



STAFF REPORT
1/27/2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Luis Lopez, Development Services Director

SUBJECT: Coachella Travel Center Project

SPECIFICS:

- a) Environmental Assessment (EA 18-05) adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for the development of the Coachella Travel Centre project.
- b) Ordinance No. 1148 approving Change of Zone (CZ 18-11) from A-R (Agricultural Reserve) to C-G (General Commercial).
- c) Conditional Use Permits (CUP 310 and 311) for drive-thru restaurant, car wash and truck wash facilities.
- d) Variance (VAR 18-09) to allow a four-story hotel building in excess of 50 feet in height, in the C-G (General Commercial) zone.
- e) Architectural Review (AR 18-09) to allow a new 3,800 sq. ft. convenience store with service station, 1,200 sq. ft. drive-thru restaurant, 5,555 sq. ft. restaurant, 2,677 sq. ft. car wash tunnel, 4,754 sq. ft. truck washing facility, and 11, 259 sq. ft. 4-story hotel with related infrastructure on 14.1 acres of vacant land located on the south side of Avenue 50 between the Whitewater Channel and the State Route 86 Expressway

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council open the public hearing and continue this item indefinitely.

BACKGROUND:

This item was continued from the November 18, 2020, May 13, 2020, July 8, 2020, July 22, 2020 and September 9, 2020 City Council meeting dates due to numerous issues previously identified by City Council and staff that had yet to be addressed before the City Council could make an informed decision about the proposed development project. Additionally, the City has been in discussions with the City Attorney's office about the future roadway infrastructure project. It was noted by the City Attorney in late July 2020 that a land appraisal had been ordered and that negotiations for a land purchase were to commence.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The City Council and City staff previously raised traffic concerns with the project, as a result of the following issues:

- 1) Inadequacy of the traffic analysis discussed in the CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration document in light of existing substandard conditions at the intersection of Avenue 50 and Tyler Street, near the project entry and the need for a traffic impact analysis to be prepared by a licensed traffic engineer.
- 2) Seasonal flooding issues that result in closure of Avenue 50 at the Whitewater Channel immediately adjacent to the main entrance into the property and the proposed project.
- 3) Concern regarding the Cal Trans Bridge Inspection Report for the Dillon Road Bridge requiring posting weight restriction limits signs for truckers to use alternate routes.
- 4) City Engineer concerns for public sewer and water improvements conceptual-level engineering plans and analyses to be submitted for review prior to final decision actions for the project.

The applicants are in favor of continuing this public hearing but have indicated that they disagree with the above issues as a reason to delay the project, stating only that they believe the City will acquire their property for street right-of-way purposes, and they are waiting for the City of Coachella to make an offer to purchase the subject property for the Avenue 50 / 86 Expressway Interchange project. As such, the developer has not met with the City Engineer to further discuss the scoping for a traffic study and for concept-level utility plans for the project.

Based on the applicant's unwillingness to meet with the City Engineer to scope out a revised traffic study, and the applicant's unwillingness to provide for concept-level utility plans for the project, staff recommends that this item be continued indefinitely until such time as the applicant is ready to address the City Council's concerns. A new notice of public hearing will be required when this project is scheduled for re-consideration by the City Council.