



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 01/21/2026
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Planning and Development Department

2026-12

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

PRECISE PLAN 2024-0001 TO REVIEW THE SITE PLAN, ARCHITECTURE, AND OTHER FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH A PROPOSED NORTHGATE GONZALEZ MARKET AND REMODEL OF AN EXISTING COMMERCIAL BUILDING ON 4.70 ACRES, LOCATED ON SIXTH STREET, BELLE AVENUE AND MAIN STREET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to affirm the decision by the Planning and Housing Commission in granting Precise Plan 2024-0001 for the site design associated with a new Northgate Gonzalez Market and remodel of an existing commercial building on 4.70 acres. The project site is located on the north side of W. Sixth Street, between Belle Avenue and N. Main Street. The applicant is Northgate Gonzalez Market.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council affirm the Planning and Housing Commission's action granting PP2024-0001, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The proposed project is for the development of a 40,000-square-foot Northgate Gonzalez Market and remodel of an existing 6,930-square-foot commercial building into a future bank and restaurant use on 4.70 net acres in downtown. The development includes new landscaping, parking, signage, and public right-of-way improvements such as sidewalks, curb and gutter, and utility and stormwater improvements.

The project site is comprised of 13 parcels located on the west side of S. Main Street, between W. Sixth Street to W. Fourth Street, and includes two parcels located on the north side of W. Fourth Street, between S. Belle Avenue and S. Washburn Avenue (Exhibit 2). Eleven of the parcels are currently vacant, while two contain commercial buildings (Citizens Bank and a strip retail building). The retail building is slated for demolition as part of the project development. The project site also includes segments of W. Fifth Street and W. Fourth Street totaling approximately 0.87 acres which presently intersect the project site and will be vacated to facilitate the project's development. The project site does not include the corner parcel at 203 W. Sixth Street, which was formerly occupied by Hunny's Café and Caremore Medical.

The parcels are located within the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan (DRSP) and are governed by the development standards adopted for said specific plan. The 11 parcels between W. Sixth Street and W. Fourth Street will maintain their existing zoning of Downtown (D) and General Plan land use designation of Mixed Use Downtown (MUD). The two parcels on the north side of W. Fourth Street are zoned Single Family (SF) and Gateway Business (GB) and have a General Plan land use designation of Low Density Residential (LDR) and General Commercial (GC).

In order to implement the proposed commercial project, the applicant is requesting concurrent approvals of a General Plan Amendment (GPA2024-0003) and Specific Plan Amendment (SPA2024-0003) to change the general plan land use designation and zoning of the two parcels on the north side of W. Fourth Street to MUD and D respectively, and extend the MUD and D designations to the 0.87 acres of public right-of-way that are to be vacated. The applicant also seeks approval of Parcel Map 38981 to consolidate the 13 parcels and 0.87 acres of public right-of-way into a single 4.70-acre parcel for the development.

ANALYSIS:

The following sections discuss details of the project including the site development, operations, architectural design, landscaping, walls and fencing, signage, and public right-of-way improvements. Detailed information with project exhibits are presented within the Planning and Housing Commission staff report, Exhibit 3.

Site Plan

The market is proposed on the northern part of the site, while the bank and restaurant building is located at the southwestern corner. A shared parking lot is centrally located to serve both buildings. An interior sidewalk is provided within the parking lot to connect the market to the commercial building. The interior sidewalk also discourages cut-through vehicular traffic from S. Main Street through the project site to S. Belle Avenue. The site plan is attached as Exhibit 2.

Customer entrance into the Northgate market is located on the south side of the building, while the north side contains a loading dock and trash compactor. The shopping carts will be located within the front of the store, outside of any drive aisles, for patrons, with several shopping cart return locations within the market parking lot area. The plotting of the buildings meets the minimum setback requirements prescribed by the DRSP for the Downtown (D) zone.

Operations

The market's specialty is traditional Mexican foods, including fresh vegetables, deli serving hot Mexican dishes, full-service meat and fish market including specialty cheeses, tortilleria (fresh tortillas), panaderia (Mexican sweet bread), daily made fresh salsas, tamales, etc. The project includes an outdoor patio dining area of approximately 650 square feet featuring a walk-up Taqueria (taco) order/pick-up window to be operated by the market. This concept is similar to Northgate's other market locations in the cities of Fontana and La Habra, to name a few.

The market will be open seven (7) days a week, from 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. The applicant anticipates the market will employ approximately 180 to 200 employees. Grocery store deliveries will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. There will be a variety of deliveries to the market daily as follows:

- One (1) delivery of produce, meat and deli per day, seven (7) days a week;
- One (1) delivery of groceries per day, five (5) days a week, occurring in the afternoon;
- Two (2) delivery loads of beer/soda per day, from Monday through Saturday; and
- 2 to 4 delivery loads of bread, chips and tortillas per day.

In total, there will be an average of 4 to 5 large truck and trailer deliveries per day, and an average of two bobtail truck deliveries per day.

Architecture

The DRSP includes architectural design guidelines to ensure quality architecture for commercial developments within the Downtown Core area. The DRSP does not prescribe a specific architectural theme for commercial buildings, and replicating past styles is not mandatory, but acknowledging historic architectural elements is required. In keeping with the design guidelines, the project features a Spanish Colonial architectural theme using clean, white stucco with colored accent trimming, decorative arched features with Saltillo tiles, decorative Spanish accent tile insets, metal awnings and metal trellis for vines, precast concrete trimming, wooden trellis, Spanish tile roofing, and large clay tile potted plants.

Landscaping

The Conceptual Landscape Plan includes approximately 27,642 square feet of drought-tolerant, low-water use ornamental landscaping throughout the site. Landscaping would include a variety of trees, such as Jacarandas, Palo Verdes, Fern Pines, Southern Live Oaks, Ornamental Orange and Lemon, Date Palms and others. The parking lot area and perimeters of the project site include ornamental shade trees, screen shrubs to conceal the parking area and a variety of ground covers. Along the northern property line, the project includes Fern Pines, an evergreen tree, to screen the project from the neighboring residential land uses to the north. The screen trees are in addition to the six-foot high block wall that the applicant will construct along the north property line.

The project also includes the installation of new trees and landscaping within the public right-of-way along S. Main Street and S. Belle Avenue in compliance with the DRSP.

Perimeter Walls

The project includes a new six-foot-high split face masonry wall along the northern property line, which will provide a physical buffer between the project site and the abutting residential uses to the north. The project also includes a 12-foot-high screen wall at the truck loading area and a 10-foot-high screen wall at the trash compactor unit. The trash compactor area will be fenced and gated to prevent unauthorized access and cut-through traffic behind the market.

Signage

The project includes a comprehensive sign program for the market and commercial building which will be reviewed and permitted separately during plan check submittal. The applicant is required to submit the final signage plan to the Planning and Development Department for review and permitting before installation. A condition has been added that the project sign program comply with all codes in place at the time of permitting, including the DRSP and any applicable conditions of approval.

Access and Circulation

The project has five vehicular access points, which are located on Main Street, Sixth Street and Belle Avenue.

The Main Street entrance into the project site is the center's primary entrance and designed to be shared with the adjacent parcel at 203 W. Sixth Street. This entrance is located directly across from the existing entrance to the Corona Mall center located on the east side of S. Main Street. The entrance will form a four-way intersection at Main Street and will be signalized to allow vehicles to make full-turn movements.

The Sixth Street entrance will allow westbound vehicles on Sixth Street to make right-turns into the site. Eastbound vehicles will not be able to turn left into the site due to the existing raised median on Sixth Street.

Three entrances are proposed along the site's Belle Avenue frontage which will allow vehicles to enter the site from Belle Avenue. The northernmost entrance on Belle Avenue will primarily be used for truck access to the market's rear loading area. The entrances on Belle Avenue will allow for full access.

The project's internal circulation features standard size 9-foot by 20-foot parking spaces with 25- to 28-foot-wide two-way drive aisles for vehicle access to parking spaces and to the adjacent commercial parcel (203 W. Sixth St). The internal circulation meets the Fire Department's 28-foot minimum width fire lane requirement.

Delivery trucks will access the project site from the SR-91 freeway off-ramp at Main Street and head southbound, turning westbound onto W. Sixth Street and northbound onto Belle Avenue and into the project site. After unloading, the trucks will exit the site onto Belle Avenue, travel southbound towards Sixth Street, eastbound on Sixth Street, northbound on Main Street, and back onto the SR-91 freeway west/east bound on-ramps. The applicant's Truck Route Map and Truck Turn Analysis, which demonstrates that Main Street, Sixth Street and Belle Avenue are adequately sized to accommodate the delivery trucks, are included in Exhibit 3. Both exhibits were reviewed and accepted by the Traffic Division of the Public Works Department.

Parking

Based on the Corona Municipal Code (CMC), the project requires a total of 251 parking stalls for both the market and bank/restaurant building. The project provides a total of 259 parking spaces, of which 236 are on-site and the remaining 23 are on-street parking spaces located adjacent to the project site, as permitted by the DRSP. The parking numbers shown on the applicant's site plan are incorrect and will be corrected during the permitting process. The on-street parking spaces are located along the east side of Belle Avenue adjacent to the project site and at the south end of S. Washburn Avenue, just east of the proposed market. Per the DRSP, parking is not required to be provided for the restaurant's outdoor dining patio.

Water, Sewer, and Drainage Improvements

Water for the proposed market building and commercial building will be provided by connecting to an existing 8-inch diameter waterline in S. Belle Avenue.

The project proposes a 6-inch diameter public sewer line to tie into the existing 10-inch diameter sewer in S. Main Street. For the proposed market building, a 6-inch diameter private sewer lateral is proposed at the northeast corner which will tie into the existing 6-inch diameter sewer at the northern project boundary. Connection details, alignments, and sizes of proposed sewer facilities will be validated during the plan check review process. Water and sewer service to the project site will be provided by the city.

Development of the project will increase impervious surface coverage on the site and increase surface runoff. Surface runoff, however, will be conveyed via an underground

storm drain to the proposed MWS (Modular Wetlands System) treatment units to address water quality requirements before reaching an underground chamber system within the market parking area for increased runoff mitigation. A pump will then convey flows from the underground chambers to a v-ditch along the western project boundary before discharging into an existing 24-inch storm drain located in S. Belle Avenue.

Public Right-of-Way Improvements

As part of the development of the project site, the applicant is required to dedicate and/or construct the necessary and missing public improvements adjacent to the project site as described in the following:

W. Sixth Street.

No public improvements are required to W. Sixth Street, however, the project site's south perimeter along W. Sixth Street requires an additional eight (8) feet of street dedication.

N. Main Street.

A fifteen (15) feet street dedication and corresponding street widening are required along the portion of Main Street adjacent to the project site. This widening is necessary to accommodate public right-of-way improvements on the west half of Main Street, including parkway landscaping, sidewalk, street trees and curb and gutter. The widening also provides sufficient width to restripe the southbound lanes to include:

- Two (2) 12-foot wide through-lanes;
- One (1) 12-foot wide left-turn pocket for vehicles entering the North Corona Mall entrance; and
- One (1) 12-foot wide right-turn pocket for vehicles entering the project site.

In addition, a new traffic signal is required to be installed at the project's primary entrance on Main Street.

S. Belle Avenue.

The City will vacate six (6) feet of right-of-way along the site's west perimeter adjacent to S. Belle Avenue, adding square footage to the project's parking area. The project is required to construct public right-of-way improvements consisting of new street trees along S. Belle Avenue adjacent to the project site, while the existing sidewalk, curb and gutter along Belle Avenue will remain.

Vehicle Trip Generation

A traffic impact analysis, dated July 2025, was prepared by a licensed traffic engineer, LL&G, to evaluate the project's site access, internal circulation, and the number of daily vehicle trips to be generated by the project.

The analysis determined that the project's overall layout does not create significant vehicle-pedestrian conflict points or significant internal queuing/stacking at the project driveways. The alignment and spacing of the project driveways are also deemed to be adequate, and vehicle turning movements into and out of the site at the driveways are anticipated to operate at acceptable service levels.

The project is expected to generate approximately 3,377 daily trips, including 133 trips during the AM peak hour and 324 trips during the PM peak hour. In comparison, the prior use on the property generated a total of 884 trips per day, with 70 trips in the AM peak hour and 142 trips in the PM peak hour.

As a result, the project is anticipated to generate a net of 2,493 more trips per day with 63 more AM peak hour trips and 182 more PM peak hour trips compared to the prior use. The project's net daily trips is not anticipated to adversely impact the level of service for the 15 street intersections and nine (9) roadway segments that were evaluated in the traffic study.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant paid the application processing fees of \$21,562 to cover the cost of the Precise Plan Permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Per Section 15070(b) 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 (MND) was prepared for the project since 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's mitigation measures and mitigation monitoring and reporting program identified in the MND, 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 MND is proposed for adoption with GPA2024-0003.

Commenting Agencies

The MND was submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH #2025110646). The Planning and Development Department received comment letters from the following reviewing agencies in response to the MND:

- California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

The DTSC comment letter, dated November 25, 2025, was received during the 20-day CEQA public review period. DTSC recommended that all structures proposed for demolition be surveyed for the presence of lead-based paints products, mercury, asbestos containing materials, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) caulk in accordance with California environmental regulations and policies. DTSC further recommended that

all import soil and fill materials be tested to ensure chemicals of concern meet the screening levels outlined in DTSC's Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (PEA) Guidance Manual. In response to these recommendations, City staff added Public Works Condition #25 to the Conditions of Approval for Precise Plan PP2024-0001. Condition #25 requires compliance with DTSC's recommendations during the permitting phase of project development.

The Caltrans comment letter, dated December 11, 2025, was received after the close of the 20-day CEQA public review period and following review of the project by the Planning and Housing Commission at its December 8, 2025 meeting. The City Traffic Engineer and the applicant's traffic engineer, LL&G, reviewed the comments and determined that they do not identify any new or significant transportation-related impacts and do not alter the conclusions or outcome of the MND. Accordingly, LL&G prepared a response letter to Caltrans, dated December 23, 2025, addressing the Caltrans comments.

The comment letters, along with the response letter prepared by LL&G, are included as public correspondence in the Planning and Housing Commission Staff Report packet in Exhibit 3.

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION ACTION:

At its meeting of December 8, 2025, the Planning and Housing Commission considered the subject matter and took the following action:

Motion was made, seconded (Alexander/Longwell) and carried with Commissioner Vernon absent, that the Planning and Housing Commission adopt Resolution No. 2677 granting PP2024-0001, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval. The minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting are included as Exhibit 4.

PREPARED BY: ROCIO LOPEZ, SENIOR PLANNER

REVIEWED BY: SANDRA VANIAN, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: JUSTIN TUCKER, ACTING PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR / ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 - Locational and Zoning Map
2. Exhibit 2 - Site plan for Precise Plan 2024-0001
3. Exhibit 3 - Planning and Housing Commission Staff Report
4. Exhibit 4 - Draft Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of December 8, 2025
5. Exhibit 5 - Northgate Outreach Flyers (English & Spanish)
6. Exhibit 6 - Neighborhood Outreach Map and Address List