



Staff Report

City of Pomona Planning Commission

July 9, 2025

FILE NO: SPA-001401-2024

A request for a Specific Plan Amendment to amend Pomona Corridor Specific Plan (PCSP) Section 2.9 "Sign Regulations" to require all signs in the PCSP area to comply with the sign regulations outlined in the Pomona Zoning and Development Code Section .630. "Signs".

ADDRESS: Pomona Corridor Specific Plan Area

APPLICANT: City of Pomona

PROJECT PLANNER: Karina Diaz, Assistant Planner

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: This project may be considered exempt for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve SPA-001401-2024 and adopt PC Resolution No. 25-010 (Attachment No. 1)

Project Request:

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment is a request to remove Section 2.9 "Signs" in the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan (PCSP) and incorporate sign regulations from the newly adopted sign regulations in the Pomona Zoning and Development Code (PZDC) Section .630. "Signs" (Attachment No. 2).

Project Background:

On July 1, 2024, the Pomona City Council adopted Ordinance No. 4345, approving a comprehensive update to the Pomona Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. The new Pomona Zoning & Development Code (PZDC) successfully implemented the goals and policies of the 2014 Pomona General Plan and met the grant objectives set by the California Department of Housing and Community Development in its SB 2 and LEAP programs for permit streamlining to accelerate housing production. The zoning code update was intended to occur in two phases:

1. Phase I – Update Zoning & Development Code
2. Phase II – Update Sign and Landscaping Regulations

Revisions to Sign and Landscaping were proposed to come forth as two separate amendments following the adoption of the new PZDC as Phase II. On April 7, 2025, the City Council unanimously approved the Second Reading

of Ordinance No. 4357 and Zoning Code Amendment (CODE-001403-2024) with a 7-0-0-0 vote. Ordinance No. 4357 went into effect 30 days after its adoption, on May 7, 2025. This Code Amendment was a request to update Section .1310 "Signs" of the Zoning Code and replace it with new regulations. This effort was intended to address Phase II of the comprehensive PZDC update and address conflicting signage regulations that were not consistent with First Amendment rights pertaining to freedom of speech. The approved amendment established sign regulations compatible with the frontage standards in the new PZDC that was adopted in July 2024 and implemented content neutral signage regulations for all permissible sign types. Specific Plans that had independent sign regulations within their respective plans were not included as part of this Code Amendment.

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment (SPA-001404-2024) addresses concerns related to language in the PCSP that directly conflicts with First Amendment rights pertaining to freedom of speech and includes allowance of new types of signage, such as: painted signs, suspended signs, and crown signs. The Code Amendment would provide for consistent sign regulations for the Corridor with the PZDC.

Project Review:

APPLICABLE CODE SECTION:

Pursuant to the PZDC Section 1150.G.(2), the City Council may by ordinance or resolution, adopt, amend, supplement, or change a specific plan; upon written recommendation from the Planning Commission.

A Specific Plan Amendment must be acted upon by the Approving Authority based upon the information provided in the submitted application, evidence presented in the Planning Division's written report, and testimony provided during the public hearing, only after considering and clearly establishing all of the below listed findings and giving supporting reasons for each finding. The application must be denied if one or more of the below-listed findings cannot be clearly established.

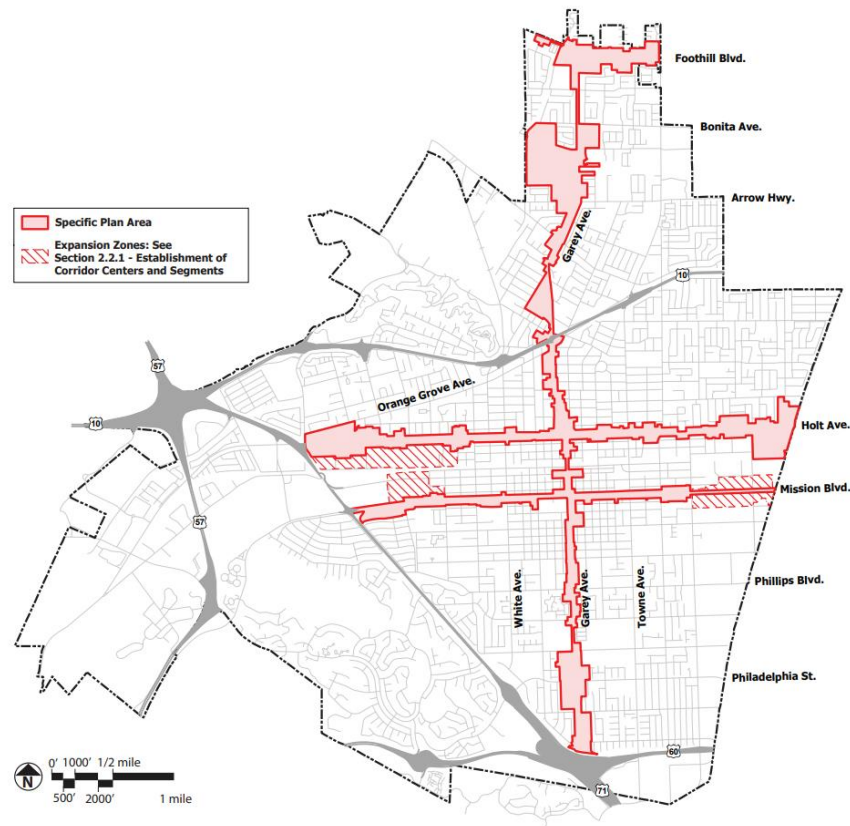
- 1) The proposed Specific Plan, or amendment thereto, is consistent with the goals, policies, plans and exhibits of the General Plan;
- 2) The proposed Specific Plan, or amendment thereto, would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or general welfare of the City;
- 3) In the case of an application affecting specific property(ies), the proposed Specific Plan, or amendment thereto, will not adversely affect the harmonious relationship with adjacent properties and land uses; and
- 4) In the case of an application affecting specific property(ies), the subject site is physically suitable, including, but not limited to, parcel size, shape, access, and availability of utilities, for the request and anticipated development.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

The purpose of the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan (PCSP) is to orchestrate private and public investment activities along the Garey Avenue, Holt Avenue, Mission Boulevard, and Foothill Boulevard corridors and to support and promote the type of investment that will enhance the beauty and vitality of the City's primary commercial corridors. To accomplish this, the Specific Plan presents the community's vision for the evolution and continued growth of these corridors and establishes primary means of regulating land use and development within the specific plan area. Because of their significant potential for change, the Garey Avenue, Holt Avenue, Mission Boulevard, and Foothill Boulevard corridors are identified as focus areas in the City of Pomona General Plan 2014 that require "specific planning and regulatory direction" to ensure the goals and policies of the General Plan are achieved. The Pomona Corridor Specific Plan is a tool which implements the vision of the General Plan along with its goals and policies via development standards, prioritized strategies, and city actions.

The proposed amendment would remove Section 2.9 "Signage Regulations" from the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan and incorporate the sign regulations under Section 630. "Signs" of the Pomona Zoning Ordinance. Affected areas would include parcels abutting major arterial corridors, such as: Holt Avenue, Garey Avenue, Mission Boulevard, and Foothill Boulevard, as shown in Figure 1.1. "Specific Plan Area" below. This action would only apply to parcels located within the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan. Signage regulations for other specific plans are not included as part of this request.

Figure 1.1. Pomona Corridor Specific Plan – Specific Plan A



The new sign regulations can be accessed in the Site chapter of the PZDC, which is responsible for regulating site design, parking, landscape, and other site features. It consists of a combination of regulations that are appropriate to a variety of contexts, such as: transit-oriented center, special campuses, suburban neighborhoods, and open spaces. While regulations are located in the Site chapter of the Zoning & Development Code, permissions will be determined by the frontage module type assigned based on the Zoning District, as displayed in Figure 1.2. Permanent Signs – Allowed Sign Type, Frontage Module Permissions. Aligning sign types to frontage modules ensures consistency with the goals and policies of the General Plan by maintaining the desired relationship to the public-right-of way.

Figure 1.2. Permanent Signs – Allowed Sign Type

630.F. Permanent Signs

1. Frontage Module Permissions

The following signs are allowed by frontage module.

Sign Type	Neighborhood Yard	Frontage Module				Standards
		Multi-Unit	General	Shopfront	Special	
Building Signs						
Awning	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.a. Awning Sign
Canopy	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.b. Canopy Sign
Painted	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.c. Painted Sign
Projecting	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.d. Projecting Sign
Roof	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.e. Roof Sign
Wall	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.f. Wall Sign
Window	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.2.g. Window Sign
Freestanding Signs						
Monument	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.3.a. Monument Sign
Suspended	■	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.3.b. Suspended Sign
Special Signs						
Crown	--	■	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.4.a. Crown Sign
Marquee	--	--	■	■	■	Sec. 630.F.4.b. Marquee Sign

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 = Sign type allowed

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 = Sign type not allowed

■ = Sign type allowed -- = Sign type not allowed

The proposed amendment request will assign the "General Frontage" module to all parcels located within the boundaries of the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan. This will only be applicable for signage regulations, since this is the scope of the action. General Frontage requires moderate to high build-to widths while allowing a wide range of modifications for pedestrian amenity spaces. This frontage module contains regulations that ensure a high-quality pedestrian environment and provides flexibility for a variety of ground story tenants. Both the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan and the General Frontage Module contemplate the same development goals for housing density and mix-use commercial development, and contain similar General Plan designations. Majority of the properties within the PCSP are composed of the following General Plan designations: Urban Neighborhood District, Neighborhood Edge, Transit Oriented District, and WorkPlace District. In comparison, the General Frontage module is applicable for the following zoning districts: Urban Neighborhood Districts (accommodates medium-intensite multi unit housing, office, commercial, and limited industrial uses), Activity

Center Districts (intended for medium-large scale development within neighborhood centers catalyzed by a variety of residential, retail, service, and commercial buildings forms and uses in a pedestrian oriented environment and mix-use is strongly encouraged), Workplace District and Transit Oriented Districts (contains the most active and walkable districts in the city and encourages a mix of residential and commercial uses). The Zoning & Development Code's zoning districts are tailored to implement the designations and place types established in the General Plan. Consistent land use designations with both the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan and the General Frontage module will ensure that the sign regulations are consistent with the General Plan, along with being compatible with the use types for the area.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE:

The land use and community design chapters of the General Plan place high priority on building form and places focus on design that supports public activity and strengthens safety. The reiterated goals and policies in the General Plan promote the efficient use of land that encourage walking, bicycling and transit use across all place types. To accomplish this the General Plan discusses moving away from "exclusively auto-oriented shopping and toward open-air, amenity driven formats that have both daytime and nighttime activity and are clustered at major crossroads". Additionally, the community design chapter emphasizes the creation of more walkable & accessible street environments, strives to improve pedestrian safety, and improve the livability and cultural life of the community through physical design considerations.

To implement the vision set by the General Plan, the sign regulations in the PZDC prohibits the erection of new auto-oriented signs such as animated signs, digital signs, bunting signs, and mobile signage and incorporates new signage types such as painted signs, crown signs, and marquee signs. Additionally, the new signage regulations remove all language pertaining to signage content and safeguards life, health, property and public welfare by regulating the design, quality of materials, construction, illumination, location, and maintenance of signs. Despite prohibiting the installation or erection of new auto-oriented signs in the PZDC sign regulations, the Pomona Corridor Specific Plan still allows for drive-thrus and gas stations within certain segments with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. While no new auto-oriented signage can be proposed with this amendment, the existing signage for auto-oriented uses (such as the gas stations and drive-thrus) will still be able to be updated and maintained, per Section 630.D.(5) "Sign Installation and Maintenance". Monument signs are still permitted under General Frontage to accommodate any new gas stations with the PCSP area.

Community Input and Noticing:

Public Legal Noticing

A copy of the public hearing notice was published in the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin on Friday, June 27, 2025. As of the date of this report, Staff has not received any public comment.

Tribal Consultation

In accordance with Senate Bill 18 (Burton 2004) (Government Code §6532.3(a)(1)) Planning Division staff contacted the California Native American Heritage Commission for a list of Tribes with ancestral lands in Pomona and offered consultation on the proposed specific plan amendment. A formal notification of the Specific Plan Amendment was sent on October 23, 2024 via certified mail. None of the California Native American Tribes requested consultation regarding the proposed amendment.

Environmental Review:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires analysis of agency approvals of discretionary "projects." A "project," under CEQA, is defined as "the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment" (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378). The proposed project is considered a "project" under CEQA.

In 2014, the City of Pomona adopted a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) associated with the discretionary project, which analyzed the environmental impacts of the City of Pomona's General Plan Update (GPU), Corridors Specific Plan, Active Transportation Plan, and Green Plan. In conjunction with the certification of the GPU and PCSP EIR, a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) was adopted. The proposed project site was previously studied under this Certified Final EIR.

In compliance with Section 15061(b)(3), the proposed project is covered by the general rule exemption which exempts activities that can be seen with certainty to have no possibility for causing a significant effect on the environment. The project may be considered for the general rule exemption in that the proposed project only includes the amendment of text of an adopted document previously studied in the 2014 Pomona GPU Final EIR. The proposed project described above hereby meets the guidelines. Therefore, no further environmental review is required.

Conclusion:

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment furthers the goals & policies in the general plan and will not result in any negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, staff recommends that Planning Commission move to approve PC Resolution No. 25-010 and recommend approval to City Council of Specific Plan Amendment SPA-001401-2024, subject to conditions.

Next Steps:

Upon Planning Commission approval of Staff's recommendation, the Specific Plan Amendment will be brought forward to the City Council for a first reading, tentatively scheduled for Monday, September 8, 2025, with an anticipated second reading on Monday, September 22, 2025.

Attachments:

1. Planning Commission Resolution No. 25-010
2. PZDC Section 630. "Signs"
3. Specific Plan Area Map
4. Proof of Legal Public Noticing