



## REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

**To:** Honorable Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

**From:** Damaris Abraham, Community Development Director

**Prepared by:** Carlos Serna, Associate Planner

**Date:** August 20, 2024

**Subject:** Planning Application No. 2023-17 (Lakefront Plaza Revitalization) – Proposal for Exterior Building Façade and Related Site Improvements with a Request for Parking Reduction for an Existing Commercial Center on a 1.99-acre Site Located at 31681 and 31701 Riverside Drive

**Applicant:** Richard Leigh, Fluid and Fare

### **Recommendation**

1. Find that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities); and
2. Adopt A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 2023-17 (COMMERCIAL DESIGN REVIEW NO. 2023-05) FOR EXTERIOR BUILDING FAÇADE AND RELATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS WITH A PARKING REDUCTION FOR THE EXISTING LAKEFRONT PLAZA COMMERCIAL CENTER LOCATED AT 31681 AND 31701 RIVERSIDE DRIVE (APNS: 379-381-053 AND 379-381-054).

### **Project Location**

The project site is an existing 1.99-acre commercial center located along Riverside Drive between Joy Street and Lincoln Street at 31681 and 31701 Riverside Drive. The project site encompasses Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 379-381-053 and 379-381-054.

The commercial retail plaza was originally entitled in the mid-to-late 1980s and is now known as the Lakefront Plaza. The site is fully developed with an approximately 14,000-square-foot two-story commercial building and 12,000-square-foot one-story commercial building along with existing parking spaces and landscaping. Existing businesses at Lakefront Plaza include a mixture of religious institutions, commercial retail shops, and two restaurants.

### **Environmental Setting**

	EXISTING LAND USE	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING
Project Site	Commercial	General Commercial (GC)	General Commercial (C-2)
North	Residential	Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Medium Density Residential (R-2)
South	Commercial	Commercial Mixed Use (CMU)	Commercial Mixed Use (CMU)
East	Commercial	General Commercial (GC)	General Commercial (C-2)
West	Commercial	General Commercial (GC)	General Commercial (C-2)

*Table 1: Environmental Setting*

### **Project Description**

Planning Application No. 2023-17 is a request for a Commercial Design Review (CDR No. 2023-05) to remodel the existing exterior façade and interior renovations of the commercial buildings including the following proposed improvements:

- Demolish both structure's existing storefront, roof membrane, and interior/exterior walls and doors to construct a new storefront façade with interior renovations including partition walls and restrooms;
- Demolish a small portion of the existing two-story building to reduce the building size from 13,837 square feet (sq. ft.) to 13,435 sq. ft.;
- Demolish the existing exterior stairwell attached to the two-story building and construct a new interior stairwell with an accessible chair lift;
- Construct a new 833-square-foot patio with a second story deck for the existing two-story building; and
- New commercial center identification signage, individual unit signage, and site improvements to the parking and landscaping.

The applicant is also requesting a reduction in the required number of parking spaces associated with the proposed remodeling and change in uses (refer to Attachment 5 for the Parking Study).

The proposed improvements are intended to accommodate a mix of new and existing retail, office, and restaurant tenant spaces. Notably, two new restaurant spaces will be added including a second story modern restaurant with a view of Lake Elsinore. The applicant has experience in opening and operating successful restaurants in neighboring cities including Temecula (1909 and Toast). The applicant is seeking to revitalize the existing center and bring new restaurant concepts to serve the Lake Elsinore community including visitors.

## **Analysis**

The following analysis below provides a discussion of the proposed project's consistency with the commercial development standards and requirements pursuant to the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code (LEMC) as well as the General Plan. In addition, the Design Review Committee, including Staff from Planning, Building and Safety, Fire, and Engineering Departments and the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, has reviewed the project and have included recommended conditions of approval to ensure compliance with adopted plans, policies, and regulations.

### **General Plan Consistency**

The subject site has a General Plan Land Use designation of General Commercial (GC) and is located in the Lakeview District. The GC Land Use designation provides for retail, services, restaurants, professional and administrative offices, hotels and motels, mixed-use projects, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses with a maximum 0.40 floor area ratio (FAR). The project is proposing to modify an existing multi-tenant commercial retail building with an existing 0.26 FAR. The proposed project includes changes in uses that will continue to be consistent with the intent of the GC Land Use designation. The proposed project improvements do not involve an expansion in square footage or FAR. Therefore, the project is consistent with the General Plan.

### **Municipal Code Consistency**

The current zoning designation of the subject site is General Commercial (C-2). According to LEMC Section 17.124.020, all permitted uses of the Commercial Office (C-O) and the Neighborhood Commercial (C-1) district as contained within LEMC Sections 17.116.020 and 17.120.020 are also permitted uses in the C-2 zone. Restaurants and retail stores are considered permitted uses in the C-O and C-1 zones and as such, also permitted in the C-2 zone. The proposed remodel and exterior site improvements comply with the applicable development standards for the C-2 zone including building setbacks, height, and landscaping.

The proposed parking reduction request is consistent with the findings outlined in LEMC Section 17.148.030.D.1 and is discussed in detail in the Parking Analysis Section below. In addition, the project includes conditions of approval to address any future parking concerns.

### **Architectural Elevations**

The architectural design of the proposed building complies with the Nonresidential Development Standards (Chapter 17.112) of the LEMC. The commercial building exteriors would be modernized through a more rectangular form with asymmetrical walls and varying rooflines. The structure also employs recessed and pop-out walls to add additional architectural articulation and stone veneer will be employed throughout the structure to avoid long expanses of untreated open walls. The updated exterior consists of stucco in cool shades of white and gray with blue accents. Furthermore, the proposed landscaping improvements complement the proposed building design, provide shade and break-up expanses of pavement.

Parking Analysis

LEMC Section 17.148.030.A requires one (1) space for each 250 sq. ft. of gross floor area for commercial uses in the C-2 zoning district. For restaurant uses, LEMC Section 17.148.030.E.13 requires one (1) space for each 45 sq. ft. of customer area plus one (1) space for each 200 sq. ft. of non-customer area. Notably, the applicant indicated that the proposed patio and second story deck will not be used as a dedicated dining area resulting in expanded customer capacity. Accordingly, it was determined that such area should not be counted towards the customer area for purposes of calculating the parking requirement for the customer area. The proposed project would require 179 parking spaces based on the LEMC (refer to Parking Summary Table below).

SUITE	TENANT NAME	LAND USE	LEMC REQUIRED PARKING	REQUIRED PARKING STALLS
<b>Building One</b>				
<b>A</b>	Commercial Uses (TBD)	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	11.9
<b>B</b>	AP Beauty Supplies	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	4.8
<b>C/D</b>	74 Cantina Mexican Cuisine	Restaurant	1 space for each 45 square feet of customer area, plus 1 space for each 200 square feet of non-customer area. Gross floor area includes 40% customer area and 60% non-customer area.	52.5
<b>E/F</b>	All-Pro Engine and Mower Supply	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	82.6
<b>Building Two</b>				
<b>G/H</b>	Restaurant (TBD)	Restaurant	1 space for each 45 square feet of customer area, plus 1 space for each 200 square feet of non-customer area. Gross floor area includes 40% customer area and 60% non-customer area.	22.9
<b>I/J</b>	Aero Delivery, Inc.	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	7.1
<b>K</b>	Dreamcatchers Photography	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	3.0
<b>L</b>	Commercial (TBD)	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	2.9
<b>M/N</b>	VIP Best Insurance Agency	Retail	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	10.7
<b>O</b>	Pizza Bowl	Restaurant	1 space for each 45 square feet of customer area, plus 1 space for each 200 square feet of non-customer area. Gross floor area includes 40% customer area and 60% non-customer area.	21.5
<b>P</b>	Restaurant TBD	Restaurant	1 space for each 45 square feet of customer area, plus 1 space for each 200 square feet of non-customer area. Gross floor area includes 40% customer area and 60% non-customer area.	22.8
<b>Q</b>	Commercial (TBD)	Office	1 Space Per 250 sq. ft.	5.2
<b>TOTAL PARKING REQUIRED PER LEMC<sup>1</sup></b>			<b>179</b>	
<b>TOTAL PARKING PROPOSED PER PARKING STUDY</b>			<b>135</b>	

Table 2: Parking Summary

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to LEMC Section 17.148.020.C, the number of parking spaces required resulting in a fractional number shall be rounded to the next higher whole number.

The project proposes to provide 135 parking spaces including six (6) accessible parking spaces. As such, the applicant is requesting to reduce their required parking by 44 spaces. Per LEMC Section 17.148.030.D, a request to reduce the number of required parking spaces may be made to the Planning Commission concurrent with the design review of a commercial or industrial project or with a proposed change of use within a commercial or industrial building when the applicant determines that the actual number of needed parking spaces is less than that required by the code.

Based on the applicant's parking study completed by K2 Traffic Engineering, Inc. (dated May 23, 2024) for the proposed project, the following findings are in accordance with LEMC Section 17.148.030.D for the requested parking reduction:

1. A parking study prepared by a traffic and parking consultant was submitted for this project and includes a shared parking analysis based on the mix of current and proposed land uses within the existing commercial plaza;
2. The shared parking analysis includes a Time-of-Day Factor Model for the proposed project based on the mix of land uses and square footages as identified on the site plan. This analysis is based on the principle that different land uses have different peak periods of parking demand throughout a given day (e.g., restaurants have peak demands during typical lunch and dinner times). Given the proposed mix of uses and their varying peak parking demand times, the shared parking analysis determined that they may be able to share a single pool of parking;
3. Furthermore, based on the results of the shared parking analysis, the proposed parking supply of 135 parking spaces including six (6) accessible spaces is projected to adequately accommodate peak parking demand at 12:00 P.M. on weekdays and 2:00 P.M. on weekends at the project site with a surplus of three (3) parking spaces;
4. Reduced parking will not affect the health, safety and welfare of the public because the parking study demonstrated a sufficient number of parking spaces would be provided. Furthermore, the parking lot is designed to allow efficient on-site circulation and access for emergency vehicles; and
5. The project has been conditioned to ensure compliance with the findings and the intent of LEMC Section 17.148.030.D and to ensure that an adequate parking management plan will be implemented to ensure adequate parking spaces will be provided per code requirements should demand for parking increase on site (COA Nos. 13, 14, and 15).

### **Environmental Determination**

The proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (Cal. Pub. Res. Code §§21000 et seq.: "CEQA") and the CEQA Guidelines (14 C.C.R. §§ 15000 et seq.) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities). Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no



expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The project proposes to remodel an existing 13,837 sq. ft. two-story commercial building including a 402 sq. ft. reduction and exterior modifications. The project also proposes improvements to the existing 11,959 sq. ft. one-story commercial building fascia.

#### MSHCP Consistency

The proposed project is consistent with the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). The project site is completely disturbed and is developed with an existing commercial center. The subject property is not located in an MSHCP criteria cell and is not subject to the City's LEAP and the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority's (RCA) JPR process. The project complies with all other applicable requirements of the MSHCP.

#### Public Notice

Notice of the hearing for this application has been published in the Press-Enterprise newspaper and mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. As of the writing of this report, no written comments concerning this application have been received by staff.

#### Attachments

- Attachment 1 – CDR Resolution
- Attachment 2 – Conditions of Approval
- Attachment 3 – GIS Exhibits
- Attachment 4 – Design Review Package
- Attachment 5 – Parking Study
- Attachment 6 – Public Notice Package