



STAFF REPORT

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

2026-10

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT 2024-0003 TO CHANGE THE LAND USE DESIGNATION OF PARCELS AT 323 S. BELLE AVENUE AND 322 S. WASHBURN AVENUE FROM LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AND GENERAL COMMERCIAL TO MIXED USE DOWNTOWN, INCLUDING 0.87 ACRES OF RIGHT-OF-WAY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to approve General Plan Amendment 2024-0003 (GPA2024-0003) to change the land use designation of two parcels located at 323 S. Belle Avenue and 322 S. Washburn Avenue from Low Density (LDR) and General Commercial (GC), respectively, to Mixed Use Downtown (MUD) and establish the MUD land use designation on approximately 0.87 acres of public right-of-way to be vacated. The MUD designation will facilitate the development of a Northgate Gonzalez Market on the project site. The Planning and Housing Commission at its meeting of December 8, 2025, recommended approval of the general plan amendment to the City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Approve General Plan Amendment 2024-0003 as recommended by the Planning and Housing Commission and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program.

- b. Adopt Resolution No. 2026-002 approving the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and GPA2023-0003 as part of Cycle 1 of the General Plan Amendment for 2026, an amendment to the General Plan Land Use Map to change the land use of two parcels located at 323 S. Belle Avenue and 322 S. Washburn Avenue from Low Density (LDR) and General Commercial (GC), respectively, to Mixed Use Downtown (MUD) and establish the MUD land use designation on approximately 0.87 acres of public right-of-way.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

Northgate Gonzalez Market is proposing to develop a commercial retail center on 4.70 acres located on the north side of W. Sixth Street between Belle Avenue and N. Main Street. The development includes a new 40,000 square foot Northgate Gonzalez Market and the remodel of a 6,930 square foot commercial building which are being reviewed under Precise Plan PP2024-0001. The site is comprised of 13 lots and approximately 0.87 acres of public right-of-way (Fourth and Fifth Streets) that currently bisect the site. The 0.87 acres are proposed to be vacated to facilitate the development.

The 11 lots located between W. Sixth and W. Fourth Streets are designated Mixed Use Downtown (MUD) under the City's General Plan and are zoned Downtown (D) per the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan. The two lots at the northern end of the site (323 S. Belle Avenue and 322 S. Washburn Avenue) have different land use designations and zoning classifications. The lot at 323 S. Belle Avenue is designated Low Density Residential (LDR) and is zoned Single Family (SF). The lot at 322 S. Washburn Avenue is designated General Commercial (GC) and is zoned Gateway Business (GB).

To allow for cohesive development of the site, the lots must be consolidated. The applicant is pursuing this through an associated entitlement, Parcel Map 38981, for which approval is being requested. Lot consolidation, however, cannot occur unless all 13 lots share the same General Plan designation and zoning. Accordingly, GPA2024-0003 seeks to change the General Plan designation of the two northern lots to MUD and establish the MUD designation on the 0.87 acres of public right-of-way proposed for vacation. A corresponding specific plan amendment to change the zoning of the two lots is being processed separately under SPA2024-0003.

ANALYSIS:

GPA2024-0003 proposes to change the General Plan designation of the two northern lots to MUD and extend the MUD designation over the 0.87 acres of right-of-way to be vacated. The MUD designation accommodates retail, commercial, and office uses, as well as integrated mix-use development that may include residential components. As such, the MUD designation is compatible with the surrounding commercial and residential land uses to the north, east, and west. To the south are vacant properties already designated MUD. If approved, GPA2024-0003 would ensure uniform General Plan consistency and allow the site to be developed for commercial use as proposed by PP2024-0001.

Replacement of the LDR designation with MUD on the property at 323 S. Belle Avenue does not conflict with Government Code Section 66300(h)(1) of the Housing Accountability Act, which states that an affected county or an affected city is prohibited from changing a land use designation or zoning ordinance to a less intensive use if the city or county concurrently changes the development standards, policies, and conditions applicable to other parcels within the jurisdiction to ensure that there is no net loss in residential property. Although the proposed development associated with the amendment is a commercial use, residential use continues to be provided for under the proposed MUD designation, provided that it is part of an integrated mix-use development subject to a maximum Floor Area Ratio of 3.0. As such, the amendment maintains a no-net-loss in residential capacity.

GPA2024-0003 facilitates infill development of 13 currently underutilized lots by consolidating them into one lot to facilitate the development of a new Northgate Gonzalez Market and redesigning an old bank building into a new bank and restaurant use. The general plan amendment fulfills a number of goals and policies of the General Plan including the following:

General Plan Goal or Policy	Satisfied
<p>Goal LU-17. A revitalized Downtown Corona that is the centerpiece of community identity, history and culture, and governance – known for its diverse and eclectic physical development and form, vibrant economy, historic character, and pedestrian activity.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003, along with approvals of SPA2024-0003, PM 38981 and PP2024-0001, promotes retail commercial land uses which are permitted along the street frontages that cumulatively create a pedestrian-oriented and active street environment, including retail shops, services, offices, entertainment, and similar and compatible uses as envisioned in the MUD designation.</p>
<p>LU-17.6. Promote and support the redevelopment of the Corona Mall and adjacent properties into a central attraction within the Downtown Core, with a mix of supporting land uses.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 facilitates the development of a “catalyst” project intended to attract and spur the redevelopment of surrounding properties and contribute to the creation of an attractive, vibrant downtown.</p>
<p>LU-17.7. Ensure that new Downtown development is attractive and creates an image conducive to economic revitalization consistent with the adopted specific plan.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 is supported by PP2024-0001 which ensures that the proposed development is well-designed and complies with the development standards and design guidelines of the Downtown Revitalization Specific Plan applicable to the project site.</p>

<p>LU-17.9. Promote 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.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 allows for the consolidation of 13 individual lots for the cohesive development of a well-designed downtown neighborhood grocery market and redesign of an old bank building into a restaurant/bank use that maintains the area’s character of low-rise and pedestrian-oriented buildings with distinctive storefronts.</p>
<p>ED-1. Promote a strong and diversified economic base by attracting quality businesses and encouraging existing businesses to expand their sales, facilities, and employment.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 supports the City’s economic base by facilitating the development of a new Northgate Gonzalez market and the repurposing of an existing commercial building for future use.</p>
<p>ED-3. Promote the revitalization of targeted growth areas including the Downtown, North Main Street, southeast corner of the SR-91 and I-15 interchanges, the Sixth Street corridor, the North-West Quadrant, and the City’s Sphere areas.</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 supports the City’s goal of fostering a strong and diversified economic base, contributes to the revitalization and continued growth of Downtown and the Sixth Street corridor.</p>
<p>ED-4. Ensure fiscal viability for the City by pursuing a diversified local business base that provides growing sales and property tax revenues to pay for municipal operations</p>	<p>GPA2024-0003 enhances the City’s fiscal sustainability through commercial sales and property tax revenues.</p>

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant paid the application processing fees of \$9,300 to cover the cost of the General Plan Amendment.

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.

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 4.

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 Woody voting "No" and Commissioner Vernon absent, that the Planning and Housing Commission recommend adoption of the Mitigation Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Plan, and approval of GPA2024-0003 to the City Council, based on the

findings contained in the staff report, and adopt Resolution No. 2676 granting GPA2024-0003 as part of Cycle 1 of the General Plan Amendments for 2026. The minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting are included as Exhibit 5.

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 - Resolution No. 2026-002
2. Exhibit 2 - Locational and zoning map
3. Exhibit 3 - Proposed Amendment
4. Exhibit 4 - Planning and Housing Commission Staff Report
5. Exhibit 5 - Draft Minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of December 8, 2025