

# City of Hesperia

## STAFF REPORT



**DATE:** July 9, 2020

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** Chris Borchert, Principal Planner

**BY:** Ryan Leonard, Senior Planner

**SUBJECT:** Specific Plan Amendment SPLA20-00002; Applicant: City of Hesperia; Area affected: City-wide

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. PC-2020-10 recommending that the City Council introduce and place on first reading an ordinance approving SPLA20-00002.

### BACKGROUND

**Proposal:** The proposed Specific Plan Amendment will increase the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) and maximum allowable building height limitations within the Commercial Industrial Business Park (CIBP) zone of the Main Street and Freeway Corridor Specific Plan (MSFCSP). Specifically, the proposed Amendment would increase the maximum floor area ratio from 0.35 to 0.50 within the CIBP zone. In addition, the Amendment would increase the maximum building height from 60 feet to 150 feet for certain properties that could be eligible within the CIBP zone, provided that any portion of the building that exceeds 60 feet in height meets added setback requirements.

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would apply only to the CIBP zone in the MSFCSP (Attachment 1). The intent of the CIBP zone is to create employment-generating uses in a business park setting. This zone is intended to provide for service commercial, light industrial, light manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution type uses.

### ISSUES/ANALYSIS

**Maximum Building Height:** Over the past few months several developers have approached the City and expressed interest in developing large scale warehouse distribution facilities. The facilities are typically over one-million square feet and are generally located on the west side of Interstate 15, in close proximity to US Highway 395.

Many of the developers have expressed a need for taller buildings within the CIBP zone in order to keep up with emerging trends in the marketplace. Warehouse facilities have evolved significantly over the past few years due to advancements in technology and the surge of e-commerce. Modern warehouse facilities typically utilize advanced technology, robotics and automation. As a result, many prospective tenants are seeking higher interior building clearances for which they can store their product on racking and to accommodate additional heights for equipment and forklift clearances.

Staff believes their request has merit and is proposing a Specific Plan Amendment that will allow for the flexibility of meeting current industry needs for taller buildings. As proposed, the Specific

Plan Amendment would increase the maximum building height in the CIBP zone from 60 feet to 150 feet. The Specific Plan Amendment would only apply to those properties that are zoned CIBP and that are located west of the Interstate 15 freeway. Properties within the CIBP designation that are generally located east of the railroad tracks and west of I Avenue would not be eligible for the height increase. In addition, the Specific Plan Amendment would limit the maximum building height at the front setback line to 60 feet, and thereafter the height could be increased at the rate of 1 foot for every additional 3-foot increase in front setback. Therefore, the maximum building height of 150 feet could only be reached when the building is setback at least 295 feet from the front property line.

**Floor Area Ratio:** The Floor Area Ratio is the relationship of buildable floor area (total amount of square feet) to a given site area (amount of land). The City has recently seen an increase in the number of new warehouse distribution projects and some developers have indicated that it is difficult to meet the City's floor area ratio standards in the CIBP zone due to the unique function and space requirements that are typical of warehouse distribution facilities. In addition, if the building height is increased to allow taller buildings, there is a potential for developments to incorporate additional floor area. Therefore, staff is recommending that the FAR be increased from 0.35 to 0.50 in the CIBP zone.

**Environmental:** The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15061(b)(3), where it can be seen with certainty that there is no significant effect on the environment. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment does not include any new development. Rather, as future development is proposed on parcels that are larger than 5 acres, they will be reviewed independently for CEQA compliance. Furthermore, the proposed Specific Plan Amendment would not introduce any new significant environmental impacts that were not previously analyzed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In addition, several programmatic level projects were recently approved by the City, including changing approximately 130 acres from Regional Commercial to Commercial Industrial Business Park. Because Regional Commercial uses typically create greater impacts to services than Commercial Industrial Business park uses, the impacts that were previously analyzed in the General Plan EIR would actually be less than previously determined. As a result, any additional impacts that would be created by the proposed Specific Plan Amendment would be offset by the changes in land use that were not previously considered in the General Plan EIR.

**Conclusion:** Staff has seen an increased need for taller buildings in the CIBP zone since warehouse distribution facilities are requiring higher interior building clearances. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment will allow for the flexibility to meet current industry needs for taller buildings. In addition, the proposed Specific Plan Amendment will further the City's goal to attract investment and jobs to the City.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

## **ALTERNATIVE(S)**

1. Provide alternative direction to staff.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. Main Street and Freeway Corridor Specific Plan Land Uses Map
2. Resolution No. PC-2020-10 with Exhibit "A"