



CARSON PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 22, 2023
FROM: Christopher Palmer, AICP - Planning Manager
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SUBJECT: Design Overlay Review 1928-23, Conditional Use Permit 1125-23

PROJECT/APPLICANT INFORMATION

Project Summary: A request for approval of a Site Plan and Design Review (DOR) and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to develop one parcel into a 2,140 square foot Starbucks coffee shop with drive through and a 3,596 square foot drive through carwash.

Project Location: 23820 Avalon Boulevard (APN # 731-500-3055)

Zoning: Commercial, General (CG)

Project Applicant: Rodrigo Escobar

Project Owner: Infinity CF, LLC

I. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction

This project, which is located at 23820 Avalon Boulevard, involves the following two applications for the development of a 1.26-acre property:

- Carson Municipal Code (CMC) section 9131.1 requires that all permitted commercial uses are subject to the requirements of a site plan and design review (DOR). CMC Section 9172.23 requires approval of a DOR by the Planning Commission for new construction having an estimated valuation of \$50,000 or more. DOR 1928-23 is to allow the demolition of an existing vacant commercial building and construction of two new commercial buildings: a 2,140 square foot Starbucks with drive-through and a 3,596 square foot drive-through carwash.
- Section 9131.1 of the CMC requires approval of a CUP by the Planning Commission for the development of a carwash facility. CUP 1125-23 is to allow the operation of a 3,596 square foot drive-through carwash.

B. Project Description

As shown in the attached site plan and floor plans (Attachment 1), the proposed project would include two buildings as follows:

Starbucks (western building)

The proposed 2,140 square foot Starbucks building is located on the southwestern corner of the 55,072 square foot property. The building is setback 22 feet from Sepulveda Boulevard, 27.4 feet from Avalon Boulevard and the building entrance is oriented to the east, towards the interior of the property. The building features a flat roof design and measures 16 feet tall and includes a painted metal canopy to screen roof mounted equipment at a height of 19.5 feet.

The Starbucks building features a modern design consistent with newer Starbucks locations in the area and includes metal awnings, a decorative metal weep, metal canopies, corrugated metal panels, and smooth stucco siding. The floor plan includes a food prep area, cashier station, two bathrooms, drive through service window, and a lobby with customer seating.

The building will be partially encircled by a 12-vehicle drive-through to minimize overflow into the parking lot and/or street. The Municipal Code requires 21 parking spaces for Starbucks with 21 provided. Landscaping is proposed along the street fronts of Avalon Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard and provides screening for the drive-through lanes from the public. Additional landscaping is provided throughout the parking lot, along the north property line, and along the driveway shared with the carwash. A traffic study for the project submitted by the applicant was reviewed and cleared by the City's traffic engineer. (Attachment 3).

Carwash (eastern building)

The proposed 3,596 square foot Carwash building is located on the eastern half of the property. The building measures approximately 108 feet long and 34 feet wide and contains an office, employee lounge, a bathroom, and an automated vehicle washing tunnel. Vehicle entrance and exit are located at the south and north ends of the washing tunnel, respectively. The building setbacks exceed the requirements of Section 9138.14 (F) of the CMC and measure approximately 60 feet from Sepulveda Boulevard to the south, approximately 40 feet from residences located to the north and over 30 feet from the industrial property to the east.

The proposed exterior materials for the carwash building include a blend of painted smooth honed concrete masonry unit (CMU) and precision face CMU, metal fascia, metal awnings and an archway above the vehicle entrance. The building measures 21.3 feet tall, has a flat standing seam metal roof and features a 29-foot-tall tower at the vehicle tunnel entrance.

The carwash drive through consists of two lanes measuring 135 feet long with capacity for five to six vehicles per lane. Self-service vacuum stations and trash receptacles are located at 8 parking stalls on the east side of the building. Although the CMC does not specify the parking requirements for automobile/vehicle washing, staff have historically applied a parking ratio

of 1:300 for this use. Based on the applied parking requirement, the carwash requires 12 parking spaces with 11 provided, including two ADA accessible stalls. A condition of approval is included that the Developer shall provide an updated parking plan that includes a total of 12 parking spaces for the carwash, prior to the issuance of building permits. Landscaping is provided along the north, east, and south property lines with additional landscaping throughout the parking lot to screen the trash enclosure, electrical transformer, vacuum equipment enclosure, queueing lanes and vacuum stalls from the public view. An existing 6-foot-tall block wall is located along the north property line that will be retained as part of the project.

The proposed hours of operation for the carwash are 7am to 9pm seven days a week. The Carson Municipal Code Section 9138.14 limits the hours of operation to 8am to 8pm, seven days a week, when located adjacent to a residential zone. As residences are located to the north of the project site, a condition of approval is included so that the hours of operation for the carwash meet code. The applicant anticipates a total of 18 employees for the business with two to four present per shift.

Access to the property is provided by three driveways, one on Avalon Boulevard and two on Sepulveda Boulevard. Movements at the driveways will be restricted to right turns only. Left turns into the project are restricted and are prevented by raised medians on both Avalon Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard. A third proposed driveway will be provided on Sepulveda Boulevard and will serve as an exit from the carwash facility. Regarding interior circulation and queueing of automobiles using the proposed carwash, the city's traffic engineer has reviewed the proposed project and finds the interior circulation acceptable. A condition of approval is included reflecting the Los Angeles County Fire Department requirement that the intersecting point of the Avalon Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard vehicle entrance/exit shall remain clear.

According to the sound study submitted by the applicant (Attachment 4) the project operational noise level is predicted to be up to 56dBA at the residential receptors to the north of the project site and does not exceed the required noise level limits for the use as described in the Noise Element of the Carson General Plan and Noise Control Ordinance.

1. Land Use Information

As shown on the attached location map (Attachment 2) the project site sits on the northeastern corner of the intersection of Avalon Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard. The site is 1.26 acres (55,072 sq ft) in area and has a Los Angeles County Tax Assessor Parcel Number of 731-500-3055.

The project site is surrounded by warehousing to the east, a gas station to the west, residences to the north and a gas station to the south. The property is currently developed with a single commercial building and parking lot. The subject building was most recently used as a secondhand clothing and merchandise store.

The following table summarizes the surrounding land uses, zoning, general plan designations:

Land Use Summary Table

	Existing Use	Zoning	General Plan
Subject Site	Vacant Commercial Building	Commercial, General (CG)	Corridor Mixed Use (CMU)
North of Subject Site	Multi-Family Residential	Residential, Multifamily with a density designation of 25 dwelling units per net acre. (RM-25)	High Density Residential (HDR)
South of Subject Site (across Sepulveda Blvd)	Gas Station	Commercial, General (CG)	Corridor Mixed Use (CMU)
East of Subject Site	Warehouse	Manufacturing, Light – Design Overlay (ML-D)	Corridor Mixed Use (CMU)
West of Subject Site (across Avalon Blvd)	Gas Station	Manufacturing, Light – Design Overlay (ML-D)	Corridor Mixed Use (CMU)

- As already stated, the property is located within the CG Zone and has a General Plan Designation of CMU. The CG Zone provides areas for all types of commercial activities not grouped in commercial centers. The allowed uses in the zone include retail sales, retail service, restaurants, personal service, recreation, and others. The CMU General Plan Designation is applied to corridors where a mix of commercial and residential uses are permitted. To support retail and services that cater to the daily needs of local residents, purely commercial or residential uses are allowed.

II. ANALYSIS

A. General Plan Consistency

The proposed development project is consistent with the General Plan and General Plan designation (CMU) of the site for the following reasons:

- The Economic Development Element of the City of Carson General Plan includes Policy 9 “recruit retail tenants currently lacking in the community that serve residents’ daily needs, including grocery stores, restaurants, and drugstores/pharmacies, among others. Focus these businesses near residential areas, such as within the Core and in Neighborhood Villages.” The proposed project meets this policy as it provides neighborhood serving amenities within a close proximity to residences; furthermore, the project is located in the Sepulveda Boulevard and Avalon Boulevard neighborhood node

within the Southwest Carson Neighborhood Village, as described in the Neighborhood Villages Plan of the City of Carson General Plan.

- The Land Use Element of the City of Carson General Plan includes Policy 10: “Promote development of neighborhood-scaled commercial centers in residential areas to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents.” As previously mentioned, the project site is located near residences. Additionally, the resulting lot coverage for the site is approximately 10 percent and maintains continuity and appropriate scale to the surrounding adjacent land uses which consist of gas stations, residences, and a warehouse.

B. Zoning Ordinance Compliance

The proposed development project is consistent with the Zoning (“CG”– Commercial, General) designation of the site, which allows drive-through restaurants as an automatically permitted use and automobile/vehicle washing uses with a CUP. The proposed project complies with the following development and design standards of the CMC:

Applicable Zoning Ordinance Sections	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Comments
Commercial and General Development Standards			
9131.1, Uses Permitted	X		CG: Drive-in or drive-through restaurants are automatically permitted uses. Automobile/vehicle washing uses are conditionally permitted.

Applicable Zoning Ordinance Sections	Compliant	Non-Compliant	Comments
9162.21 Parking Spaces Required.	X		Dining and drinking establishments. The Starbucks requires 21 parking spaces with 21 provided. The Carwash requires 12 parking spaces with 12 provided via the implementation of condition of approval No. VI. 1.
9136.12 Height of Buildings and Structures.	X		No building or structure shall exceed a height of 30 feet. The maximum height of the proposed Starbucks is 19.5 feet, and the maximum height of the car wash is 29 feet.
9136.3 Fences, Walls, and Hedges.	X		A 6-foot-tall solid masonry wall is located along the northern property line, abutting residences. This wall will be retained as part of the proposed development.

1. DOR Application

The proposed development meets the criteria for DOR approval pursuant to CMC 9172.23 (D). In addition to being consistent with the General Plan, the project provides a modern design similar to current development trends for newer Starbucks locations and carwashes. The project is compatible in design and scale with existing and anticipated development in the vicinity, consisting of a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Furthermore, the project provides adequate vehicle circulation.

2. CUP Application

The proposed carwash meets the development standards required by the municipal code including minimum lot area, setbacks, design, and hours of operation, as conditioned and discussed above. The project will retain an existing 6-foot-tall block wall adjacent to the residences to the north and the carwash building exceeds the setback requirements to residences as required by CMC section 9138.14 (F). Additionally, sufficient landscaping is provided throughout the site. As previously mentioned, vehicle access to the project site will be served by three driveways. Adequate traffic capacity is provided as confirmed by the Traffic Engineer.

C. Public Hearing Notice

Public Notice (Attachment 5) was given in accordance with Part 7 of the CMC. Notice of public hearing was posted to the project site and mailed to property owners and occupants within a 750' radius by August 9, 2023. The agenda was posted at City Hall no less than 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

D. Environmental Analysis

The proposed request for approval of a Site Plan and Design Review (DOR) and a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to develop one parcel into a 2,140 square foot Starbucks coffee shop with drive through and a 3,596 square foot drive through carwash is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, in-fill development.

E. CFD/DIF Discussion

In accordance with Article XI (Interim Development Impact Fee Program) of the Carson Municipal Code ("CMC"), the applicant, property owner, and/or successor to whom these project entitlements are assigned ("Developer") shall be responsible for payment of one-time interim development impact fees ("IDIF") at the applicable amounts/rates detailed in condition of approval number I.13 for each square foot of commercial development constructed for the project. If the project increases or decreases regarding the square footage constructed, the total IDIF amount will be adjusted accordingly at the applicable rate.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the judgement of staff, the project is consistent with the General Plan and General Plan Land Use Designation. The project provides a modern design, compatible with existing and anticipated development in the area. The project provides adequate vehicle circulation; furthermore, the project provides a neighborhood-scaled commercial use in a residential area to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents.

Staff recommends 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. 1928-23 AND CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 1125-23 TO DEVELOP ONE PARCEL INTO A 2,140 SQUARE FOOT STARBUCKS COFFEE SHOP WITH DRIVE THROUGH AND A 3,596 SQUARE FOOT DRIVE THROUGH CARWASH."

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Development Plans
- 2) Vicinity/ Zoning Map
- 3) Traffic Study

- 4) Sound Study
- 5) Public Hearing Notice
- 6) Draft Resolution No 23-_____.
 - A. Legal Description
 - B. Conditions of Approval