



STAFF REPORT
1/15/2020

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Juan Carrillo, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Policy Discussion regarding a proposed development of a multi-tenant restaurant/retail building including a 2,000 sq. ft. drive-thru Coffee Shop and 4,500 sq. ft. restaurant/office space, and a 12-fueling position Canopy for Service Station and a 3,010 sq. ft. mini-market on 3.01 acres of vacant land located at the NEC of Cesar Chavez Street and First Street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the attached site plan design for a proposed development that includes a multi-tenant restaurant/retail building including a 2,000 sq. ft. drive-thru Coffee Shop and 4,500 sq. ft. restaurant/office space, and a 12-fueling position Canopy for Service Station and a 3,010 sq. ft. mini-market to be operated by 7-Eleven. The proposed site is partially developed with a Walgreens Pharmacy, McDonald's and Tao Bell, all of which have a drive-thru. The request is to provide Staff and the applicant with further direction on the project because the General Plan Land Use designation of the proposed site does not permit automotive establishments, including gas stations and restaurants with a drive-thru.

BACKGROUND:

This property where the proposed development is proposed was entitled by Architectural Review 07-20 and Conditional Use Permit 233 and it is partially developed. Both applications were originally approved by the Planning Commission on May 7, 2008. While the architectural review only approved the first phase of construction, a master site plan showing future retail pads was reviewed by the Planning Commission which at the time included a service station. The overall project included a 14,814 square foot drive-thru pharmacy (Walgreens), a 2,858 square foot drive-thru restaurant pad, a 3,243 sq. ft. service station/mini-market, and two multi-tenant retail buildings totaling 12,672 square feet. The project was then revised to remove the drive-thru component of the pharmacy and reconfigured the drive-thru for the McDonalds.

On February 19, 2015, the applicant, Coachella Realty Associates, LP., Submitted Pre-Application 15-02 proposing to construct a 2,036 square foot fast food restaurant with a drive-thru. The proposed tenant is Taco Bell and the proposed location on the site is between the existing Walgreens Pharmacy and the existing McDonalds restaurant which has a drive-thru at this time. On March 18, 2015, Staff provided draft comments to the applicant on the proposed development. In the Draft Comments from staff, the applicant was informed that the Draft General Plan 2035, at the time, did not allow for drive-thru restaurants in the now designated “Downtown Center” which is the land use designation per the now adopted General Plan 2035. Additionally, in the Draft Comments letter to the applicant, the applicant was informed that a policy discussion on the, now adopted General Plan 2035, prohibition of drive-thru restaurants was going to be staff’s recommendation to the Planning Commission moving forward with the proposed project.

On April 24, 2015, the applicant submitted Conditional Use Permit 261 proposing a phased development to include the proposed fast food development with a drive-thru under Pre-Application 15-02 and two additional fast food pads with a drive-thru each, and a proposed 18,436 square foot retail pad. On September 23, 2019, Fountainhead Plaza submitted a new Pre-Application Review proposing the construction of a multi-tenant restaurant/retail building including a 2,000 sq. ft. drive-thru Coffee Shop and 4,500 sq. ft. restaurant/office space, and a 12-fueling position Canopy for Service Station and a 3,010 sq. ft. mini-market on the remaining 3.01 acres of vacant land at the project site.

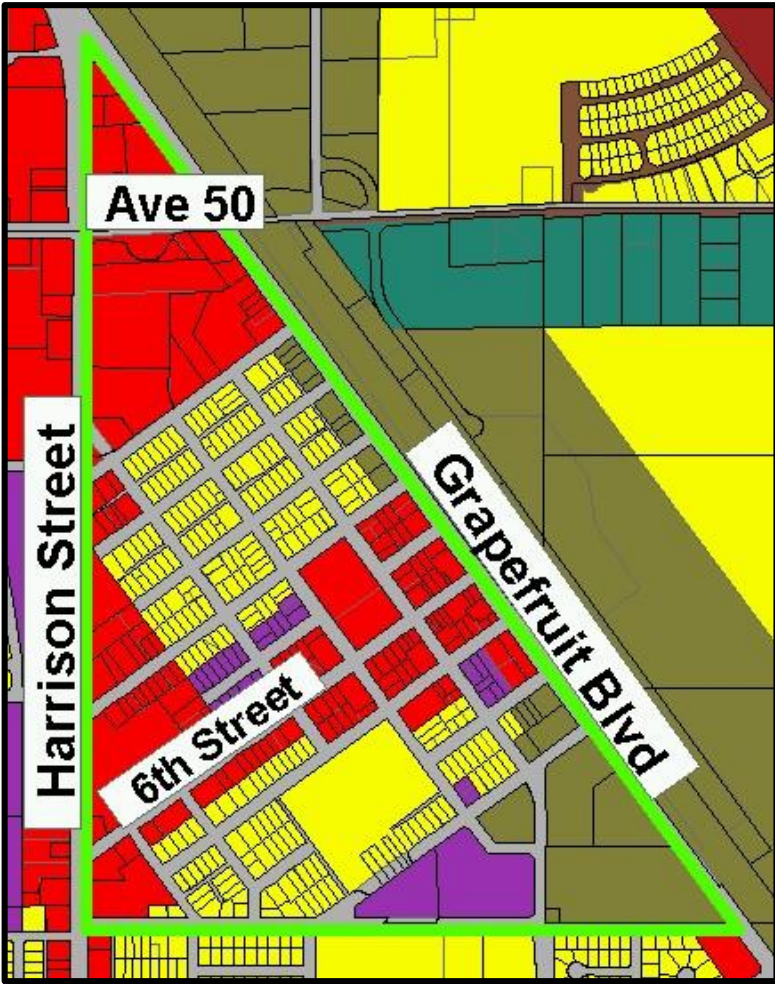
DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

As mentioned above, the General Plan 2035 shows the subject property as a “Downtown Center” designation which does not allow for automotive uses including service stations or gas stations and it also prohibits drive-thru establishments as illustrated on Table 4-1 General Plan designations Compatible as shown on Attachment III. As stated above, the applicant, Fountainhead Plaza, submitted Pre-Application 19-12 on September 23, 2019, proposing the construction of a multi-tenant restaurant/retail building including a 2,000 sq. ft. drive-thru Coffee Shop and 4,500 sq. ft. restaurant/office space, and a 12-fueling position Canopy for Service Station and a 3,010 sq. ft. mini-market on 3.01 acres of vacant land, the General Plan does prohibit gas stations and drive-thru restaurants within the Downtown Center designation.

The proposed site is within the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan adopted by the City Council in August of 2009. In the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan, the site is identified as a vehicular-oriented commercial center. Further, the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan acknowledges the triangular shape of the proposed site as comprised of vehicular-oriented uses with expansive

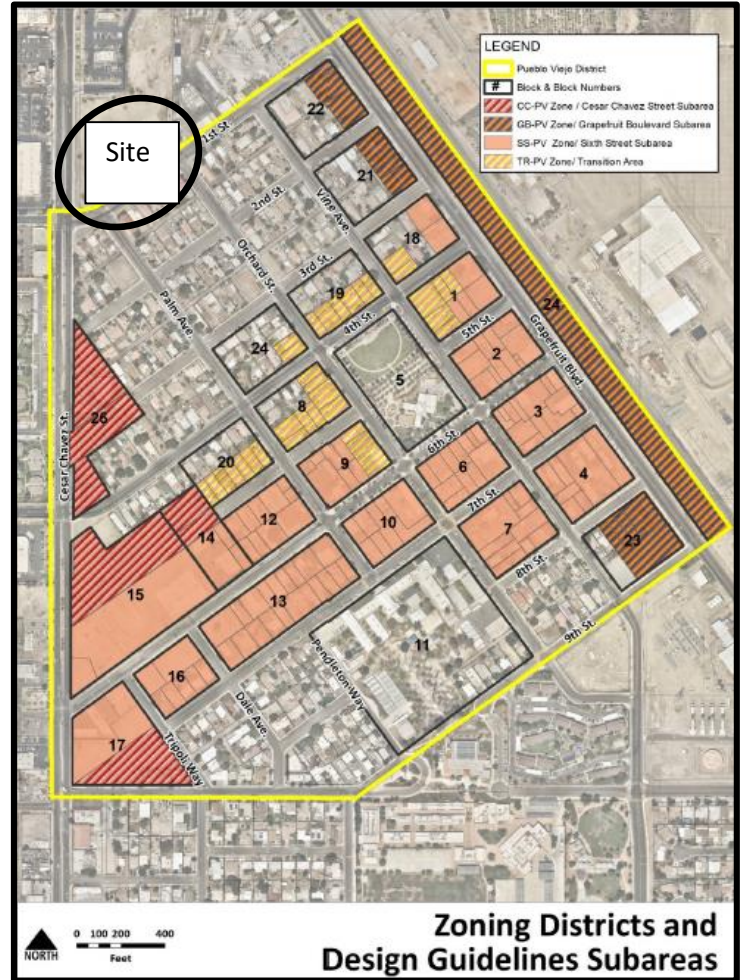
parking lots and some vacant parcels zoned for future commercial uses. Strip commercial uses, some of which include drive-thru restaurants, are generally found along Cesar Chavez Street.

On November 20, 2019, Staff presented to the Planning Commission the Pueblo Viejo Implementation Strategy Plan which proposes to modify the current boundaries of the Pueblo Viejo revitalization Plan. With the proposed boundary changes the proposed project site is no



longer within the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan as demonstrated below:

Original Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan



Modified boundary lines

In February 2011, a study was conducted to address neighborhood connections along Cesar Chavez Street (Harrison Street). The name of the study is Improving Neighborhood Connections Along Coachella’s Harrison Street. The study’s main goal is to improve the circulation between established neighborhoods and future development. Additionally, The study recognizes that as the City becomes more urbanized with growth, Coachella will begin to take steps to remake the

Harrison Street corridor into a more walkable and livable area for people on, and along roadways. One of the recommendations in the Harrison Street Corridor, now Cesar Chavez Street, is that connecting new uses so that foot and bicycle travel is provided. Although the Harrison Street Corridor does not specifically discourage drive-thru restaurants, it makes recommendations for more walkable future development along the corridor. The Harrison Street Corridor makes reference to creating nodes of activity that will be gathering points for the entire community, something that cannot be achieved through placement of a large number of drive-thru restaurants concentrated with a commercial center. Although, the Harrison Street Corridor recognizes that the nature of future development projects will be determined by the market and what proves to be the best fit for the community in the long term.

CURRENT ZONING DESIGNATION:

The project site is within a current zoning designation of 'C-G' (General Commercial) which permits the construction and operation of service stations and restaurant uses with drive-thru service with the approval of a conditional use permit, in accordance with section 17.74.010 of the Coachella Municipal Code.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION:

With the adoption of the General Plan 2035, the City's Zoning Map is now inconsistent with the land use designations of the General Plan. One clear example of the inconsistencies with the land use designations of the General Plan and the current zoning designations is the GC (General Commercial) land use regulation versus the "Downtown Center" classification. The General Plan prohibits gas stations and drive-thru restaurants within the Downtown Center while the current zoning designation allows the construction and operation of gas stations and restaurants with drive-thru service with the approval of a conditional use permit, in accordance with section 17.74.010 of the Coachella Municipal Code. Staff will begin the process of amending the zoning map to be consistent with the recently adopted General Plan 2035. This will require the creation of new zoning designations and corresponding Zoning Code Amendment. Once a draft zoning map is made available it will be presented to the Planning Commission for review in recommending approval to the City Council.

At this time staff is requesting that the Planning Commission provide staff and the applicant with direction regarding the appropriateness of drive-thru for restaurants or coffee shops and auto oriented businesses, including gas stations. The commission may take into consideration that the original project, entitled under Architectural Review 07-20 and Conditional Use Permit 233, included a gas station and other drive-thru uses was submitted prior to the adoption of the General

Plan 2035 which was on April 22, 2015, and therefore the land use designation at the time of submittal may be honored. The Planning Commission may consider that all future development from the date of adoption of the General Plan has to comply with current land uses.

Attachments:

- I Proposed Site Plan
- II Pre-Application 19-12 Draft Comments
- III Table 4-1: General Plan Designation Compatible Uses