND PUBLIC STREETSCAPES FOR THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT AND OTHER COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS PARK DISTRICTS OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN; EXPAND THE BOUNDARY OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN, SOUTH OF THE SOUTHERLY PORTION OF GRAND BOULEVARD, TO INCLUDE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; REPLACE OUTDATED INFORMATION AND CHANGE THE APPEARANCE AND GRAPHICS OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN DOCUMENT (APPLICANT: CITY OF CORONA)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve Specific Plan Amendment 2024-0002 (SPA2024-0002) as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission amending the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan. The specific plan amendment reflects the City's effort to redevelop the Downtown core in and around the aging Corona Mall, and the public streetscape enhancements on Sixth Street within the Grand Boulevard Circle.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve Specific Plan Amendment 2024-0002, as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission.
- b. Introduce, by title only, and waive full reading of consideration of Ordinance No. 3407, first reading of an ordinance adopting an addendum to the Environmental Impact Report for the Corona General Plan Technical Update (SCH # 2018081039) and the Environmental Impact Report for the Corona Redevelopment/ Downtown Specific Plan (SCH # 97071021), approving an amendment to the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan (SP98-01) to: (1) comprehensively amend the development standards, design guidelines and public streetscapes; (2) expand the boundaries of the Specific Plan; and (3) amend and add corresponding changes to associated text and exhibits within the Specific Plan (SPA2024-0002).

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan was adopted in 1998 and encompasses 621 acres. The boundary of the specific plan covers the properties within the Grand Boulevard Circle, certain properties on the outskirts of Grand Boulevard, and along Sixth Street between Lincoln Avenue to the west and the Flood Control Channel to the east. The specific plan zoning consists of residential and various commercial districts including a Downtown District and a business park district.

The Corona General Plan 2020-2040 identifies the City's Downtown as an opportunity district for redevelopment and includes General Plan Goal LU-17 and Policies LU-17.1 through LU-17.22 related to the redevelopment and image of Downtown.

In 2020, the City's Economic Development Department prepared a Downtown Revitalization Plan (DRP) and DRP Design Guidelines that reassessed the current condition of Downtown and examined the current market condition related to retail development. The DRP and Design Guidelines outreach involved a public meeting, the distribution of a survey which resulted in 2,400 responses, and discussions at the City Council study sessions. The final DRP and Design Guidelines were presented as a report to the City Council in 2022.

In December 2023, the City's Planning and Development Department initiated the preparation of an amendment to the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan, which is the regulatory document that governs the land uses and development standards for the properties located in the specific plan. The amendment to the specific plan is to implement the recommendations of the DRP Design Guidelines in addition to the following: a) amend the development standards and design guidelines, b) expand the boundary of the specific

plan to include an additional 497 residential properties located generally south of the southern portion of Grand Boulevard, c) replace outdated infrastructure information, d) update street sections, e) update the implementation and appendices chapters, f) replace graphics throughout the document, and g) change the format and appearance of the document.

At the beginning of the specific plan amendment process in February/March 2024, stakeholder interviews were conducted with the following groups.

- Economic Development Department
- Public Works
- Planning Commissioners (two members)
- Private real estate group (Calvert Properties)
- Corona Historical Preservation Society
- Corona History Association
- Corona Regional Medical Center

The specific stakeholder interviews were done as an extension of the outreach efforts already conducted during the DRP process.

Staff presented an overview of the update on the specific plan amendment to the City Council at its study session on September 18, 2024.

SPA2024-0002 was reviewed by the Planning and Housing Commission at its meeting on November 13, 2024, and recommended for approval to the City Council.

ANALYSIS:

Like the existing Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan, the vision for the Downtown remains the same with the proposed amendment. The vision for the Downtown is to function as the heart of the community, be a vibrant, walkable place featuring a complementary mix of uses, feature memorable streetscapes and outdoor gathering spaces, and have new development be respectful of the traditional town center character.

All the chapters in the specific plan were reorganized and updated with new information and graphics. Table 1 describes the outline of the chapters, and the information included in the specific plan.

Table 1
Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan Organization

Chapter	Description
Chapter 1: Introduction	Covers the organization of the specific plan, the geographical area of the specific plan boundary, and the plan's purpose and authority.
Chapter 2: Vision & Framework	Discusses the vision for the Downtown, the community engagement process, consistency with the City's General Plan, and strategies from the 2022 Downtown Revitalization Plan and design guidelines.
Chapter 3: Land Use & Development Standards	Identifies the specific plan's land use districts (zoning) and allowable land uses, onsite development standards related to building setbacks from property lines, and other onsite requirements for building frontages, open space, landscaping, outdoor dining, signage, outdoor displays, mixed-use and live/work units, and parking.
Chapter 4: Design Guidelines	Covers the design guidelines for the Downtown core properties and the other districts located in the specific plan, and guidelines related to landscaping, signage, and lighting.
Chapter 5: Circulation	Discusses the circulation network within the specific plan.
Chapter 6: Infrastructure	Discusses the infrastructure within the specific plan related to water, sewer, storm drainage, and dry utilities.
Chapter 7: Public Streetscapes & Public Space	Discusses design recommendations for public streetscapes and public areas such as sidewalks, midblock crossings and crosswalks, paving designs and street furniture, street sections, public signage and gateway signage.
Chapter 8: Administration & Implementation	Discusses the administrative processes for the review of proposed land uses and development, decisions that are considered in substantial conformance with the specific plan's objectives and intent, nonconforming uses, and common

Chapter	Description
	funding sources for infrastructure improvements.
Chapter 9: Appendices	Includes a glossary and table of past specific plan amendments.

Specific Plan Boundary Expansion

The original 1998 specific plan boundary covered 621 acres. The proposed specific plan amendment expands the boundary of the specific plan to include additional residential properties generally located south of the southern portion of Grand Boulevard, increasing the area of the specific plan boundary to 700 acres. These properties represent traditional neighborhoods associated with Corona’s history like other residential neighborhoods within Grand Boulevard. The residential densities of the properties remain the same with the specific plan zoning applied to the properties.

Development Standards

The development standards are separated by the land use districts shown on the Land Use Regulating Plan in Figure 3-1 of the specific plan document. The land use districts include:

- Downtown (D)
- Transitional Commercial (TC)
- General Commercial (GC)
- Community Services (CS)
- Gateway Business (GB)
- Business Park (BP)
- Residential Office (RO)
- Residential: Single Family (SF), Residential 2 (R2), Multi-Family Residential (MF)
- Park (P)
- School (S)

The development standards regulate the building setbacks, height, and coverage, which are shown in Table 3-2 of the specific plan document. The development standards allow the buildings closer to the front of the sidewalk to encourage sidewalk storefronts, outdoor displays, and outdoor dining.

Multistory Building Stepback

The development standards also include requirements for building stepbacks on the upper floors of a multi-story building adjacent to Sixth Street and a residential zone. The stepback requirements are shown in Tables 3-3 and 3-4 of the specific plan document. If a building is higher than three stories, the fourth floor is required to be stepped back 10 feet from the third floor for at least 70 percent of the building façade facing Sixth Street. This same scenario

applies to the fifth floor with the stepback required from the fourth floor. No additional stepback is required beyond the fifth floor. When a multi-story building is adjacent to a residential zone, the same requirement applies except that it applies to 100 percent of the building façade facing the residential zone.

Other Development Standards

The development standards also include open space requirements, landscape standards, parking requirements and standards, and special use regulations for outdoor dining, signage, outdoor display of merchandise, mixed use (commercial and residential) and live/work units.

Design Guidelines

The design guidelines for each land use district are separated according to the following categories listed in Chapter 4.

Table 2
Design Guidelines Classification

Name	Applicable Land Use Districts
Downtown Core Guidelines	D, CS, TC, GB
Commercial Guidelines	GC
Light Industrial/Business Park Guidelines	BP
General Residential Guidelines	RO, SF, R2 and MF

The design guidelines complement the development standards in Chapter 3. The context of the design guidelines is to create visual appeal and architectural diversity that is reminiscent of a traditional downtown environment by using building materials and architectural elements that are historically common in the area.

The design guidelines apply to new development and to the exterior rehabilitation of existing development that will extensively change the appearance of the existing structure or the onsite design of the property. The design guidelines address:

- Site planning such as building placement and orientation, the location of parking, circulation, and the location of service areas associated with loading activities and storage.
- Building design such as character and quality of materials, façade articulation, location of entrances, transparency, roof design, and building materials.
- Supplemental guidelines for parking structures, storefront designs, sidewalk dining, and buildings with drive-through services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

SPA2024-0002 is an application by the City. Therefore, no application fees were paid for the processing of this application.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The City prepared an initial study for the project and has concluded that the project does not include substantial changes to the project analyzed under the 2019 Corona General Plan Technical Update Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2018081039), and the 1998 Corona Redevelopment/Downtown Specific Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 97071021), and none of the conditions described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 calling for the preparation of a subsequent EIR exist. Therefore, according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, the initial study serves as an Addendum to the 1998 Corona Redevelopment/Downtown Specific Plan Final Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 97071021), and 2019 Corona General Plan Technical Update Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2018081039).

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 – Ordinance No. 3407
2. Exhibit 2 – Planning and Housing Commission staff report
3. Exhibit 3– Draft minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of November 13, 2024