



STAFF REPORT
11/16/2022

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Gabriel Perez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: McDonald's Restaurant Drive Through Reconfiguration

SPECIFICS: Conditional Use Permit No. 358 and Amendment to Architectural Review No. 15-12 to reconfigure the drive through for an existing 3,854 square foot restaurant in an existing commercial center located at 50090 Cesar Chavez Street in the C-G (General Commercial) zone. Sararee Jirattikanchote (Applicant)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-26 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 358 and amendment to Architectural Review No. 15-12 at the McDonald's restaurant located at 50090 Cesar Chavez Street pursuant to the findings and conditions of approval contained in the attached resolution.

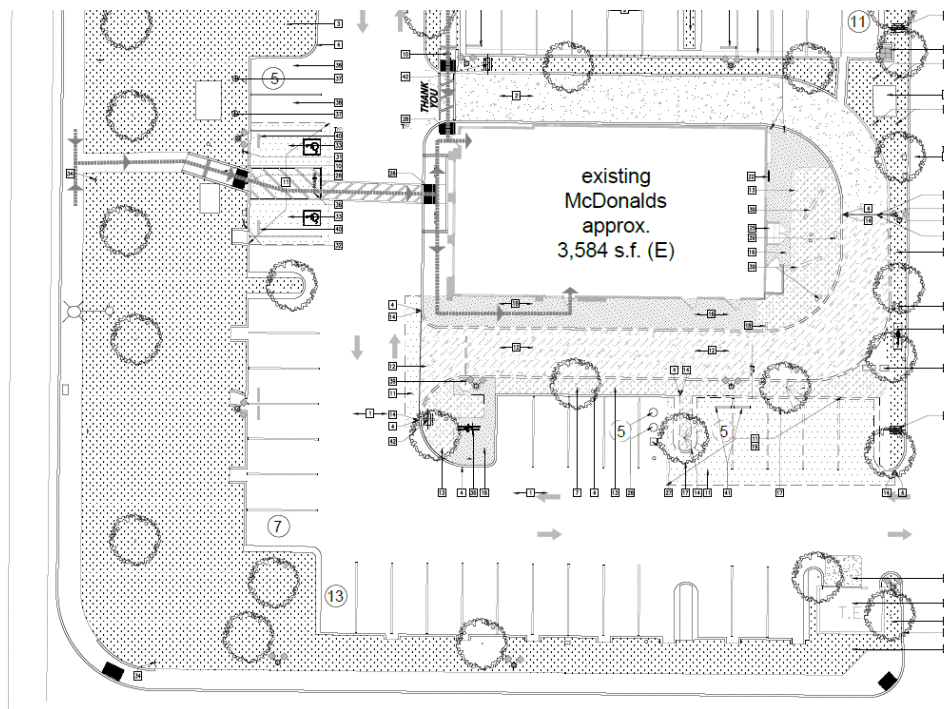
BACKGROUND:

The existing 3,584 sq. ft. McDonald's Restaurant currently operates with a drive-thru located on one 0.83-acre parcel of land that is part of a larger commercial center, Fountainhead Plaza, within the C-G (General Commercial) Zone. The restaurant was first approved with a drive-thru lane in the shape of a horseshoe looping around the building by the Planning Commission on May 7, 2008. On December 16, 2015, the Planning Commission considered and approved Architectural Review No. 15-12 for a dual drive through lane that eliminated the horseshoe shape where customers can place their orders in two vehicles at a time, which was intended to improve vehicle circulation and service for McDonald's customers. The existing drive through configuration accommodates the existing outdoor dining patio on the south side of the building and replaces portion of the original drive-thru lane.

Staff observed that the drive through reconfiguration has resulted in negative impacts to circulation within the commercial center, where queuing vehicles were seen queuing beyond the dual drive through lanes and into the main commercial center drive aisle. Conflicts were observed between vehicles attempting to queue into the drive through from the main commercial center drive aisle and the drive aisle within the existing McDonald's restaurant pad. Chapter 17.26 (C-G General Commercial Zone) of the Coachella Municipal Code requires a Conditional Use Permit for all fast food establishments. The photo below shows an interim measure the owner has taken to help control the flow of vehicles queuing into the drive through lane and avoid traffic conflicts within

the commercial center. A permanent solution for the drive through is necessary to improve aesthetics and to make project findings that it can be operated and maintained to be compatible with the intended character of the general vicinity and not have a harmful effect upon desirable neighborhood character.

Figure 1: Original McDonald's Restaurant drive through configuration



DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Environmental Setting:

The applicant, Sararee Jirattikanchote, submitted a request for a CUP to reconfigure the existing McDonald's restaurant drive through to improve vehicle circulation at the McDonald's restaurant and within the Fountainhead Plaza commercial center. The zoning designation of the commercial center is C-G (General Commercial). The existing commercial center consists of a Walgreens Pharmacy, a McDonald's Restaurant, Taco Bell Restaurant, and a newly constructed Starbucks. Aldi supermarket is under construction within the center. On-site circulation will be improved by extending the length of the drive through lane to accommodate more queuing vehicles while still accommodating dual drive through for ordering. The applicant does not propose to modify the drive through lane to the original configuration, which would require the elimination of the outdoor dining area.

Surrounding land uses and zoning classifications include the following:

North: Existing Walgreens Pharmacy and Taco Bell (C-G, General Commercial).

South: Starbucks (C-G, General Commercial).

East: Vacant commercial land and non-conforming industrial uses (C-G, General Commercial).

West: Existing commercial development across Cesar Chavez Street (C-G, General Commercial).

Circulation and Parking:

Access to the site is provided by five existing driveways, three from Cesar Chavez Street, one from Leoco lane, and another from First Street. The applicant proposes to begin a singular drive through lane along the southerly portion of the McDonald's pad, which turns northerly and opens into two dual drive through lanes for ordering purposes. The new drive through configuration would accommodate up to 15 vehicles. The extended drive through lane is proposed to be bordered top the north by striped delineators rather than a raised curb with landscaping. The new drive through lane would close existing access to vehicles in the main commercial center drive aisle and instead require them to circulate to the McDonald's pad from the more northerly access drive aisle. Two points of vehicular access are required and therefore a new exiting access point is proposed at a southerly point at the McDonald's pad, which exits into the main drive aisle to exit onto Cesar Chavez Street.

The McDonald's pad currently provides for 41 parking spaces, which is above the minimum requirement of 24 parking spaces or a surplus of 17 parking spaces. The applicant proposes to remove 15 parking spaces in total, which includes removal of 13 southerly parking spaces to accommodate the expanded drive through lane and removal of two parking spaces north of the McDonald's building to accommodate the relocated trash enclosure. The removal of the 15 parking spaces would result in a surplus of two on-site parking spaces. A reciprocal access agreement exists between McDonald's and Taco Bell and therefore parking impacts are not anticipated with the proposed drive through reconfiguration. The proposed project is conditioned to prepare and submit plans to the Riverside County Fire Department for approval of a site plan designating required fire lanes with appropriate lane painting and/or signs due to the minor on-site circulation result.

Figure 2: Existing drive through configuration

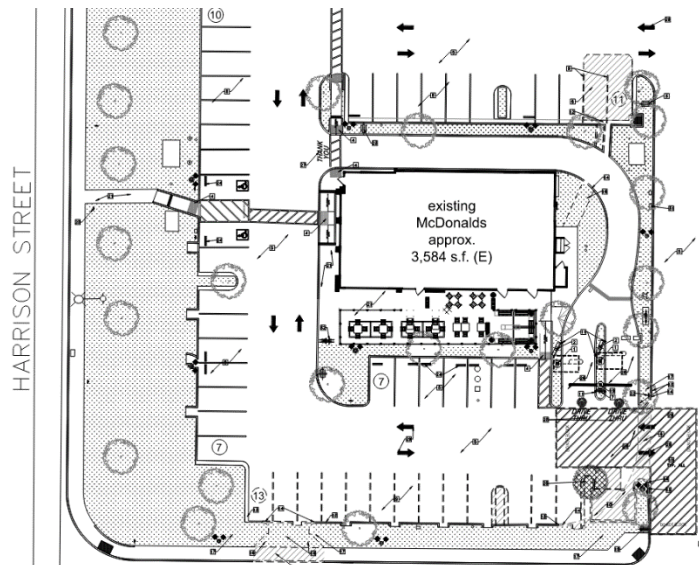
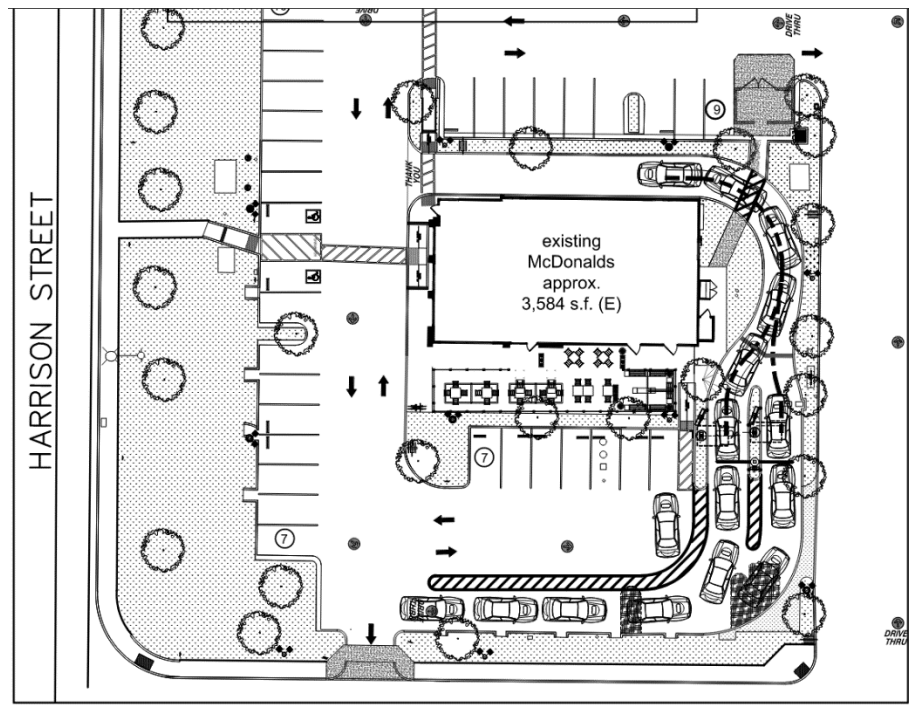


Figure 3: Proposed drive through configuration



Landscaping

The existing landscape area maintenance responsibilities for the McDonald's restaurant pad belong to McDonald's restaurant ownership and not Fountainhead Development. Staff observed that the existing landscaping consisting of groundcover, shrubs, and trees are not well maintained and shrubs and trees were observed to be missing. Staff also observed that the landscape irrigation is not properly maintained as flooding was observed in portions of the landscape areas. Landscape areas would be expanded with the new drive through configuration but no landscape plan has been presented at this time. A condition of approval has been added to the approving resolution to require submittal of a final landscape plan, that existing landscaping be refreshed, and that the owner enter into a landscape maintenance agreement with the City to ensure landscape areas are maintained in a first class condition and that debris is regularly removed.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act as a "Replacement or Reconstruction" project (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303) as the project would replace existing drive through facilities on the same site where existing drive through facilities currently exist. The subject site is .83 acres having reciprocal access and combined street frontage within the Fountainhead Plaza commercial center.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis contained herein and the findings listed below, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission approve Conditional Use Permit No. 358 and amendment to

Architectural Review No. 15-12 with the findings and conditions listed in Resolution No. PC 2022-26, and in the attached resolution. Additional alternatives are listed below for the Planning Commission.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 2022-26 recommending that the City Council approve CUP 358 and Architectural Review No. 15-12 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Deny Resolution No. PC 2022-26 and maintain existing drive through condition.
- 3) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):

Staff recommends alternative #1.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. PC 2022-26
Exhibit A Conditions of Approval
2. Vicinity Map
3. Proposed Site Plan
4. Landscape Plan (2015) for AR No. 15-12
5. Existing Conditions Photos