



# CITY OF CARSON

## PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**PUBLIC HEARING:** February 28, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Site Plan and Design Review (DOR) No. 1906-22

**APPLICANT:** Humberto Lopez  
3760 Kilroy Airport Way, Suite 100  
Long Beach, CA 90806

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Elisseos Patronas  
17209 Central Avenue  
Carson, CA 90746

**REQUEST:** Consider finding a CEQA exemption and approving of Site Plan and Design Review No. 1906-22, for an exterior remodel and related site improvements to an existing 2,925 square-foot restaurant with drive-through on a 0.5-acre property.

**PROPERTY INVOLVED:** 17209 Central Avenue (APN 7319-033-008)

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### COMMISSION ACTION

<b>AYE</b>	<b>NO</b>		<b>AYE</b>	<b>NO</b>	
		<b>Chairperson (Vacant)</b>			<b>Hernandez</b>
		<b>Vice-Chair (Vacant)</b>			<b>Huff</b>
		<b>Diaz</b>			<b>Monteclaro</b>
		<b>Docdocil</b>			<b>Rashad</b>
		<b>Guerra</b>			<b>D. Thomas</b>
					<b>Alt. (Vacant)</b> <b>Alt. Mfume</b> <b>Alt. Wilson</b>

**Item No. 7B**

## **I. Introduction**

### **Applicant**

Humberto Lopez  
3760 Kilroy Airport Way, Suite 100  
Long Beach, CA 90806

### **Property Owner**

Elisseos Patronas  
17209 Central Avenue  
Carson, CA 90746

## **II. Project Description**

The applicant, Humberto Lopez, requests approval of DOR No. 1906-22 to allow façade improvements to an existing restaurant with a drive-through and related site improvements for a property located within the ML-D (Light Manufacturing- Design Overlay) zone.

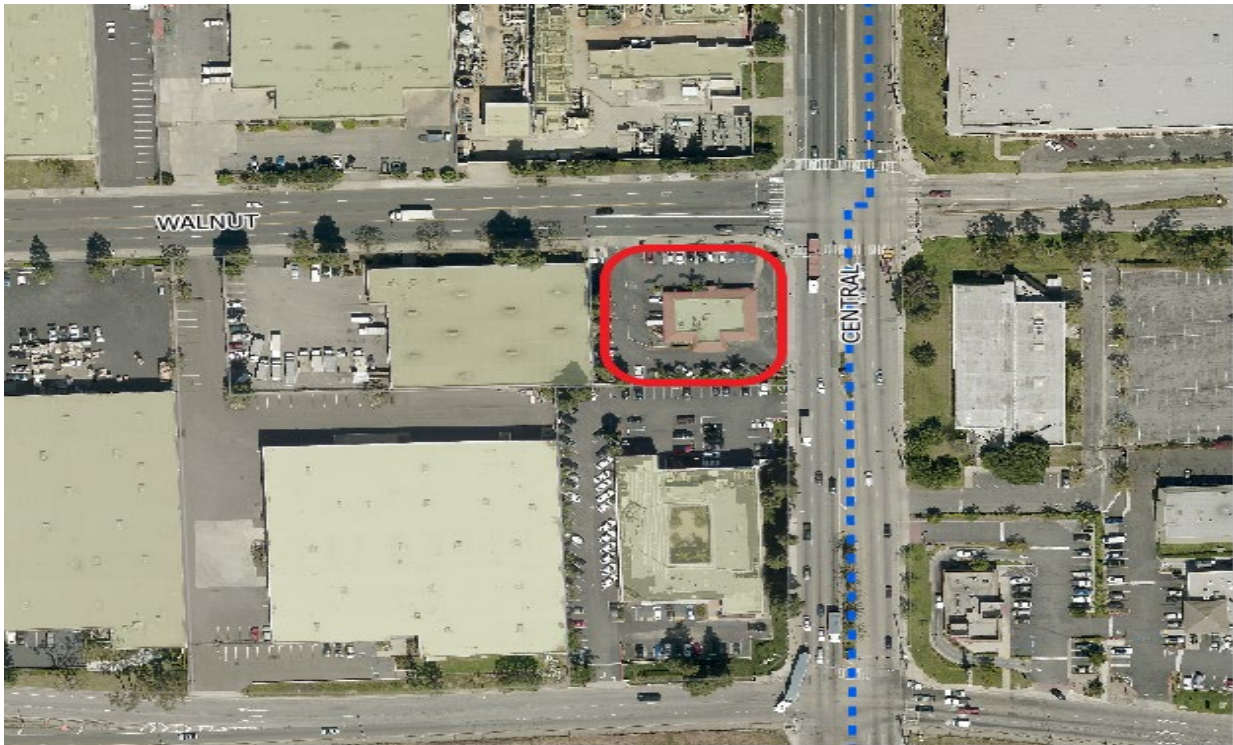
Carson Municipal Code Section 9172.23 (Site Plan and Design Review) requires Planning Commission review of projects within the Design Overlay District having construction valuation of \$50,000 or more.

The existing restaurant, Lucky Star Café, is a privately-owned, fast casual restaurant whose specialty is Mexican and American food. The local restaurant chain has been in business for over 34 years and operates three restaurants with locations in the cities of Carson, Lawndale, and Gardena. The hours of operation at the project site are Monday through Saturday, 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM to 10:00pm on Sunday.

## **III. Project Site and Surrounding Land Uses**

The subject property site is in the ML-D zone and is designated Light Industrial under the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Walnut Street and Central Avenue.

Land use surrounding the proposed project site to the north, south and west is primarily light industrial. A mixture of industrial and commercial land uses is located to the east in the City of Compton.



The following table provides a summary of information regarding the project site:

<b>Site Information</b>	
General Plan Land Use	LI (Light Industrial)
Zone District	ML-D (Light Industrial)
Site Size	25,699 SF (0.58 acres)
Present Use and Development	Restaurant
Surrounding Uses/Zoning	North: Light Industrial, ML South: Light Industrial, ML-D East: City of Compton, Industrial and Commercial West: Light Industrial, ML-D
Access	Ingress/Egress: Walnut Street and Central Avenue

#### **IV. Analysis**

##### Use

On September 23, 1986, the Planning Commission approved Site Plan and Design Review (DOR) No. 355-86, allowing the construction and operation of the restaurant. The restaurant measures 2,925 square feet and features drive-through service and indoor dining.

##### Site Plan

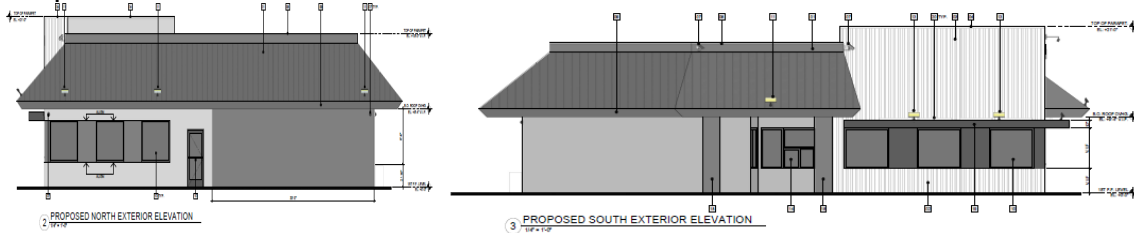
The existing restaurant building sits in the center of the parcel. The drive-through lane, building square footage, and parking areas will not be altered by the proposed remodel. An existing monument sign and a decorative non-operable antique car are in the landscaped area at the northeast and southeast corners of the property, respectively, and

will not be altered by the proposed remodel. The monument sign was approved in 1989 and the decorative non-operable antique car was placed without the benefit of permits.

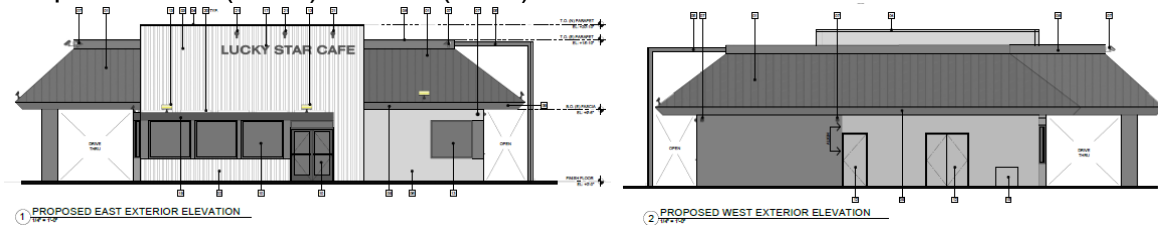
### Building and Architecture

The proposed project includes several façade changes: replacing the existing tile roof with a new dark gray metal roof system, new off-white corrugated metal paneling and parapet, a dark gray aluminum rain screen system, new light fixtures mounted to the base of the aluminum screen system and repainting the exterior stucco siding a mixture of light and dark gray. The proposed revisions will provide an enhanced appearance, an improved street view aesthetic while maintaining the overall scale of the original structure. The subject project does not include interior renovations.

### Proposed North & South side Elevations:



### Proposed East (Front) & West (Rear) Elevations:



### Signage

Carson Municipal Code Section 9136.7 (Signs) allows two square feet of signage for every one linear foot of lot frontage. The existing restaurant has approximately 139' of lot frontage along Walnut Street and 135' of frontage along Central Avenue allowing 548 (274 x 2 = 528) square feet of signage. New signage is not proposed as part of this application.

### Landscaping

Carson Municipal Code Section 9162.52 (Landscaping Requirements) requires automobile parking facilities and any parking facilities visible from the public right-of-way to have interior landscaping of not less than 5%. The existing restaurant provides 1,890 (7.4%) square feet of landscaping and exceeds the minimum interior landscape area required by code.

The property is generally in good repair and well maintained; however, some landscaped areas are bare. Drought tolerant landscaping will be planted to refurbish the landscaping while not contributing to the existing strain on water supplies, Condition No. 23.

## Paving

The parking lot paved areas have cracks through-out and the parking stalls striping are faded. The applicant will resurface and restripe the parking area prior to the final building inspection, Condition No. 30.

## **V. CFD/DIF Discussion**

On April 16, 2019, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 19-1931 to implement the City's Interim Development Impact Fee ("IDIF") Program. Renovation of existing structures are exempted from the DIF (Carson Municipal Code Section 11700).

Based on the adopted CFD, the project is exempt due to the subject property's existing commercial use.

## **VI. Zoning and General Plan Consistency**

The proposed exterior remodel to an existing restaurant and site improvements are consistent with the standards of the ML-D (Light Manufacturing-Design Overlay) zoning designation and LI (Light Industrial) General Plan land use designation and will remain consistent with the surrounding uses.

## **VII. Environmental Review**

The proposed project is limited to Site Plan and Design Review pursuant to CMC Section 9172.23. CEQA applies only to discretionary projects proposed to be carried out or approved by public agencies, and the discretionary component of an action must give the agency the authority to consider a project's environmental consequences to trigger CEQA. Although Site Plan and Design Review approvals pursuant to CMC 9172.23(B)(1) involve discretion of the Planning Commission in applying the facts to determine if the required affirmative findings of CMC 9172.23(D) can be made, the Planning Commission's discretion is limited to the design-related issues included in the required findings. Accordingly, the City cannot impose conditions of approval that constitute environmental impact mitigation measures for DOR No. 1906-22 exceeding the scope of such design-related issues. Additionally, design-related issues such as those found in CMC 9172.23 have been found not to require the separate invocation of CEQA, as it is common sense that such design-related issues do not relate to the potential for whether a project causes a significant effect on the environment. (Pub. Res. Code §21080; *McCorkle Eastside Neighborhood Group v. City of St. Helena*, 31 Cal.App.5th 80 (2018)). In the alternative, the proposed project is exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under Category Exemption (CE) Section 15301 (a), Class 1 for Existing Facilities.

## **VIII. Public Notice**

Notice of public hearing was posted to the project site on February 15, 2023. Notices were mailed to property owners and occupants within a 750' radius on February 15, 2023. The agenda was posted at City Hall no less than 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

## **IX. Recommendation**

That the Planning Commission:

- **ADOPT** Resolution No. 23-\_\_\_\_\_, entitled “A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON FINDING A CEQA EXEMPTION AND CONDITIONALLY APPROVING SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW NO. 1906-22, FOR AN EXTERIOR REMODEL TO AN EXISTING RESTAURANT AND RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS LOCATED AT 17209 CENTRAL AVENUE.”

**X. Exhibits**

1. Draft Resolution
  - A. *Legal Description*
  - B. *Conditions of Approval*
2. Development Plans

Prepared by: Aaron Whiting, Associate Planner