



Tuesday, September 22, 2026

701 East Carson Street, Carson, CA 90745
Helen Kawagoe Council Chambers, 2nd Floor
6:30 p.m.

**AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION**

Members:	Dianne Thomas Chair	Louie Diaz Vice Chair	Frederick Docdocil
	Carlos Guerra	Del Huff	DeQuita Mfume
	Clarence Johnson	Leticia Wilson	
Alternates:	Jaime Monteclaro		
Staff:	Nathan Freeman Community and Economic Development Director	McKina Alexander Planning Manager	Benjamin R. Jones Asst. City Attorney
	Laura Gonzalez Planning Secretary		

This Agenda and corresponding staff reports can be found on the City of Carson website at www.carsonca.gov

"In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, if you require a disability related modification or accommodation to attend or participate in this meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please call the City Clerk's office at 310-952-1720 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting." (Government Code Section 54954.2)

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The public may address the members of the Planning Commission on matters within the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission or on any items on the agenda of the Planning Commission during the designated public comment periods. There will be two oral communication sessions: one for Agendized Items (comment about items ON the agenda) and the other non-Agendized items (comment about items NOT on the agenda). The Oral Communications portion of the agenda is limited to a duration of one hour unless otherwise approved by the Planning Commission. Comment time is normally 3 minutes depending on the number of speakers.

IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN-PERSON, PUBLIC COMMENTS CAN BE SUBMITTED BEFORE THE MEETING VIA:

- Email: planning@carsonca.gov (up to 3 hours prior to the start of the meeting).
- Written: Delivered to the Planning Division at City Hall (up to 3 hours prior to the start of the meeting).

Emailed and written comments received by the Planning Division may not be read aloud during the meeting but will be provided to the Board and incorporated into the record.

PUBLIC VIEWING OF THIS MEETING WILL BE AVAILABLE BY:

- Livestream: www.carsonca.gov
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/@CityofCarsonCalifornia
- Cable TV: Spectrum (Channel 35) and ATT (Channel 99)

RULES OF DECORUM:

1. *No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including but not limited to applause, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, impertinent, or slanderous utterance-that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.*
2. *All remarks by members of the public shall be addressed to the Mayor or the Chair and not to any other member of the public or to any single Council, Board or Commission Member unless in response to a question from that Member.*
3. *Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted in the audience during a Public Meeting if the presence of such item disturbs, disrupts or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.*
4. *All persons attending a Public Meeting shall remain seated in the seats provided, unless addressing the body at the podium or entering or leaving the meeting.*
5. *All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Presiding Officer to enforce the Rules of Decorum.*
 - *Treat everyone courteously*
 - *Listen to others respectfully*
 - *Exercise self-control*
 - *Give open-minded consideration to all viewpoints*
 - *Focus on the issues and avoid personalizing debate*
 - *Embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights that are inherent components of an inclusive public process and rolls for forging sound decisions*

1. CALL TO ORDER: PLANNING COMMISSION

2. ROLL CALL

3. FLAG SALUTE

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA

The public may at this time address the members of the Planning Commission on any matters within the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission. No action may be taken on non-agendized items except as authorized by law. Speakers are requested to limit their comments to no more than three minutes each, speaking once.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)

The public may at this time address the members of the Planning Commission on any matters within the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission. No action may be taken on non-agendized items except as authorized by law. Speakers are requested to limit their comments to no more than three minutes each, speaking once.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 11, 2026

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- APPROVE the minutes as listed.

6.B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 25, 2026

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- APPROVE the minutes as listed.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARING

7.A. ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS AN OPTION FOR GROUND COVER IN LANDSCAPING OF LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION, SUBJECT TO SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. CONDUCT a Public Hearing; and ADOPT Resolution No. 26-2904, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL FIND A CEQA EXEMPTION AND ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 9313.5 (LANDSCAPING MATERIALS, SIZE, AND SPACING), SECTION 9313.7 (INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE), AND SECTION 9112.3 (TERMS AND DEFINITIONS) OF THE CARSON ZONING CODE TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS GROUND COVER FOR LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION."

7.B. CONSIDER RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT (ZCC NO. 00005-26) TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANTS

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. CONDUCT a Public Hearing; and
- ADOPT Resolution 26-2905 entitled, " A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MAKE A FINDING OF APPLICABILITY OF CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061 (B)(3) AND APPROVE ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 00005-26 TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 9, CHAPTER 1 OF THE CARSON MUNICIPAL CODE AMENDING THE CITY'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANTS"

7.C. ZONING CODE AMENDMENT TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE CARSON MUNICIPAL CODE TO UPDATE, CLARIFY, AND ESTABLISH ZONING REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO CAR WASHES, SUBJECT TO SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. CONTINUE THE PUBLIC HEARING TO OCTOBER 13, 2026.

8. MANAGER'S REPORT

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (COMMISSIONERS)

10. ADJOURNMENT

Date Posted: September 17, 2026



Report to Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES 6A.

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: McKina Alexander, Planning Manager
PREPARED BY: Laura Gonzalez, Planning Secretary
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 11, 2026

I. SUMMARY

The Planning Division is seeking approval of the following minutes:

- Tuesday, August 11, 2026

II. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the minutes as listed.

III. ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes - August 11, 2026

Attachments

[Minutes - August 11, 2026](#)



**CITY OF CARSON
MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 11, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER: PLANNING COMMISSION

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Dianne Thomas in the Helen Kawagoe Council Chambers, Carson City Hall, 701 E. Carson Street, California 90745.

2. ROLL CALL

Planning Secretary Laura Gonzalez noted the roll:

Planning Commissioners Present: Chair Dianne Thomas, Vice Chair Louie Diaz, Commissioner Del Huff, Commissioner DeQuita Mfume, Commissioner Clarence Johnson, Commissioner Leticia Wilson, Commissioner Frederick Docdocil

Planning Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Jaime Montecarlo

Also Present: Nathan Freeman, Community and Economic Development Director; McKina Alexander, Planning Manager; Kaneca Pompey, Senior Planner; Benjamin R. Jones, Assistant City Attorney

3. FLAG SALUTE

Vice Chair Diaz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)

None.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - APRIL 14, 2026
RECOMMENDED ACTION

— APPROVE the minutes as listed.

Motion To Approve submitted by Louie Diaz seconded by Frederick Docdocil resulting in 8-0-0-0-1 Absent was Jaime Montecarlo

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARING

7.A. REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF DEVELOPMENT AND SITE PLAN (DOR) NO. 00015-26, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP (TTM) NO. 00001-26, AND CEQA GUIDELINES 15168 CONSISTENCY MEMORANDUM, AND MAKING A RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT (SP) NO. 00004-26, AND AMENDED AND REINSTATED DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (DA) NO. 00001-26 FOR THE DISTRICT AT SOUTH BAY PROJECT LOCATED AT 20400

MAIN STREET (Southwest of I-405 and Del Amo Boulevard)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. OPEN the Public Hearing, TAKE public testimony, and CLOSE the Public Hearing
- 2. RECEIVE and FILE the staff report and all related testimony.
- 3. ADOPT Resolution No. 26-2902, entitled, "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Carson (1) Approving Development and Site Plan Review (DOR) No. 00015-26, (B) Amended Vesting tentative Tract Map (TTM) No. 83481, and (C) Find CEQA Guidelines 15168 Consistency"
- 4. ADOPT Resolution No. 26-2903, entitled, "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Carson, California, recommending the City Council approve (1) Specific Plan Amendment (SP) No. 00004-2026, (2) Amended & Restated Development Agreement (DA) No. 00001-26, and approving a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) consistency determination and checklist pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15168 for The District at South Bay Specific Plan Amendment (SP) No. 00004-26"

Senior Planner Pompey provided a presentation.

Assistant City Attorney Jones - We have a revised version of Resolution No. 26-2902. The edits were essentially to make clear that the Planning Commission's action tonight on the Development and Site Plan Review and the Vesting Tentative Tract Map, and the CEQA findings are a recommendation to the City Council. We also have some edits to Resolution No. 26-2903, which I will read into the record. There are several blanks that you'll see throughout the recitals and the conditions of approval and throughout the resolution for dates and entitlement numbers. We request the Planning Commission's authority for staff to fill in those dates and entitlement numbers after the fact and to add exhibit A, which is the legal description. We also would revise the title of the resolution to clarify that the action is to recommend City Council making the CEQA finding as well as approving the Specific Plan Amendment and Development Agreement with subject to conditions of approval. We have the removal conditions of approval number 11 through 16 as Ms. Pompey mentioned. The words "residential, retail, recreation and" would be deleted from Section 3(b). In the beginning of Section 4, we would add the words "and recommends that the City Council find," so it would read, "the Planning Commission further finds and recommends that the City Council find that the proposed project is within the scope," etc. In Section 5(a), after where it says, "adopt the Specific Plan Amendment with the entitlement number," we would add "subject to the conditions of approval attached as Exhibit B." We would delete Section 6, which is an appeal provision and does not apply.

Commissioner Huff - There's a change in the building size in Area 3. I believe we were to have some restaurants, what's changed?

Senior Planner Pompey - The proposal removes the Country Mart in Area 3, and the area would then consist of solely light industrial uses. The new proposal would be for the five industrial buildings. This is a way for the project to continue moving forward with fewer environmental impacts and without needing further environmental analysis.

Planning Manager Alexander - We understand there was a huge interest as part of this project, and we want to express that there is opportunity in other cells for the interest that you just expressed and that may come into light a bit later.

Public Comments:

Jeff Bree (Ironworkers Local 433) - Supports the project.

Amy Smith (Creed LA) - Supports the project.

Victor Glenn Najjar (Anchor Church) - Supports the project.

Myra Hildreth (IBEW Local 11) - Supports the project.

Robert Ramos (Ironworkers Local 416) - Supports the project.

Brenda Campos - Supports the project.

Silvia Coss - Supports the project.

Crystal Lewis (UA Local 250) - Supports the project.

Ivonnenanette Machado - Supports the project.

Juan Morales (UA Local 78) - Supports the project.

Dave Rand - Supports the project.

Bella Gonzalez - Supports the project.

Motion To Approve submitted by Louie Diaz seconded by Del Huff resulting in 8-0-0-0-1 Absent was Jaime Monteclaro

8. MANAGER'S REPORT

Director Freeman - As you may recall, about four years ago my department, working with the City Council, the Economic Development Commission, and the Planning Commission, put together the city's economic development strategic plan. We have made amazing progress toward the goals and objectives of plan. We promised you that we were going to do a presentation tonight on that; however, our Economic Development Manager, Chris Palmer, is out of town at a conference. At our next meeting, we will have a comprehensive report to share with you. That same report is going to the City Council on September 1st. Feel free to tune in. A couple of months ago, I shared with you a vision for the redevelopment of the Carson Civic Center Campus. The request for qualifications and proposals closed two weeks ago, and we received three proposals. As staff, we are very excited. I can't share any of the details yet. I'm excited too, based on what I've seen and on the potential for what this 20-acre campus could become in the future. I'll be sure to keep this commission apprised as we move forward. Certainly, as always, I want to thank staff for the hard work they put into tonight's meeting. Gena, Kaneca, McKina, Ben, and Rich Campbell from Aleshire & Wynder put a tremendous effort into bringing this together for you tonight.

Planning Manager Alexander - Commissioner Guerra, we are happy to see you. At our next meeting, we'll have a workshop, a refresher on Planning Commission expectations led by Ben Jones.

Assistant City Attorney Jones - It's wonderful to see you all. Welcome back, Commissioner Guerra. Thank you to staff for the amazing work.

9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (COMMISSIONERS)

Commissioner Johnson - Happy to be here, serve, and see the community come out.

Commissioner Mfume - Happy to see my commissioners here. I'm glad to see Commissioner Guerra back with us. Thank you to staff, you do an awesome job. Everybody seemed to be on the same page and really excited about what's getting ready to happen at the 157-acres. We are ready to see a change. I'm hoping that the Country Mart is not off the table. We hope to see something like that for the community.

Commissioner Wilson - Ditto to all the comments that have been made.

Commissioner Docdocil - I would like to highlight how great it is to get everybody back together pulling in the same direction. That comprehensive report was amazing. It's awesome to see the community coming through, the developer, representatives from the workers or professionals that will be part of this project, the faith groups, and the youth. We are all pulling in the same direction. I recall before we took our last break, I had requested information about not having a left turn arrow on the southern end of Main Street.

Planning Manager Alexander - Thank you for the reminder. I will contact you offline to continue the conversation and we can bring it back to the commission as a final discussion at our next meeting.

Commissioner Huff - The professionalism of your department is wonderful. I appreciate your being ready and having the answers right there for us. It's wonderful to be back and to see everybody.

Commissioner Guerra - It's a privilege and a pleasure to serve. It's great to see all my fellow commissioners.

Vice Chair Diaz - It's wonderful to be here this evening. I think the project spoke for itself. We appreciate staff's efforts to put these presentations before us. It's a collaboration with staff, the applicants, and the developers, and all entities. Thank you for the comprehensive report.

Chair Thomas - It's great to be back. There's so much happening in the city. The Manhattan Square townhomes are absolutely mind blowing. The developer who started that is part of the team that's working on tonight's project as well. You can see our fiber optics network going all over the city. You can go through the city, and you'll see so much going on. We have the Jazz Festival coming on October 3rd. We completed a backpack giveaway with the mayor this past Saturday. There is a fest that will take place on September 22nd at Stevenson Park. It's a Family Fest free for everyone. It's sad news for those of you who knew Wayne Baker, who was a member of the Carson Citizens Cultural Arts Foundation, passed away this weekend. Let's keep each other in prayer so that we can continue to lift each other up.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Dianne Thomas at 7:25 p.m.

Dianne Thomas, Chairperson

Attest:

Laura Gonzalez, Secretary



Report to Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:30 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES 6B.

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: McKina Alexander, Planning Manager
PREPARED BY: Laura Gonzalez, Planning Secretary
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 25, 2026

I. SUMMARY

The Planning Division is seeking approval of the following minutes.

- Tuesday, August 25, 2026

II. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE the minutes as listed.

III. ATTACHMENTS

1. Minutes, August 25, 2026

Attachments

[Minutes - August 25, 2026.pdf](#)



**CITY OF CARSON
MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION
AUGUST 25, 2026**

1. CALL TO ORDER: PLANNING COMMISSION

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chair Dianne Thomas in the Helen Kawagoe Council Chambers, Carson City Hall, 701 E. Carson Street, California 90745.

2. ROLL CALL

Planning Secretary Laura Gonzalez noted the roll:

Planning Commissioners Present: Chair Dianne Thomas, Commissioner Del Huff, Commissioner DeQuita Mfume, Commissioner Clarence Johnson, Commissioner Leticia Wilson, Commissioner Frederick Docdocil, Commissioner Jaime Monteclaro

Planning Commissioner Absent: Vice Chair Louie Diaz, Commissioner Carlos Guerra

Also Present: Nathan Freeman, Community and Economic Development Director; McKina Alexander, Planning Manager; James Nguyen, Real Property Services Manager; Benjamin R. Jones, Assistant City Attorney

3. FLAG SALUTE

Commissioner Johnson let the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA

None.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)

None.

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.A. TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES

The presentation was provided by James Nguyen, Real Property Services Manager.

6.B. UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE FEE AND SPECIAL TAX STUDY

The presentation was provided by James Nguyen, Real Property Services Manager.

6.C. TRAINING WORKSHOP - MEETING AND HEARING PROTOCOLS AND PROCEDURES REFRESHER

The workshop was provided by Benjamin Jones, Assistant City Attorney.

7. MANAGER'S REPORT

Planning Manager Alexander - Thank you, Assistant City Attorney Jones, for the awesome presentation. Our last refresher was in 2021; it was time. We'll email you the slides if you already don't have them as well as the flow chart. Please let us know if you want The League of California PC book. Email any inquiries to Laura and she'll do the coordination. I want to make sure that the Planning Commission knows that James Nguyen has a new division under his wing. He is now the Real Property Services Manager, but he also has his own division within the Community and Economic Development Department. I want to say kudos to him because of those many years in the making. I also want to share that September 22nd is going to be a robust meeting. Please be here for that meeting because we have a few items on board. I want to bring back a matter regarding Commissioner Docdocil and the inquiry regarding a left turn arrow at the southbound Main and Alameda intersection. The city traffic engineer said that they're going to collect data and complete a study and will let us know what the findings are. I'll circle back sometime around late October with their findings.

8. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (COMMISSIONERS)

Commissioner Montecarlo - This year is a milestone for me, I turn 80. I'm happy to be here and serve the City of Carson as a commissioner.

Commissioner Johnson - I'm happy to be here and excited to see the brownfield grant circling back. I know that's going to be a lot of work. I'm excited about what's to come.

Commissioner Mfume - I'm happy to be here. James Nguyen, thank you for the presentations. Congratulations on your new title in office. Assistant City Attorney, I appreciated your presentation. I learned a lot.

Commissioner Wilson - I echo the sentiments of all my colleagues. I want to acknowledge the young lady here who's from the nonprofit who has been very involved over the years. Thank you for always having a presence at these meetings and speaking on behalf of the community around the issues that your organization focuses on. I think for the most part, we all are very supportive of what you do. Thank you for being here.

Commissioner Docdocil - It's always a privilege to attend and participate. It's nice to see our public being involved in these proceedings. It's wonderful to have such capable presenters give us so much

information. The last training preceded my participation in the commission. This is a lot of information that is necessary in doing what we do. Having these tools in our arsenal can only help us in doing our job to the best of our ability. Thank you to the staff for preparing this for us. Hats off to my fellow commissioners for your willingness to serve.

Commissioner Huff - I think we are all happy and proud to serve. It's a pleasure to work alongside you. I applaud everybody for the time and the effort they're putting in for us being trained.

Commissioner Wilson - Do we know when Sprouts will open?

Planning Manager Alexander - It'll be open sometime in October. I'll get back to you regarding the date.

Chair Thomas - It's a pleasure and honor to serve in this city, especially with all the things that are happening and are projected to happen. When you think about how small Carson is comparatively speaking to these big cities, we are doing excellent. The city is on the move. We just had a press conference last week with a major announcement that will bring over \$400 plus million dollars coming from the oil company Marathon over the next fifteen years. Decisions and agreements have been made that put this city on a firm foundation of solvency that is just unmatched. I want to commend the City Council and staff that worked on that and made that dream happen. Our future is bright. We are now becoming a destination city with the things that are proposed to be happening here. This is a good place to be. We have the prayer breakfast coming up on September 19th. The Jazz Festival is coming up on October 3rd. The women conference is also coming up. We have the turkey coming up in November and then Winter Fest and toy giveaway in December.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Dianne Thomas at 7:50 p.m.

Dianne Thomas, Chairperson

Attest:

Laura Gonzalez, Secretary



Report to Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:30 PM

NEW PUBLIC HEARING 17A.

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Nathan Freeman, Director of Community and Economic Development

PREPARED BY: Nathan Freeman, Director of Community and Economic Development

SUBJECT: ZONING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS AN OPTION FOR GROUNDCOVER IN LANDSCAPING OF LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION, SUBJECT TO SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS

PROJECT/APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project Summary:	Consider a Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow artificial turf as groundcover in landscaping of lawfully established, purely residential land uses (existing and new) and expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option.
Project Location:	Citywide
General Plan/Zoning:	Various Zoning Designations
Project Applicant:	City of Carson, Community and Economic Development Department
Project Owner:	Not Applicable

I. OVERVIEW

The Community & Economic Development Department is proposing amendments to the Carson Zoning Code to provide residential property owners with additional landscaping options that promote water conservation and the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping practices. The proposed amendments would allow artificial turf as a groundcover landscaping option for lawfully established, purely residential properties. Xeriscape would also be recognized as an allowable landscaping option.

For purposes of the proposed amendments, xeriscape means landscaping that uses drought-tolerant and low-water plants, along with other water-efficient landscaping practices, to reduce the amount of water needed to maintain the landscaped area. Xeriscape can include a variety of trees, shrubs, ground cover, ornamental grasses, and other plants that require less water than traditional turf and other water-intensive landscaping.

The proposed amendments would establish standards governing the materials, installation, drainage, maintenance, and appearance of artificial turf and xeriscape to ensure that such alternative landscaping remains attractive, functional, and compatible with surrounding properties. The Planning Commission is being asked to consider the proposed amendments and recommend that the City Council approve them. The City Council may make revisions to the proposed amendments before adoption.

II. BACKGROUND

The City's existing landscaping regulations establish requirements concerning landscaping materials, plant size and spacing, installation, and maintenance. The current regulations generally contemplate the use of live plant material as ground cover and establish standards intended to maintain landscaped areas throughout the City.

The City has received interest in allowing additional landscaping options, particularly artificial turf and drought-tolerant landscaping, for residential properties. The proposed amendments would provide property owners with additional options for maintaining landscaped areas while promoting water conservation and the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping practices.

Artificial turf can provide an alternative to traditional grass lawns and, when properly installed and maintained, can reduce the amount of water required to maintain a lawn. At the same time, artificial turf can create maintenance, drainage, heat, appearance, and installation concerns if it is not subject to appropriate standards.

Similarly, xeriscape can provide a water-efficient alternative to conventional landscaping by using drought-tolerant and low-water plants and other landscaping practices that require less supplemental irrigation. Unlike artificial turf, xeriscape uses living plants and can provide color, texture, and other visual benefits while reducing water use.

In response, staff has prepared amendments to the Carson Zoning Code that would allow artificial turf as a groundcover landscaping option for lawfully established, purely residential properties, while establishing standards intended to address potential impacts associated with their installation and maintenance. The amendments would also expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option, except as otherwise required by the Code (e.g., where the Code mandates specific landscaping requirements that cannot be met by use of xeriscape).

III. PROPOSED ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS

The proposed amendments would modify the Carson Zoning Code provisions governing landscaping materials, installation and maintenance, and definitions.

A. Artificial Turf

The proposed amendments would allow artificial turf as ground cover for lawfully established, purely residential properties throughout the City, regardless of the underlying zoning designation, for up to sixty percent (60%) of the total landscaped area, subject to specified requirements. Artificial turf would not be permitted for mixed-use developments, commercial properties, or other non-residential uses. The proposed standards would establish minimum requirements for artificial turf materials, including:

- Appearance and simulation of natural grass;
- Pile height;
- Fiber materials;
- Permeable backing;
- Manufacturer warranty;
- Resistance to weather, staining, insects, rot, mildew, and fungus;
- UV resistance and dimensional stability;
- Thatch layer;
- Infill materials; and
- Prohibition of rubber infill.

The proposed regulations would also prohibit materials that do not meet the specified standards, including nylon-based or plastic blades and rubber infill.

B. Artificial Turf Installation

The proposed amendments would establish installation requirements intended to ensure that artificial turf is properly installed and does not create drainage or maintenance problems.

The proposed standards would require:

1. Installation in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements and specifications;
2. Installation by licensed professionals with experience installing artificial turf;
3. Removal of existing plant material from the installation area;
4. Appropriate grading and slope to prevent excessive pooling, runoff, or flooding onto adjacent properties;
5. Installation over a minimum three-inch aggregate base providing adequate drainage and stability;
6. Anchoring of artificial turf at edges and seams;
7. Separation of artificial turf from live planting areas by an approved barrier; and
8. Capping or removal of existing irrigation infrastructure within the artificial turf installation area.

The proposed regulations would also authorize the Director of Community and Economic Development, or designee, to establish administrative guidelines addressing submittal requirements and additional installation and maintenance standards.

C. Artificial Turf Maintenance

The proposed amendments would establish ongoing maintenance requirements for artificial turf to ensure it remains in a green, fadeless, and well-maintained condition. Artificial turf would be required to remain free of weeds, stains, debris, tears, holes, depressions, ruts, odors, and uplifted edges or seams, with damaged or worn areas repaired or replaced to maintain a consistent appearance. Artificial turf would also be required to be replaced when it can no longer be maintained as required, and vehicle storage or parking on artificial turf would be prohibited.

D. Xeriscape

The proposed amendments would expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option, except as otherwise required by the Code (e.g., where the Code mandates specific landscaping requirements that cannot be met by use of xeriscape). Xeriscape is intended to provide property owners with the option to replace traditional turf and other water-intensive landscaping with drought-tolerant and low-water plants and other water-efficient landscaping practices.

Xeriscape may include trees, shrubs, ground cover, ornamental grasses, and other appropriate plants that require less water to maintain. The intent is to reduce water use while continuing to provide an attractive and functional landscaped area.

The proposed regulations would establish standards for xeriscape landscaping, including appropriate plant materials, landscaping coverage, irrigation, maintenance, and overall appearance. These standards are intended to ensure that xeriscape provides an attractive and functional landscaped area while reducing water consumption and maintaining compatibility with surrounding residential properties.

E. Definition of Artificial Turf and Xeriscape

The proposed amendments would add definitions for artificial turf and xeriscape to the Carson Zoning Code. Artificial turf would be defined as a manufactured grass-like surface made from synthetic materials that is used as an alternative to natural grass. Xeriscape would be defined as landscaping that uses drought-tolerant and low-water plants, along with other water-efficient landscaping practices, to reduce the amount of water needed to maintain the landscaped area.

Establishing these definitions in the Zoning Code would provide greater clarity for property owners, applicants, staff, and code enforcement personnel when determining whether a proposed landscaping treatment qualifies under the new provisions.

IV. ANALYSIS

The proposed amendments would provide residential property owners with additional options for complying with the City's landscaping requirements while promoting water conservation and also establishing standards intended to maintain attractive, functional, and well-maintained residential neighborhoods.

Water Conservation

Allowing xeriscape and artificial turf would provide alternatives to conventional turf landscaping that can reduce water consumption. Xeriscape would allow property owners to replace water-intensive landscaping with drought-tolerant and low-water plants and more efficient irrigation practices, while artificial turf would provide an alternative for portions of residential landscaped areas where a grass-like appearance is desired without the ongoing irrigation requirements associated with natural turf.

The proposed amendments would allow property owners to replace water-intensive turf and other landscaping with lower-water alternatives while maintaining an attractive and well-maintained appearance.

Neighborhood Appearance

The proposed amendments include standards intended to ensure that alternative landscaping materials remain visually compatible with residential neighborhoods. Artificial turf would be required to maintain a green, fadeless, grass-like appearance and remain free of weeds, debris, damage, and other conditions that could create an unsightly appearance, while xeriscape would be subject to landscaping and maintenance standards intended to ensure that drought-tolerant landscaping remains attractive, properly maintained, and compatible with surrounding properties.

Drainage and Adjacent Properties

Improperly installed artificial turf can contribute to drainage problems, particularly where existing soil and grading conditions are not appropriately addressed. The proposed installation standards therefore require appropriate grading and drainage, as well as a minimum aggregate base, to prevent excessive pooling, runoff, or flooding onto adjacent properties.

Maintenance

The proposed amendments would not eliminate the obligation of property owners to maintain landscaped areas. Both artificial turf and xeriscape would remain subject to the City's general landscaping maintenance requirements.

The proposed artificial turf provisions would specifically address conditions such as damaged surfaces, uplifted seams, weeds, stains, debris, odors, and other conditions that could adversely affect the appearance or functionality of the property. Xeriscape would similarly be required to remain properly maintained, including the replacement or removal of dead, diseased, or overgrown vegetation.

Residential Applicability

The proposed amendments are intended to provide additional landscaping options for lawfully established, purely residential properties throughout the City's residential and mixed-use zones, regardless of the underlying zoning designation. This includes residential properties that are lawfully established in areas where the underlying zoning allows commercial or mixed-use. However, the proposed provisions would not apply to mixed-use, commercial properties, or other non-residential uses or developments.

V. GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

The proposed Zoning Code amendments are consistent with the Carson 2040 General Plan and support the City's goals relating to water conservation, sustainable development, attractive and well-maintained neighborhoods, and the efficient use of natural resources. Providing additional landscaping options, including xeriscape and artificial turf, can reduce reliance on water-intensive landscaping while maintaining landscaped residential areas.

The proposed standards also promote orderly development and maintenance by establishing objective requirements governing the installation and continued maintenance of alternative landscaping materials. Accordingly, staff finds that the proposed amendments are consistent with the Carson 2040 General Plan.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Zoning Code amendments are exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the "common sense" exemption. The amendments provide additional landscaping options for residential properties and establish standards for their installation and maintenance. They do not authorize new development or construction and are intended, in part, to encourage water conservation and the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping.

Based on the nature of the proposed amendments, staff finds that there is no possibility that adoption of the amendments would result in a significant effect on the environment. The Planning Commission is therefore recommended to find the proposed amendments exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

VII. PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice of the Planning Commission hearing was provided in accordance with applicable requirements of the Carson Municipal Code and State law.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 26-2904, "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL FIND A CEQA EXEMPTION AND ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 9313.5 (LANDSCAPING MATERIALS, SIZE, AND SPACING), SECTION 9313.7 (INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE), AND SECTION 9112.3 (TERMS AND DEFINITIONS) OF THE CARSON ZONING CODE TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS GROUND COVER FOR LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION."

IX. ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission Resolution No. 26-2904
2. Draft Council Ordinance (Exhibit A to PC Resolution No. 26-2904)

Attachments

[Turf and Xeriscape PC Resolution.pdf](#)

[Zone Text Amendment \(Artificial Turf and Xeriscape\)\(PC Agenda\)\(2191332.1\).pdf](#)

CITY OF CARSON

PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 26-XXXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL FIND A CEQA EXEMPTION AND ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 9313.5 (LANDSCAPING MATERIALS, SIZE, AND SPACING), SECTION 9313.7 (INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE), AND SECTION 9112.3 (TERMS AND DEFINITIONS) OF THE CARSON ZONING CODE TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS GROUND COVER FOR LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI, Section 7, the City of Carson (“City”), a charter city, has the police power to make and enforce all ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws, and pursuant to California Constitution Article XI, Section 5 and the City’s Charter, the City may make and enforce all ordinances and regulations in respect to municipal affairs, subject only to restrictions and limitations provided in the Charter;

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2024, the City adopted Ordinance No. 24-2405, enacting Phase 1, pertaining generally to residential and mixed-use zones, of an anticipated comprehensive update to Chapter 1 of Article IX of the Carson Municipal Code, as amended (the “Carson Zoning Code”);

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission of the City of Carson (“Planning Commission”) is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations concerning amendments to the Carson Zoning Code and for promoting orderly development consistent with the City’s General Plan;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recognizes the importance of water conservation and finds that providing additional residential landscaping options can encourage the use of water-efficient, drought-tolerant, and low-water landscaping practices while maintaining attractive, functional, and well-maintained residential properties;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that allowing artificial turf and expressly recognizing xeriscape as landscaping options for lawfully established, purely residential land uses would provide property owners with greater flexibility in the design and maintenance of landscaped areas while establishing standards intended to preserve the appearance and character of the City’s residential neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendments would establish artificial turf as an allowable ground cover material for purely residential properties, subject to specified requirements relating to materials, installation, drainage, maintenance, appearance, and use;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendments would expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option and thereby promote the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping materials while maintaining appropriate plant coverage, appearance, drainage, and compatibility with surrounding properties;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed amendments would establish clear and objective standards for the installation and ongoing maintenance of artificial turf and xeriscape and would assist in ensuring that such landscaping remains compatible with surrounding properties and the established character of residential neighborhoods;

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2026, the Planning Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing to consider the proposed amendments to the Carson Zoning Code, received and considered the staff report and presentation, received public testimony, and considered all evidence presented regarding the proposed amendments;

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the proposed amendments and finds that the amendments are consistent with the Carson 2040 General Plan and will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare; and

WHEREAS, all legal prerequisites to adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, DOES HEREBY FIND AND RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Planning Commission finds that the foregoing recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. Based on its independent review of the analysis set forth in the staff report and incorporated herein by this reference as findings of fact, and the administrative record as a whole, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and the CEQA Guidelines, the Planning Commission hereby finds, and recommends that the City Council find, that the proposed amendments are exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the “common sense” exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed amendments may have a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed amendments establish artificial turf as an additional landscaping options for lawfully established, purely residential land uses, and expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option, subject to specified standards concerning materials, installation, maintenance, drainage, and appearance. The amendments do not authorize new development or construction and are intended, in part, to encourage water conservation and the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping practices. Accordingly, the Planning Commission finds that there is no possibility that the proposed amendments may have a significant effect on the environment.

SECTION 3. The Planning Commission hereby finds that the proposed amendments to the Carson Zoning Code are consistent with the Carson 2040 General Plan.

The proposed amendments support the General Plan's goals and policies relating to water conservation, sustainable development, attractive and well-maintained neighborhoods, and the efficient use of natural resources by providing residential property owners with additional landscaping options that can reduce water consumption and support drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping practices. The proposed amendments will not substantially impair achieving the General Plan's objectives.

The proposed amendments also establish standards intended to ensure that artificial turf and xeriscape installations are properly designed, installed, maintained, and compatible with surrounding properties.

The proposed amendments are consistent with applicable requirements of state and federal law and with the purpose of the Carson Zoning Code to promote the growth of the City in an orderly manner and to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

SECTION 4. Based upon the foregoing findings, the Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt an appropriate ordinance to approve the proposed text amendments to the Carson Zoning Code set forth in Exhibit "A," attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference. The Community & Economic Development Director is authorized to make edits to the proposed text amendments consistent with the intent of this recommendation prior to presentation of the same to the City Council without the need for further Planning Commission review.

SECTION 5. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Resolution is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Resolution. The Planning Commission hereby declares that it would have adopted this Resolution and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions thereof may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 6. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon its adoption.

SECTION 7. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution and shall transmit a certified copy of this Resolution to the City Council for its consideration.

CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

SECRETARY

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 9313.5 (LANDSCAPING MATERIALS, SIZE, AND SPACING) AND SECTION 9313.7 (INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE) OF DIVISION 3 (LANDSCAPING) OF PART 3-A (GENERAL REGULATIONS) AND SECTION 9112.3 (TERMS AND DEFINITIONS) OF DIVISION 2 (DEFINITIONS) OF PART 5 (GENERAL TERMS) OF THE CARSON ZONING CODE TO ALLOW ARTIFICIAL TURF AS GROUND COVER FOR LAWFULLY ESTABLISHED, PURELY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES, AND TO EXPRESSLY RECOGNIZE XERISCAPE AS AN ALLOWABLE LANDSCAPING OPTION

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 7, the City of Carson (“City”), a charter city, has the police power to make and enforce all ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws, and pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 5 and the City’s Charter, the City may make and enforce all ordinances and regulations in respect to municipal affairs, subject only to restrictions and limitations provided in the Charter.

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2024, the City adopted Ordinance No. 24-2405, enacting phase 1, pertaining generally to residential and mixed-use zones, of an anticipated comprehensive update to Chapter 1 of Article IX of the Carson Municipal Code (as amended, “Carson Zoning Code”).

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Carson (“City Council”) strives to promote and enhance the public health, safety, and general welfare of the City’s residents.

WHEREAS, in order to promote an aesthetically enriched community landscape while preserving the City’s community character, pursuant to the City’s police power, the City Council now desires to adopt this Ordinance amending the Carson Zoning Code to allow City residents to use artificial turf as ground cover materials in the landscaping of lawfully established, purely residential land uses (including both existing uses and new uses), and to expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option, subject to specified requirements and limitations.

WHEREAS, all of the legal prerequisites to adoption of this Ordinance have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. RECITALS. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference.

SECTION 2. CEQA. Based on its independent review of the analysis set forth in the staff report and incorporated herein by this reference as a finding of fact, and the administrative record as a whole, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the City Council, in the exercise of its independent judgment, hereby finds as follows:

A. The adoption of this Ordinance, and the zone text amendments approved hereby, is exempt from review under the “common sense” exemption in CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in

question may have a significant effect on the environment. The text amendments establish artificial turf as an additional groundcover option for landscaping of lawfully established, purely residential land uses (including both existing uses and new uses), and expressly recognize xeriscape as an allowable landscaping option, subject to specified standards concerning materials, installation, maintenance, drainage, and appearance. The amendments do not authorize new development or construction and are intended, in part, to encourage water conservation and the use of drought-tolerant and low-water landscaping practices. Accordingly, there is no possibility that the proposed amendments may have a significant effect on the environment.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT. Section 9313.5 (Landscaping Materials, Size, and Spacing) of Division 3 (Landscaping) of Part 3-A (General Regulations) of the Carson Zoning Code is hereby amended as follows (added text is indicated in ***bold italics***, deleted text in ~~striketthrough font~~):

“9313.5 Landscaping Materials, Size, and Spacing

Landscaping may consist of a combination of groundcovers, shrubs, vines, trees, and garden areas including edible vegetation. Landscaping may also include incidental features such as semi-pervious pathways, stepping-stones, benches, fountains, sculptures, decorative stones, or other ornamental features, placed within a landscaped setting. ***Except as otherwise required by this Code, landscaping may consist entirely of xeriscape.***

A. Ground Cover Materials. ***Except for artificial turf meeting the applicable requirements of this Division, g***Ground cover shall be of live plant material and may not be comprised of pervious non-plant materials such as permeable paving, gravel, colored rock, cinder, bark, and similar materials. Mulch must be confined to areas around shrubs and trees and is not a substitute for ground cover plants. ***For a lawfully-established, purely residential land use (including both existing uses and new uses), artificial turf may be used as ground cover for up to sixty percent (60%) of the total landscaped area, provided the artificial turf meets the requirements of subparagraph 1 below (pertaining to materials) and the requirements of Section 9313.7 (pertaining to installation and maintenance). Artificial turf is not permitted for any use or development that contains any non-residential component, such as a mixed-use or commercial use or development.***

1. ***Material Requirements for Artificial Turf. Artificial turf must simulate the appearance of natural live grass, be of the type known as cut pile infill, and be manufactured from lead-free polypropylene, polyethylene or a blend of such fibers on a permeable backing. It must have a minimum eight (8) year “No Fade” warranty as issued by the manufacturer and have a minimum blade length (pile height) of one-***

and-three-quarter inches (1.75"). Nylon-based or plastic blades are prohibited. Artificial turf must be constructed to resist damage during normal use, minimize UV degradation, and maximize dimensional stability. It must be resistant to staining, weather, insects, rot, mildew, and fungus, and be non-allergenic and non-toxic and fire resistant. It must contain a beige or tan thatch layer. Infill medium must be of silica sand variety or other approved material and brushed into the fibers to keep the blades upright. Infill medium of rubber is prohibited.

- B. Size and Spacing. Plants shall be of the following size and spacing at the time of installation:
1. Ground Covers. Ground cover plants other than drought-tolerant grasses must be at least the four-inch pot size. Areas planted in ground cover plants other than grass seed or sod must be planted at a rate of at least one per 12 inches on center.
 2. Shrubs. Shrubs shall be a minimum size of one gallon. When planted to serve as a hedge or screen, shrubs shall be planted with two to four feet of spacing, depending on the plant species.
 3. Trees. Trees shall be a minimum of 15 gallons in size with a one-inch diameter at breast height (dbh). Newly planted trees shall be supported with stakes or guy wires. Any tree to be planted along a property line or adjacent to a structure shall be no closer to said property line or structure than one-half (1/2) the diameter of the species' drip line at maturity, measured from the center of the tree."

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT. Section 9313.7 (Installation and Maintenance) of Division 3 (Landscaping) of the City's Zoning Code is hereby amended as follows (added text is indicated in ***bold italics***, deleted text in ~~strike through font~~):

"9313.7 Installation and Maintenance

- A. Maintenance Requirements. All landscaping shall be permanently maintained in a healthy and always thriving condition, in compliance with the approved landscape plan. Irrigation systems and their components shall be maintained in a fully functional manner consistent with the original approved design or upgraded to reflect current best practices for water efficiency. Regular maintenance shall include:
1. Adjusting, checking, and repairing irrigation equipment, resetting automatic controllers, aerating and de-thatching turf areas,

adding/replenishing fertilizer, mulch, soil amendments, insect control, the replacement of dead or diseased plants, pruning, watering, and weeding all landscaped areas,

2. The trimming of vegetation as necessary to maintain the effective functioning of solar energy facilities and passive solar design features installed both on site and on adjacent properties, and
3. The trimming of vegetation as necessary to keep pedestrian and bicycle paths clear.
4. Maintenance of vegetation shall include:
 - a. Pruning, cultivating, weeding, fertilizing, replacement of plants, and watering on a regular basis,
 - b. Pruning or removal of overgrown vegetation, cultivated or uncultivated, that may harbor rats, vermin, or other nuisances, or otherwise be detrimental to neighboring properties, and
 - c. The removal of dead, decayed, diseased, or hazardous trees, weeds and debris that create an unsightly appearance and may be dangerous to public safety and welfare or detrimental to neighboring properties or property values. Compliance shall be by removal, replacement, or maintenance.
 - d. Landscaping (trees, shrubs, ground cover, turf, etc.) that does not appear healthy or fails to grow due to accident, damage, disease, lack of maintenance, or other cause shall be replaced with drought tolerant species. Replacement plants shall conform to all standards that govern the original planting installation, approved landscaping plan, or as approved by the Director.
5. ***Artificial turf must be maintained at all times in a green, fadeless condition and free of weeds, stains, debris, tears, holes, depressions, ruts, odors, and uplifted edges or seams. Damaged or worn areas in the artificial turf surface must be immediately repaired or removed and replaced in a manner that results in elimination of the foregoing conditions and a consistent appearance with the remainder of the artificial turf. Artificial turf must be replaced once it can no longer be maintained as required. Vehicle storage or parking on artificial turf is prohibited.***

B. Removal of Litter.

1. Litter shall be removed from all landscaped areas in a timely fashion,
2. Turf areas shall be mowed on a regular basis and kept green unless State or local regulations limit or prevent watering due to drought conditions.
3. Accumulation of leaves, twigs, bark, and other similar materials shall be removed on a regular basis. Planting areas shall be always kept free of weeds.

C. *Installation Requirements.*

1. *Artificial turf shall be installed pursuant to manufacturer's requirements and specifications by licensed professionals with experience in the installation of artificial turf. As part of site preparation, there must be removal of all existing plant material, and the area must be sloped and graded to prevent excessive pooling, runoff, or flooding onto an adjacent property. Artificial turf must be installed over at least three inches (3") of a compact aggregate base that provides adequate drainage and ensures stability. Artificial turf must be anchored at all edges and seams and separated from live planting areas by a City-approved barrier. All existing irrigation infrastructure in the artificial turf site area must be capped or removed and must not be visible.*
2. *The Director is authorized to promulgate administrative regulations and guidelines to supplement the provisions of this Division pertaining to installation of artificial turf and/or xeriscape, including but not limited to plan submittal requirements and additional materials and maintenance requirements for any artificial turf and/or xeriscape to be installed. All artificial turf and xeriscape installations shall comply with applicable requirements of such administrative regulations in addition to the express requirements of this Division except to the extent of a conflict between such administrative regulations and the express requirements of this Division, in which case the express requirements of this Division shall prevail. Any such administrative regulations or guidelines shall be consistent with the express requirements of the Carson Zoning Code and shall not modify or supersede any requirement established by ordinance."*

SECTION 5. AMENDMENT. Section 9112.3 (Terms and Definitions) of Division 2 (Definitions) of Part 5 (General Terms) of the Carson Zoning Code is hereby amended to add the following definitions of "artificial turf" and "xeriscape" in their appropriate alphabetical order:

“Artificial turf. A manufactured surface composed of synthetic fibers or materials designed to replicate the appearance of natural grass, typically installed over a prepared base and used as a substitute for living lawn or sod. Artificial turf does not include painted surfaces, loose ground coverings, or materials not specifically designed to simulate grass.

Xeriscape. Landscaping that uses living drought-tolerant and low-water plants, along with other water-efficient landscaping practices, to reduce the amount of water needed to maintain the landscaped area. Xeriscape can include a variety of trees, shrubs, groundcover, ornamental grasses, and other plants that require less water than traditional turf and other water-intensive landscaping. Xeriscape may include incidental features such as semi-pervious pathways, stepping-stones, benches, fountains, sculptures, decorative stones, or other ornamental features, placed within a landscaped setting.”

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions thereof may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect thirty (30) days after its adoption.

SECTION 8. CERTIFICATION. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this Ordinance and shall cause the same to be published and codified in the manner required by law.

[SIGNATURE PAGE AS FOLLOWS]

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council on
this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Lula Davis-Holmes, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dr. Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Sunny K. Soltani, City Attorney



Report to Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:30 PM

NEW PUBLIC HEARING 7B.

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: McKina Alexander, Planning Manager
PREPARED BY: Kaneca Pompey, Senior Planner
SUBJECT: CONSIDER RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT (ZCC NO. 00005-26) TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANTS

PROJECT/APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project Summary:	Consider recommending that the City Council adopt a Zone Text Amendment to Article IX (Planning and Zoning) of the Carson Municipal Code and Phase 1 of the Zoning Code amending the City's land use regulations and establishing consistent development standards for drive-through restaurants.
Project Location:	Citywide
General Plan/Zoning:	Various Zoning Designations
Project Applicant:	City of Carson, Community and Economic Development Department
Project Owner:	Not Applicable

I. OVERVIEW

A. Introduction

The Community & Economic Development Department is proposing amendments to the Carson Zoning Code to strengthen the City's land use regulations, establish consistent development standards for drive-through restaurants in various zones where the use is permitted or conditionally permitted, and limit restaurant drive-through facilities to being accessory and subordinate to the primary restaurant. The ordinance would amend various sections of the Carson Zoning Ordinance (Old Code) and the new Phase 1 Carson Zoning Code.

For the purposes of the proposed amendments, Drive-through Restaurant is defined as "all restaurants with a drive-through facility where food or coffee-type beverages are purchased by motorists who remain in their vehicles during the sales transaction, including drive-up service, and that is designed to enable persons to receive a service or purchase or consume goods while remaining within a motor vehicle. This definition includes all associated drive-through lane(s), queuing/stacking areas, ordering points/menu boards, and pick-up windows". The term does not include drive-through facilities associated with banks, credit unions, pharmacies, or other non-restaurant uses.

The proposed ordinance would require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Development and Site Plan Review (DOR) for drive-through restaurants in all zones where the use is not prohibited, and would require compliance with the new proposed development and operational standards, which are intended to reduce conflicts with surrounding uses, and to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

The Planning Commission is being asked to consider the proposed amendments and recommend that the City Council approve them. The City Council may make revisions to the proposed amendments before adoption.

B. Background

On January 20, 2026, the City Council unanimously adopted Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U, establishing a 45-day moratorium on new or expanded Drive-through Restaurants while the City develops permanent zoning regulations. Adopted pursuant to Government Code Section 65858, the ordinance took effect immediately and was set to expire on March 6, 2026, unless extended by the Council (Attachment 2).

On February 17, 2026, the City issued a 10-day report as required pursuant to Government Code Section 65858(d) (Attachment 3).

On March 3, 2026, the City Council unanimously adopted Ordinance No. 26-2604U (Attachment 3), on an urgency basis, to extend, for 10 months and 15 days pursuant to Government Code Section 65858(a), for the temporary prohibition on new drive-through restaurants and the expansion of existing drive-through restaurants in the City. The extension of the moratorium became effective March 6, 2026, and expires January 21, 2027, unless the City Council extends the Moratorium for an additional period of time in accordance with the provisions set forth in Government Code Section 65858 or otherwise adopts relevant and superseding zoning regulations.

Adoption of the proposed Drive-through Restaurant ordinance would help carry out the purpose of the moratorium by adopting new zoning code regulations to protect public health, safety and welfare as it pertains to drive-through restaurant uses and developments.

The proposed Zone Text Amendment responds to the City Council's identified need for clearer and more consistent regulation of drive-through restaurants. The Amendment would ensure discretionary review and uniform development standards addressing location, circulation, queuing, setbacks, landscaping, noise, screening, pedestrian safety, and compatibility with surrounding uses. These standards are intended to reduce foreseeable adverse impacts while providing applicants and the City with clearer expectations for project review.

II. **ANALYSIS**

A. Need for Zone Text Amendment

The establishment and proliferation of drive-through restaurants without adequate regulations, absent the current temporary moratorium, would present a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare. Such uses can result in adverse impacts related to traffic circulation and congestion, pedestrian and bicycle safety, air quality, noise, land use compatibility, and overall public health.

The City's zoning regulations are administered through both the existing Carson Zoning Ordinance (the "Old Code") and the Phase 1 Zoning Code, adopted in 2024. Given the current limited applicability of each, the proposed amendments address both to provide uniform regulations.

Under Section 9131.1 of the Old Code, drive-in or drive-through restaurants are identified as automatically permitted in the Commercial Neighborhood (CN), Commercial Regional (CR), and Commercial General (CG) zones; permitted with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in the former Mixed-Use Carson Street (MU-CS) zone and the Commercial Automotive (CA) zone; and not permitted in the former Mixed-Use Sepulveda Boulevard (MU-SB) zone. The Old Code also contains specific drive-through standards for the former MU-CS zone. The Old Code provides that any principal use permitted in any commercial zone, whether automatically, with limitation, or by conditional use permit, is automatically permitted in the industrial zones, subject to the same requirements specified for such use in the commercial zones, except the uses enumerated in the relevant portion of the land use table in Section 9141.1.

Under the Phase 1 Zoning Code, drive-through restaurants are permitted subject to a Minor CUP (i.e., a Director-approved CUP) in the DMX zone. In the CMX zone, they are permitted subject to a CUP and a prohibition on such uses being located within 100 feet of existing residential uses or residential zones.

The existing regulations do not provide sufficient uniform standards addressing circulation, queuing, pedestrian safety, noise, compatibility, and other potential impacts associated with drive-through operations for all commercial zones.

The proposed amendments would address both codes to provide uniform land use regulations across all zones (generally requiring a CUP in all zones except where the use is prohibited, such as in residential zones), and would respond to the Council's concerns by replacing current limited development standards that vary between the old and new codes with a uniform set of development standards. Requiring discretionary review through a CUP and DOR ensures CEQA review for potential environmental impacts and provides the City with an opportunity to evaluate site-specific circulation, compatibility, design, and operational issues before the City approves a drive-through restaurant use.

III. Proposed Zoning Code Amendments

- **Land Use Regulations.** The proposed ordinance would provide that drive-through restaurant uses require a conditional use permit (CUP) in the commercial and mixed-use (DMX and CMX) zones, as well as the industrial zones. The existing prohibition against drive-through restaurants being located in areas of the CMX zone that are within 100' of residential uses or zones would be preserved. Drive-through restaurants would continue to be a prohibited use in the residential zones.
- **Development and Operational Standards.**

The proposed ordinance would establish the following standards for drive-through restaurant uses and developments:

- **Location:** A new drive-through restaurant may not be approved within 500 feet of an existing or approved drive-through restaurant.

Lot Area: The area devoted to the drive-through facility, including but not limited to the pick-up window, order board, queuing lane, and space devoted to entering and exiting the queuing lane, must not exceed 25% of the total lot area.

- **Street frontage and compatibility:** Drive-through restaurants must be located on lots having street frontage, and must be sited to avoid hazards, nuisances, traffic congestion, and conflicts with pedestrian-oriented uses.
- **Circulation:** Drive-through lanes must be clearly separated, through striping, curbing, landscaping, or other approved means, from primary circulation routes and lanes used for property ingress/egress or access to off-street parking, to the extent feasible. Drive-through lanes must also be visibly delineated.
- **Setbacks:** Drive-through or drive-up lanes may not be located in required setback areas. Drive-through lanes must be set back at least 15 feet from street property lines and this requirement shall apply in addition to any greater setback otherwise required by the applicable zoning district, and screened with landscape berms, low garden walls, or a combination thereof.
- **Residential buffering:** A minimum 10-foot-wide landscaped buffer is required between drive-through aisles and abutting residential zoned property.
- **Lane entrance and exit:** The entrance to a drive-through stacking lane must be at least 25 feet from the right-of-way line of an adjacent public street providing direct access to the lane, and a drive-through aisle may not exit directly onto a public street or alley.
- **Lane width:** Drive-through lanes must be at least 11 feet wide on straight sections and 12 feet wide on curved sections.
- **Architectural compatibility:** Drive-through restaurants within an integrated shopping center must be consistent with the center's architectural design, detailing, roof material, exterior finish materials, and color.
- **Noise:** Speaker/microphone stations must be at least 25 feet from residential zoned properties. Speaker/microphone equipment shall comply with the City's Noise Control Ordinance and shall incorporate appropriate sound attenuation measures where adjacent to residentially zoned property.
- **Queuing:** Coffee facilities must provide four stacking spaces before the order board and four spaces between the order board and pick-up window. Fast-food restaurants must provide five stacking spaces before the order board and five spaces between the order board and pick-up window.
- **Screening:** Drive-through lanes must be screened with landscaping, low walls, and/or berms to a height of 36 inches to minimize headlight glare affecting adjacent residences, businesses, rights-of-way, and parking lots. Screening shall also be designed and maintained so that it does not obstruct required sight distance, pedestrian visibility, or access.

- Pedestrian circulation: Pedestrian walkways shall not intersect drive-through access lanes; where an intersection is unavoidable, the crossing must be clearly visible and enhanced with special paving or markings approved by the Director of Community and Economic Development, or designee.

Seating Area: The restaurant must include an indoor and/or outdoor seating area for patrons of the restaurant who are not utilizing the drive-through. Drive-throughs are prohibited for restaurants that do not have such an indoor and/or outdoor seating area.

Overall, the proposed amendments strengthen the City's regulations, ensure discretionary review and aim to limit restaurant drive-through facilities to being accessory and subordinate to the primary restaurant as a means of ensuring compatibility between land uses and prevention of adverse impacts to public health, safety and welfare and the environment.

If the Planning Commission determines that the proposed development standards do not adequately address concerns related to the location of drive-through lanes, street frontage, pedestrian safety, and the overall interface between drive-through facilities and the public right-of-way, the Planning Commission may consider establishing more stringent development standards for drive-through restaurants.

Such standards could include prohibiting drive-through lanes from being located along a street frontage and requiring drive-through lanes to be screened from the primary building façade. This approach would prioritize the placement of the restaurant building along the street frontage (with the drive-through lane being located behind the building, on the opposite site from any main street frontage), helping ensure the drive-through component is subordinate to the restaurant, does not adversely affect the aesthetics of the streetscape, and promote a more pedestrian-oriented streetscape. On the other hand, including a one-size fits all requirement such as this in the ordinance would decrease flexibility in site-specific review pursuant to the CUP process (which would be conducted by the Planning Commission), and significant buffering and screening requirements for drive-through lanes are already included in the proposed development standards discussed above. For that reason, staff did not include such a requirement in the proposed ordinance.

Additionally, the Planning Commission may wish to consider limiting drive-through facilities to mobile-order and pick-up services only, thereby prohibiting development of new traditional drive-through lanes for restaurants. This restriction is not contained in the proposed ordinance and would reflect a stricter and less common approach to allowing for the convenience of drive-through or drive-up activities for restaurant patrons who place mobile orders in advance while reducing the circulation, queuing, and pedestrian conflicts typically associated with traditional drive-through restaurant operations.

IV. Zoning and General Plan Consistency

A. Zoning Consistency

The amendment does not permit or authorize a drive-through restaurant use or development that is otherwise prohibited under the City's zoning regulations in any zone, nor does it relax any City land use regulations or development standards. The amendment only strengthens the City's land use regulations and development standards as it pertains to drive-through restaurants.

B. General Plan Consistency

The Zone Text Amendment is consistent with the City's General Plan and advances several General Plan goals and policies relating to protection of public safety, compatibility of adjacent land uses, and minimization of noise impacts to sensitive land uses.

The proposed standards promote orderly development by ensuring discretionary land use review and environmental review and establishing objective and uniform requirements governing development and operation of new drive-through restaurants. Accordingly, staff finds that the proposed amendments are consistent with the Carson 2040 General Plan.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Consideration of Zone Text Amendment (ZCC) No. 00005-26 is not a CEQA "project" under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Alternatively, it is exempt from environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)'s "common sense rule" that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of the proposed zone text amendment is to impose expanded requirements and clear, current, and sustainable development and operational standards applicable to new drive-through restaurants in order to protect against adverse public health, safety, and environmental impacts of such facilities. The proposed ordinance would not permit any land uses that are not currently permitted, and would not approve any development project. CEQA review for new drive-through restaurant uses that are subject to the proposed ordinance (if/when adopted) will be conducted on a project-by-project basis as entitlement applications are processed. Based on the nature of the proposed amendments, staff finds that there is no possibility that the adoption of the proposed ordinance would result in a significant effect on the environment.

The proposed Planning Commission resolution would therefore recommend that the City Council find the proposed amendments are not a CEQA "project" or alternatively, are exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(e).

VI. PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public Notice was given in accordance with applicable law. Notice of public hearing was posted to the paper by August 29, 2026. The agenda was posted at City Hall no less than 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission:

1. Conduct a Public Hearing; and
2. Adopt Resolution No. 26-2905, entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MAKE A FINDING OF APPLICABILITY OF CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061(B)(3) AND APPROVE ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 00005-26 TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 9, CHAPTER 1 OF THE CARSON MUNICIPAL CODE AMENDING THE CITY'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANTS"

VIII. ATTACHMENTS

1. Planning Commission Resolution No. 26-2905
2. Draft City Council Ordinance (Exhibit A to PC Resolution No. 26-2905)
3. March 3, 2026 City Council Item 17 Staff Report

Attachments

- [1. Draft PC Resolution 26-2905 Drive-Through Restaurant Ordinance \(2192260.2\).pdf](#)
- [2. Draft Drive-Through Restaurant Ordinance \(2187919.7\) \(Exh. A to PC Reso. 26-2695\).pdf](#)
- [3. March 3, 2026 City Council Item 17 Staff Report with Exhibits.pdf](#)

CITY OF CARSON
PLANNING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 26-2905

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MAKE A FINDING OF APPLICABILITY OF CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061 (B)(3) AND APPROVE ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 00005-26 TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 9, CHAPTER 1 OF THE CARSON MUNICIPAL CODE AMENDING THE CITY'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANTS

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 7, the City of Carson ("City"), a charter city, has the police power to make and enforce all ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws, and pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 5 and the City's Charter, the City may make and enforce all ordinances and regulations in respect to municipal affairs, subject only to restrictions and limitations provided in the Charter.

WHEREAS, in October 1977, the City adopted Ordinance No. 77-413, entitled the Carson Zoning Ordinance, which has been amended numerous times through subsequent ordinances over the years to update and refine the City's zoning regulations ("Old Code").

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2024, as phase 1 of an anticipated 2-phase comprehensive update to the Carson Zoning Ordinance, the City adopted Ordinance No. 24-2405, enacting phase 1, pertaining generally to residential and mixed-use zones, of an anticipated comprehensive update to Chapter 1 of Article IX of the Carson Municipal Code (as amended, "Phase 1 Zoning Code").

WHEREAS, Section 9131.1 of the Old Code sets forth the permitted uses in the City's commercial zones, providing that drive-in or drive-through restaurants is an automatically permitted use in the commercial neighborhood, commercial regional, and commercial general zones, and permitted with the approval of a conditional use permit in the commercial automotive zone.

WHEREAS, Section 9141.1 of the Old Code provides that any principal use permitted in any commercial zone, whether automatically (X), with limitation (L), or by conditional use permit (C), is automatically permitted in the industrial zones, subject to the same requirements

specified for such use in the commercial zones, except the uses enumerated in the relevant portion of the land use table in Section 9141.1.

WHEREAS, Table 9212.2 of the Phase 1 Zoning Code sets forth the permitted uses in the City's mixed-use zones, providing that drive-in or drive-through restaurants is a permitted use subject to approval of a minor conditional use permit in the downtown mixed use (DMX) zone and a permitted use subject to approval of a conditional use permit in the corridor mixed use (CMX) zone, except that such uses are prohibited in the CMX zone within 100 feet of residential uses or zones.

WHEREAS, via Interim Urgency Ordinance Numbers 26-2602U and 26-2604U, the City Council determined that new development and proliferation of drive-through restaurants permitted under current zoning regulations may result adverse impacts, including concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover and turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses. Additionally, the Council found that extended idling and stop-and-go conditions relating to drive-through restaurant queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The Planning Commission makes and incorporates these findings as its own.

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that the current Zoning Ordinance (including the Old Code and Phase 1 Code, as applicable) does not provide sufficient regulations to ensure that development and operation of drive-through restaurants occurs in a manner that protects the public from adverse impacts to public peace, health, and safety and that adequately protects against avoidable adverse environmental impacts, and is in need of an update to better address these issues.

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds the proposed Zone Text Amendment Ordinance, attached hereto as Exhibit "A" ("ZTA Ordinance"), is necessary for the protection of the public peace, health, and safety of the City because in the absence of amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance, projects for new development (including construction of new buildings on vacant lots, as well as demolition of existing buildings and construction of new buildings on the same lots) and expansion or intensification of drive-through restaurants in the commercial, mixed use and industrial zones will continue to be processed and permitted without sufficient supporting regulatory authority and in the absence of clear regulatory standards, and may thereby have adverse effects on the public peace, health and safety of the City's residents. Enactment of the additional requirements set forth in the ZTA Ordinance will help ensure that the City has sufficient regulatory control and prevent and protect

against the adverse impacts such operations may otherwise cause, including those discussed above.

WHEREAS, the ZTA Ordinance is consistent with the City’s General Plan and advances the General Plan goals and policies of protecting public safety, ensuring compatibility of adjacent land uses, and minimizing noise impacts to sensitive land uses.

WHEREAS, nothing in the ZTA Ordinance is intended nor shall be construed to: (1) allow or permit any use that is currently prohibited under CMC Section 9131.1 or the Phase 1 Code; or (2) limit or preclude applicability of any existing regulation or requirement of the CMC, except as otherwise specified in the ZTA Ordinance.

WHEREAS, on September 22, 2026, after notice duly given, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and heard testimony and considered all factors both oral and written with regards to recommendation of City Council adoption of the ZTA Ordinance, and now sees fit and intends to recommend City Council adoption of the ZTA Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the text amendments in this Ordinance are made to both the Old Code and the Phase 1 Zoning Code, given the current limited applicability of each.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA DOES FIND, DETERMINE AND RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. RECITALS. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference as findings of fact.

SECTION 2. CEQA. Based on its independent review of the analysis set forth in the staff report and incorporated herein by this reference as a finding of fact, and the administrative record as a whole, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the Planning Commission, in the exercise of its independent judgment, hereby recommends the City Council find as follows:

ZCC No. 00005-26 is not a CEQA “project” under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Alternatively, ZTA No. 00005-26 is exempt from CEQA review under the “common sense” exemption in CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. ZTA No. 00005-26 only makes the City’s land use regulations applicable to drive-through restaurants more restrictive than at present.

SECTION 3. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT FINDINGS. The Planning Commission further finds and recommends that the City Council find as follows with respect to Zone Text Amendment:

1. The ordinance amendment is consistent with the applicable requirements of state and federal law.
2. The amendment is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan, and will not substantially impair achieving the plan's objectives. The proposed ordinance advances the General Plan goals and policies of protecting public safety, ensuring compatibility of adjacent land uses, and minimizing noise impacts to sensitive land uses. The ordinance minimizes the adverse effects of drive-through restaurants, and promotes compatibility with surrounding uses and activities. To that end, the development standards set forth in the ordinance are intended to limit drive-through facilities to being accessory and subordinate to the primary restaurant use.
3. The amendment is consistent with the purpose of the Zoning Code to promote the growth of the City in an orderly manner, and to promote and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. The proposed ordinance provides more thorough guidelines and regulations for drive-through restaurants, ensuring public health, safety and welfare is protected.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATION. Based on the foregoing, the Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt Zone Text Amendment No. 00005-26, amending various sections of Article IX, Chapter 1 of the Carson Municipal Code as provided in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 5. This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its adoption.

SECTION 6. The Secretary of the Planning Commission shall certify to the adoption of this Resolution and transmit a copy of this Resolution to the City Council via the City Clerk.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 22nd day of September, 2026.

CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

SECRETARY

EXHIBIT A

[Proposed ZTA Ordinance—to be attached]

Ordinance No. _____

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON MAKING
A FINDING OF APPLICABILITY OF CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061 (B)(3)
AND APPROVING ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 00005-26 TO MAKE
VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 9, CHAPTER 1 OF THE CARSON
MUNICIPAL CODE AMENDING THE CITY’S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND
DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVE-THROUGH
RESTAURANTS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 7, the City of Carson (“City”), a charter city, has the police power to make and enforce all ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws, and, pursuant to California Constitution Article XI Section 5 and the City’s Charter, the City may make and enforce all ordinances and regulations in respect to municipal affairs, subject only to restrictions and limitations provided in the Charter.

WHEREAS, in October 1977, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 77-413, entitled the Carson Zoning Ordinance, which has been amended numerous times through subsequent ordinances over the years to update and refine the City’s zoning regulations (“Old Code”).

WHEREAS, on March 19, 2024, as phase 1 of an anticipated 2-phase comprehensive update to the Carson Zoning Ordinance, the City adopted Ordinance No. 24-2405, enacting phase 1, pertaining generally to residential and mixed-use zones, of an anticipated comprehensive update to Chapter 1 of Article IX of the Carson Municipal Code (as amended, “Phase 1 Zoning Code”).

WHEREAS, Section 9131.1 of the Old Code sets forth the permitted uses in the City’s commercial zones, providing that drive-in or drive-through restaurants is an automatically permitted use in the commercial neighborhood, commercial regional, and commercial general zones, and permitted with the approval of a conditional use permit in the commercial automotive zone.

WHEREAS, Section 9141.1 of the Old Code provides that any principal use permitted in any commercial zone, whether automatically (X), with limitation (L), or by conditional use permit (C), is automatically permitted in the industrial zones, subject to the same requirements specified for such use in the commercial zones, except the uses enumerated in the relevant portion of the land use table in Section 9141.1.

WHEREAS, Table 9212.2 of the Phase 1 Zoning Code sets forth the permitted uses in the City’s mixed-use zones, providing that drive-in or drive-through restaurants is a permitted use subject to approval of a minor conditional use permit in the downtown mixed use (DMX)

zone and a permitted use subject to approval of a conditional use permit in the corridor mixed use (CMX) zone, except that such uses are prohibited in the CMX zone within 100 feet of residential uses or zones.

WHEREAS, via Interim Urgency Ordinance Numbers 26-2602U and 26-2604U, the City Council determined that new development and proliferation of drive-through restaurants permitted under current zoning regulations may result adverse impacts including concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover and turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive lanes and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses. Additionally, the City Council found that extended idling and stop-and-go conditions relating to restaurant drive-through queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the current Zoning Ordinance (including the Old Code and Phase 1 Code, as applicable) does not provide sufficient regulations to ensure that development and operation of drive-through restaurants occurs in a manner that protects the public from adverse impacts to public peace, health, and safety, and against avoidable adverse environmental impacts, and is in need of an update to better address these issues; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds the proposed Zone Text Amendment is necessary for the protection of the public peace, health, and safety of the City because in the absence of amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance, projects for new development (including construction of new buildings on vacant lots, as well as demolition of existing buildings and construction of new buildings on the same lots) and expansion or intensification of drive-through restaurants in the commercial, mixed-use and industrial zones will continue to be processed and permitted without sufficient supporting regulatory authority and in the absence of clear regulatory standards, and may thereby have adverse effects on the public peace, health, and safety of the City's residents. Enactment of the additional requirements set forth in this ZTA Ordinance will help ensure that the City has sufficient regulatory control and prevent and protect against the adverse impacts such operations may otherwise cause, including those discussed above; and

WHEREAS, this ZTA Ordinance is consistent with the City's General Plan and advances the General Plan goals and policies of protecting public safety, ensuring compatibility of adjacent land uses, and minimizing noise impacts to sensitive land uses; and

WHEREAS, nothing in this ZTA Ordinance is intended nor shall be construed to: (1) allow or permit any use that is currently prohibited under CMC Section 9131.1 or the Phase 1 Code; or (2) limit or preclude applicability of any existing regulation or requirement of the CMC, except as otherwise specified in the ZTA Ordinance.

WHEREAS, on XX, after notice duly given, the Planning Commission, in a X-X vote, recommended City Council adopt this ZTA Ordinance.

WHEREAS, on XX, after notice duly given, the City Council held a public hearing and heard testimony and considered all factors, oral and written, with regards to City Council adoption of the ZTA Ordinance.

WHEREAS, the text amendments in this Ordinance are made to both the Old Code and the Phase 1 Zoning Code, given the current limited applicability of each.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. RECITALS. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and are incorporated herein by this reference as findings of fact.

SECTION 2. CEQA. The City Council finds and determines that this ordinance is exempt from environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the commonsense exemption. CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Here, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question (the proposed zone text amendment) may have a significant effect on the environment.

SECTION 3. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT FINDINGS: Pursuant to Government Code Section 65853 and CMC Section 94114.3 and in light of the record before it including the staff report (and all attachments), and all evidence and testimony heard at the public hearing for this item, and consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission as set forth in Resolution No. 26-2905, the City Council makes the following findings pertaining to Zone Text Amendment No. 00005-26 as set forth in this Ordinance:

1. The ordinance amendment is consistent with all applicable requirements of State and federal law.
2. The ordinance is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and any applicable Specific Plan and will not substantially impair achieving the plan's objectives. The ordinance advances the General Plan goals and policies of protecting public safety, ensuring compatibility of adjacent land uses, and minimizing noise impacts to sensitive land uses.

3. The amendment is consistent with the purpose of the Zoning Code to promote the growth of the City of Carson in an orderly manner and to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare. The ordinance provides more thorough guidelines and regulations for drive-through establishments ensuring public health and safety is met.

SECTION 4. TEXT AMENDMENTS TO OLD CODE The Old Code is amended as follows:

- a. Solely as it relates to “Drive-in or drive-through restaurants”, Section 9131.1 (Uses Permitted) of Division 1 (Uses Permitted) of Part 3 (Commercial Zones) of Chapter 1 (Zoning) of Article 9 (Planning and Zoning) of the Carson Municipal Code is hereby replaced with the following:

	Zones					
	CN	CR	CG	CA	MU-CS	MU-SB
Food sales and Service*						
*Alcoholic beverage sales and services are listed under separate headings						
Drive-in or drive-through restaurants (See CMC § 9133.1, § 9138.17, and § 9138.93.)	C	C	C	C	C	

- b. Division 8 (Special Requirements for Certain Uses) of Part 3 (Commercial Zones) of Chapter 1 (Zoning) of Article 9 (Planning and Zoning) of the Carson Municipal Code is hereby amended to add a new Section 9138.93 to read as follows:

§ 9138.93 Drive-Through Restaurants

“Findings and Purposes.

1. Drive-through restaurants create special problems of traffic friction, congestion, hazard, noise, littering, and appearance, and such establishments differ significantly from other commercial uses, thus requiring special controls on location, siting, development, and operation in order to achieve compatibility with surrounding uses.

2. This section minimizes the adverse effects of drive-through restaurants, and promotes compatibility with surrounding uses and activities. To that end, this section is intended to

limit restaurant drive-through facilities to being accessory and subordinate to the primary restaurant use.

3. For the purpose of this section, a “drive-through restaurant” includes all restaurants with a drive-through facility where food or coffee-type beverages are purchased by motorists who remain in their vehicles during the sales transaction, including drive-up service, and that is designed to enable persons to receive a service or purchase or consume goods while remaining within a motor vehicle. This definition includes all associated drive-through lane(s), queuing/stacking areas, ordering points/menu boards, and pick-up windows. The term does not include drive-through facilities associated with banks, credit unions, pharmacies, or other non-restaurant uses.

Drive-through restaurants are subject to a CUP and Site Plan and Design Review approval pursuant to Sections 9172.21 and 9172.23 and are subject to the following development and operational standards:

A. Location.

- 1. No new drive-through restaurant use may be approved if located within 500 feet from an existing or proposed drive-through restaurant. A “new” drive-through restaurant includes the construction of new buildings on a vacant lot, as well as the partial or full demolition of existing buildings and construction in order to allow for vehicle circulation, queuing, or pedestrian path travel associated with a drive-through restaurant.
 - a. Notwithstanding the aforementioned prohibition, in the event of a casualty, a previously existing drive-through restaurant may be rebuilt substantially in its prior form (i.e., same building footprint), subject to the approval and discretion of the Community and Economic Development Director.**
- 2. Drive-through restaurants shall be located only on lots having street frontage. Such establishments shall be located so as not to be a hazard or nuisance to nearby uses, to not create traffic congestion or hazard, and to avoid conflict with pedestrian oriented uses.*

B. Each drive-through lane shall be a separate lane from the circulation routes and lanes necessary for ingress to, egress from, the property or access to any off-street parking spaces. Each such lane shall be striped, marked, or otherwise distinctively delineated.

C. No drive-through lane shall be located in any required setback area.

D. Lane width: drive-through lanes shall have minimum width of 11 feet on straight sections and 12 feet on curved sections.

E. Lane setback: drive-through lanes shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from all street property lines.

F. Landscape buffer: There shall be a minimum 10 foot wide landscaped buffer between drive-through lanes and any abutting residentially zoned property.

G. Location of lane entrance: The beginning point of a drive-through lane shall be located no closer than 25 feet from the right-of-way line of any adjacent public street or alley providing direct access to the lane.

H. Location of lane exit: no drive-through lane shall exit directly onto a public street or alley.

I. Design: drive-through restaurants within an integrated shopping center shall be consistent with the center in terms of architectural design and detailing, roof material, exterior finish materials, and color.

J. Noise: Drive-through restaurants that rely upon use of speaker/microphone stations for the placing and/or receiving of customer orders, shall locate the station a minimum of 25 feet from any residentially zone property. In no case, however, shall noise emanating from a speaker/microphone station be audible beyond the property line nor exceed the limitations set forth in Article 5 , Chapter 5, Noise Control Ordinance.

K. Length of queuing lane: drive-through restaurants shall provide a queuing lane according to the following table:

<i>Use</i>	<i>Required Stacking Space</i>
<i><u>Coffee Facilities</u></i>	
<i>Before order board</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Between order board and pick-up window</i>	<i>4</i>
<i><u>Fast-Food Restaurants</u></i>	
<i>Before order board</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Between order board and pick-up window</i>	<i>5</i>

L. Screen wall: Each drive-through lane shall be appropriately screened with a combination of landscaping, low walls, and/or berms to a height of 36 inches to prevent headlight glare from impacting adjacent residences, businesses, public rights-of-way, and parking lots.

M. Walkways: Pedestrian walkways should not intersect the drive-through access lanes. If they do intersect drive-through access lanes, they shall be clearly visible and enhanced with special paving or markings approved by the Director of Community and Economic Development, or designee.

N. Lot Area: At least 75% of the total area of subject lot must remain devoted to the primary restaurant use, excluding the drive-through facility. Stated differently, the area devoted to the drive-through facility, including but not limited to the pick-up window, order board, queuing lane, and space devoted to entering and exiting the queuing lane, must not exceed 25% of the total lot area, without limiting the other requirements of this section.

O. Seating Area: The restaurant must include an indoor and/or outdoor seating area for patrons of the restaurant who are not utilizing the drive-through. Drive-throughs are prohibited for restaurants that do not have such an indoor and/or outdoor seating area.

P. Minimum requirements may be reduced by the Director of Community and Economic Development, or designee, for modifications to existing drive-through restaurants where it can be demonstrated the proposed modifications would result in an improved design that more closely complies with the requirements specified herein.”

- c. Division 1 (Uses Permitted) of Part 4 (Industrial Zones) of Chapter 1 (Zoning) of Article 9 (Planning and Zoning) of the Carson Municipal Code is hereby amended to add a new row to the land use table under the heading “Uses Permitted in Commercial Zones,” under a new subheading “Food sales and services,” to read as follows:

	ML	MH
Food sales and services:		
	C	C

SECTION 5. TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE PHASE 1 ZONING CODE. The Phase 1 Zoning Code is hereby amended as follows:

- a. Solely as it pertains to the Commercial Use Type “Restaurant with Drive-through”, Table 9212.2 in Section 9212.2 (Land Use Regulations) of Division 2 (Mixed-Use Districts) of Part 2 (Base, Overlay and Special Districts) of the Phase 1 Zoning Code is hereby amended as follows (added text is shown in ***bold italics***, deleted text is shown in ~~strikethrough font~~):

District	DMX	CMX	FLX	Additional Regulations
Restaurant with Drive-through	MCUP	CUP***	- -	See Part 3-B, Division 14, Alcoholic Beverage Sales (Phase 2), Division 29 (Drive-Through Restaurants), and Division 47, Outdoor Dining and Seating. *MCUP required for new uses within 100 feet of: (i) any lawfully existing residential use; or (ii) any other zoning district that permits a residential use except for the FLX zoning district. **MCUP required for new uses that may offer incidental live music or live entertainment performances. ***New uses prohibited within 100 feet of: (i) any lawfully existing residential use; or (ii) any other zoning district that permits a residential use except for the DMX and FLX zoning districts.

- b. Subparagraph (2) of subsection (C) (Queuing) of Section 93129.3 (Requirements) of Division 29 (Drive-In and Drive-Through Facilities) of Part 3-B (General Regulations) of the Phase 1 Zoning Code is hereby deleted.
- c. Section 93129.3 (Requirements) of Division 29 (Drive-In and Drive-Through Facilities) of Part 3-B (General Regulations) of the Phase 1 Zoning Code is hereby amended to add the following subsection “I”:

“I. Drive-Through Restaurants

Notwithstanding the foregoing requirements, the following additional requirements apply to drive-through restaurants:

1. Findings and Purposes. *Drive-through restaurants create special problems of traffic friction, congestion, hazard, noise, littering, and appearance, and such establishments differ significantly from other commercial uses, thus requiring special controls on location, siting, development, and operation in order to achieve compatibility with surrounding uses. This sub-section minimizes the adverse effects of drive-through restaurants, and promotes*

compatibility with surrounding uses and activities. To that end, this section is intended to limit restaurant drive-through facilities to being accessory and subordinate to the primary restaurant use.

2. Definition. For the purpose of this Division and sub-section, a “drive-through restaurant” includes all restaurants with a drive-through facility where food or coffee-type beverages are purchased by motorists who remain in their vehicles during the sales transaction, including drive-up service, and that is designed to enable persons to receive a service or purchase or consume goods while remaining within a motor vehicle. This definition includes all associated drive-through lane(s), queuing/stacking areas, ordering points/menu boards, and pick-up windows. The term does not include drive-through establishments associated with banks, credit unions, pharmacies, or other non-restaurant uses.

3. Location. Drive-through restaurants are subject to a CUP and Site Plan and Design Review approval and are subject to the following development and operational standards:

a. No new drive-through restaurant use may be approved if located within 500 feet from an existing or proposed drive-through restaurant. Also, no new drive-through restaurant use located in the CMX zone may be approved if located within 100 feet of: (i) any lawfully existing residential use; or (ii) any other zoning district that permits a residential use, except for the DMX and FLX zoning districts.

ii. A “new” drive through restaurant includes the construction of new buildings on a vacant lot, as well as the partial or full demolition of existing buildings and construction in order to allow for vehicle circulation, queuing, or pedestrian path travel associated with a drive-through restaurant.

i. Notwithstanding the aforementioned prohibition, in the event of a casualty, a previously existing drive through restaurant may be rebuilt substantially in its prior form (i.e., same building footprint), subject to the approval and discretion of the Community and Economic Development Director.

b. Drive-through restaurants shall be located only on lots having street frontage. Such establishments shall be located so as not to be a hazard or nuisance to nearby uses, to not create traffic congestion or hazard, and to avoid conflict with pedestrian oriented uses.

4. Each drive-through lane shall be a separate lane from the circulation routes and lanes necessary for ingress to, egress from, the property or access to any off-street parking spaces. Each such lane shall be striped, marked, or otherwise distinctively delineated.

5. No drive-through lane shall be located in any required setback area.

6. Lane width. Drive-through lanes shall have minimum width of 11 feet on straight sections and 12 feet on curved sections.

7. Lane setback. Drive-through lanes shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from all street property lines.

8. Landscape buffer. There shall be a minimum 10 foot wide landscaped buffer between drive-through lanes and any abutting residentially zoned property, and only where the Municipal Code authorizes this use.

9. Location of lane exit. No drive-through lane shall exit directly onto a public street or alley.

10. Design. Drive-through restaurants within an integrated shopping center shall be consistent with the center in terms of architectural design and detailing, roof material, exterior finish materials, and color.

11. Noise. Drive-through restaurants that rely upon use of speaker/microphone stations for the placing and/or receiving of customer orders shall locate the station a minimum of 25 feet from any residentially zone property, and only where the Municipal Code authorizes this use. In no case, however, shall noise emanating from a speaker/microphone station be audible beyond the property line nor exceed the limitations set forth in Article 5, Chapter 5, Noise Control Ordinance of the Municipal Code, or Division 5 (Noise) of Part 3-A of this Zoning Code.

12. Length of queuing lane. Drive-through restaurants shall provide a queuing lane according to the following table:

Use	Required Stacking Space
<u>Coffee Facilities</u>	
Before order board	4
Between order board and pick-up window	4
<u>Fast-Food Restaurants</u>	
Before order board	5
Between order board and pick-up window	5

13. Lot Area: At least 75% of the total area of subject lot must remain devoted to the primary restaurant use, excluding the drive-through facility. Stated differently, the area devoted to the drive-through facility, including but not limited to the pick-up window, order board, queuing lane, and space devoted to entering and exiting the queuing lane, must not exceed 25% of the total lot area, without limiting the other requirements of this subsection (I).

14. Seating Area: The restaurant must include an indoor and/or outdoor seating area for patrons of the restaurant who are not utilizing the drive-through. Drive-throughs are prohibited for restaurants that do not have such an indoor and/or outdoor seating area.

15. Minimum requirements may be reduced by the Director of Community and Economic Development, or designee, for modifications to existing drive-through restaurants where it can be demonstrated the proposed modifications would result in an improved design that more closely complies with the requirements specified herein.”

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this ordinance is, for any reason, held to be invalid or unconstitutional by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance and each section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses, phrases, or portions thereof may be declared invalid or unconstitutional.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect thirty (30) days after its adoption.

SECTION 8. CERTIFICATION. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance, and shall cause the same to be posted and codified in the manner required by law.

PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the City Council on this ____ day of _____ 2026.

Lula Davis-Holmes, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dr. Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Sunny K. Soltani, City Attorney



Report to Honorable Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 5:00 PM

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY 17.

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Nathan Freeman, Director of Community and Economic Development CD Planning

Subject: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF AN INTERIM URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 26-2604U EXTENDING A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF RESTAURANT DRIVE-THROUGH OPERATIONS WITHIN CITY LIMITS DURING THE PENDENCY OF THE CITY'S REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PERMANENT ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SUCH USES FOR AN ADDITIONAL TEN MONTHS AND FIFTEEN DAYS (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

On January 20, 2026, the City Council unanimously adopted Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U, establishing a 45-day moratorium on new or expanded Drive-through Restaurant Operations while permanent zoning regulations are developed. Adopted pursuant to Government Code Section 65858, the ordinance took effect immediately and is set to expire on March 6, 2026, unless extended by the Council. (Exhibit No. 3).

On February 17, 2026, a 10-day report was issued by the City Council as required pursuant to Government Code Section 65858(d) (see Exhibit No. 2).

The purpose of this item is for the City Council to hold a public hearing and consider extending the moratorium for an additional 10 months and 15 days from its scheduled expiration date, as authorized pursuant to Government Code Section 65858. To extend the moratorium, the City Council is required to conduct a public hearing, which has been duly noticed for tonight's meeting, and adopt an interim urgency ordinance (Ordinance No. 26-2604U, Exhibit No. 1), which would extend the moratorium for an additional 10 months and 15 days beyond its original expiration date, i.e., to January 21, 2027, or until it is superseded. Adoption of the urgency ordinance requires a four-fifths vote of the City Council.

II. RECOMMENDATION

TAKE the following actions:

1. OPEN the public hearing, TAKE public comments, and CLOSE the public hearing; and
2. WAIVE further reading and ADOPT Ordinance No. 26-2604U, "AN INTERIM URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, EXTENDING URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 26-2602U, WHICH INSTITUTED A 45-DAY TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF DRIVE-THROUGH RESTAURANT OPERATIONS WITHIN CITY LIMITS DURING THE PENDENCY OF THE CITY'S REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PERMANENT ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SUCH USES FOR AN ADDITIONAL TEN MONTHS AND FIFTEEN DAYS, AND DECLARING THE URGENCY THEREOF."

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE such other action as the City Council deems appropriate, consistent with the requirements of law.

IV. BACKGROUND

Notices

A public hearing notice was published as required by law.

Temporary 45-Day Moratorium

The current Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U will expire on March 6, 2026, if it is not extended by the City Council on or before that date.

10-Day Report & Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U

Ten days prior to expiration of Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U or any extension, the City Council is required to issue a written report describing the measures taken to alleviate the condition that led to the adoption of the Ordinance. (Gov't Code §65858(d)).

As detailed in the 10-day report issued on February 17, 2026, new development and proliferation of Drive-through Restaurant Operations permitted under current zoning regulations may result adverse impacts including concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover and turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses. Additionally, the Council noted extended idling and stop-and-go conditions relating to Restaurant Drive-through Operations queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Since the adoption of Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U, the City has begun the process of gathering stakeholder input, reviewing, and comparing against peer-city drive-through regulations, and analyzing the number and types of drive-through restaurants operating in the City. More time is requested to adequately study and make recommendations concerning the potential amendments to City regulations that would alleviate those potential impacts. Completing the required analyses, as well as developing and implementing the appropriate modifications, is anticipated to take at least several months. Therefore, the initial 45 days' effectiveness of the moratorium enacted by Ordinance No. 26-2602U provides an insufficient amount of time to fully study and consider all the above, and any other impacts and relevant proposals. As detailed in Ordinance No. 26-2604U, extension of the moratorium will continue to prevent a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare, and is necessary as an urgency measure for the immediate preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.

Staff recommends the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 26-2604U, on an urgency basis, to extend, for 10 months and 15 days pursuant to Government Code Section 65858(a), the temporary prohibition on new drive-through restaurants and the expansion of existing drive-through restaurants in the City. The extension of the moratorium would be effective March 6, 2026, the Moratorium's original scheduled expiration date, and would be of no further force and effect 10 months and 15 days thereafter, January 21, 2027, unless the City Council extends the Moratorium for an additional period of time in accordance with the provisions set forth in Government Code Section 65858.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Draft Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2604U (Drive-through Restaurant Moratorium Extension)
2. 10-Day Report dated February 17, 2026
3. Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U (45-Day Temporary Drive-through Restaurant Moratorium)

Attachments

[Exhibit 1 Draft Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2604U Moratorium Extension Restaurant Drive-through.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2 10-Day Report Drive-through Restaurant Moratorium 021726.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3 Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U 45-day Moratorium Drive-through Restaurant.pdf](#)

URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 26-2604U

AN INTERIM URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, EXTENDING URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 26-2602U, WHICH INSTITUTED A 45-DAY TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF RESTAURANT DRIVE-THROUGH OPERATIONS WITHIN CITY LIMITS DURING THE PENDENCY OF THE CITY'S REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PERMANENT ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SUCH USES FOR AN ADDITIONAL TEN MONTHS AND FIFTEEN DAYS, AND DECLARING THE URGENCY THEREOF

WHEREAS, the City of Carson ("City") has the authority under its police power to enact regulations for the public peace, morals, and welfare of the City pursuant to its Charter and California Constitution Article XI, section 7; and

WHEREAS, the City has a compelling interest in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, residents, visitors, and businesses, and in preserving the peace and quiet of the neighborhoods within the City by regulating the establishment and expansion of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations (as defined in this Ordinance below) within City limits; and

WHEREAS, the City is responsible for adopting and implementing land use regulations within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations have potential negative impacts on circulation, traffic, safety, air quality, walkability, quality of life, and effects on public health; and

WHEREAS, the vision and goal of the City Council is to adopt policy changes to specifically address the growing needs of the community, and to create an environment that offers people options and a variety of choices that promote and encourage healthy behaviors; and

WHEREAS, CMC section 9131.1 provides that drive-in or drive-through restaurants are a permitted use in multiple commercial zones including the Commercial, General (CG) zone; and

WHEREAS, CMC section 9141.1 provides that any principal use permitted in any commercial zone, whether automatically, with limitation, or by conditional use permit, is automatically permitted in the industrial zones, subject to the same requirements specified for such use in the commercial zones, with certain exemptions that are not relevant here; and

WHEREAS, CMC 9212.2 provides that restaurants with drive-through uses are permitted with a minor conditional use permit in the Downtown Mixed Use (DMX) zone and permitted with a conditional use permit in the Corridor Mixed Use zone. General regulations for such facilities are set forth in CMC 93129.1-93129.4; and

WHEREAS, the CMC does not sufficiently regulate Restaurant Drive-Through Operations on a consistent basis throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations can generate concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses; and

WHEREAS, extended idling and stop-and-go conditions associated with Restaurant Drive-Through Operations queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, undermining adopted public health and environmental objectives, especially in areas already burdened by cumulative impacts; and

WHEREAS, an over concentration of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations exist in pockets throughout the City, which can result in a situation of unhealthy behaviors, because widespread access to fast-food service has been found to contribute to the general rate of childhood obesity and other health problems; and

WHEREAS, the City's existing development standards for Restaurant Drive-Through Operations are insufficient and, together with the City's current land use regulations, could result in establishment of drive-through uses that are detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare of nearby residents and businesses and a proliferation or oversaturation of said uses within the City; and

WHEREAS, absent sufficient regulation, the establishment, proliferation and oversaturation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City poses a threat to the public peace, health, and safety, and, unless the City takes action to regulate, the impacts described above are likely to continue to occur; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to regulate Restaurant Drive-Through Operations to ensure that public rights-of-way and public property remain free of public nuisances, are safe and accessible for all users, are clear of conditions that pose threats to public health, safety, and welfare, to ensure that future development is undertaken in a manner consistent with the City's General Plan, and to ensure that Restaurant Drive-Through Operations comply with State and City regulations that inure to the public's health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the City anticipates that Restaurant Drive-Through Operators may seek to establish additional drive-throughs, or desire to expand existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations before a non-urgency ordinance would become effective; and

WHEREAS, City Charter Section 313 and Government Code Section 65858 expressly authorize the City Council to adopt an urgency ordinance for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, and to prohibit a use that is in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal that the legislative body, planning commission, or the planning department is considering or studying or intends to study within a reasonable time; and

WHEREAS, on January 20, 2026, the City Council adopted Interim Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U, which imposed a temporary moratorium on the establishment or expansion of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations within the City of Carson ("Moratorium"), based upon immediate threats to public health, safety, and welfare described above; and

WHEREAS, the City Council continues to be concerned that the potential proliferation of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations , as well as the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, may adversely affect the City’s economic vitality, and may result in a high concentration of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City, which can give rise to the harms already noted herein and may not be compatible with existing and potential uses of similarly zoned businesses; and

WHEREAS, as provided in the Moratorium, the City’s current standards for Restaurant Drive-Through Operations may be too broad and present a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, or welfare because they do not address issues such as the undesirable conditions created by an excessive proliferation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, to include their impact on adjacent business, traffic, noise, and their inconsistencies with the Carson General Plan; and

WHEREAS, based upon the foregoing, an extension of the Moratorium is necessary so that the City may continue to thoroughly investigate, review, study, and amend the City’s laws, rules, procedures, and fees related to the expansion of existing or establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations within the City; and

WHEREAS, Government Code Section 65858 expressly authorizes the City Council to adopt and extend an urgency ordinance prohibiting any uses which may be in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal which the City Council or the City’s Planning Commission or Planning Department is considering or studying or intends to study within a reasonable time, for the purpose of the immediate preservation of the public health, safety, or welfare; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2026, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing to consider extension of the Moratorium pursuant to Government Code Section 65858; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the above-described express statutory authority and its police power, the City Council desires, on an urgency basis, to extend the temporary prohibition on the establishment of new, or expansion of existing, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations within the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS

The City Council finds and determines the Recitals above are true and correct and are hereby incorporated by reference. Additionally, based on the foregoing, both verbal and written testimony at the public hearing, including the staff report, exhibits, and any materials provided by members of the public, the City Council finds as follows:

- A. There continues to be a public urgency and a need to immediately protect the public health, safety, and welfare, as detailed further in the Moratorium and in this Ordinance.

B. The Moratorium prohibits the expansion or establishment of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations for a period of 45 days from its adoption while the City Council, the City Planning Commission, and/or the City's Community Development Department is considering, studying, or intends to study the establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, or the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations.

C. For the purposes of the Moratorium and this Ordinance, a "Restaurant Drive-Through Operation" includes all restaurants with a drive-through facility where food or coffee-type beverages are purchased by motorists who remain in their vehicles during the sales transaction, including drive-up service, and that is designed to enable persons to receive a service or purchase or consume goods while remaining within a motor vehicle, including any associated drive-through lane(s), queuing/stacking areas, ordering points/menu boards, and pick-up windows. The term "Restaurant Drive Through Operation" does not include drive-through facilities associated with banks, credit unions, pharmacies, or other non-restaurant uses.

D. There is insufficient time for the City to adopt a regular, non-urgency ordinance applicable to these types of businesses. The Moratorium complies with applicable state law and preserves the status quo so that the City may either prohibit such uses or establish reasonable rules and regulations protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of City residents and businesses regarding the establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, or the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations.

E. Without an extension of the Moratorium, the potential adverse direct and secondary effects of the establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, or the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, present a clear and present danger to the immediate preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare of the community. Further, the potential proliferation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations may adversely affect the City's economic vitality and may not be compatible with existing and potential uses of similarly zoned businesses.

F. In light of the concerns noted herein, the City Council determines it continues to be in the interest of protecting the immediate public health, safety, or welfare to extend the Moratorium by 10 months and 15 days in order to allow staff time to, among other related tasks, continue and/or proceed with a comprehensive study to research and consider potential regulatory and zoning mechanisms for regulating such businesses.

G. Until such time that staff concludes a comprehensive study, and the City Council determines whether to adopt new regulatory controls over Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, the community is in jeopardy in that such businesses could be established which would be in potential conflict with the City's regulatory or zoning proposals. The establishment of such new businesses would defeat the intent and purpose of any potential future regulation and substantially impair its effective implementation.

H. Based upon the foregoing, this urgency extension of the Moratorium is necessary to ensure that the City adopts adequate regulation regarding the establishment of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City prior to the issuance of any new permits authorizing such activities to an extent greater than set forth in the Moratorium.

I. Based upon the foregoing, issuance or approval of any building, planning, or other applicable entitlements for the establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, or the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, prior to the staff's completion of its comprehensive study would result in a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, or welfare, and therefore extension of the Moratorium will continue to prevent a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare.

SECTION 2. TEN DAY WRITTEN REPORT

In accordance with Government Code Section 65858(d), on February 17, 2026, the City Council issued a written report describing the measures taken to alleviate the condition which led to the adoption of the Moratorium.

SECTION 3. CEQA COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines (14 CCR §§15000 *et seq.*), this extension of the Moratorium is exempt from CEQA based on the following: (i) This Ordinance is not a project within the meaning of CEQA Section 15378 because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, either directly or indirectly; and (ii) this Ordinance is also exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3) because the proposed ordinance involves an extension of the Moratorium on the operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, and does not have the potential to significantly impact the environment.

SECTION 4. EXTENSION

The Moratorium is hereby extended for an additional 10 months and 15 days from its original expiration date, March 6, 2026, such that the Moratorium will now expire on January 21, 2027, or when an ordinance supersedes the Moratorium.

SECTION 5. URGENCY MEASURE

Based upon the foregoing, the City Council hereby declares that this extension of the Moratorium is necessary as an urgency measure for the immediate preservation of the public health, safety, and welfare of the City.

SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY

The City Council hereby declares, if any provision, section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, phrase, or word of this Ordinance is rendered or declared invalid or unconstitutional by any final action in a court of competent jurisdiction or by reason of any preemptive legislation, then the City Council would have independently adopted the remaining provisions, sections, subsections, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words of this Ordinance, and as such they shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. EFFECTIVENESS OF ORDINANCE

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by a 4/5 vote, pursuant to the authority conferred upon the City Council by Government Code Sections 36934, 36937, and

65858. As provided in Section 4, the extension of the Moratorium pursuant to this Ordinance shall be effective March 6, 2026, and shall be of no further force and 10 months and 15 days beyond the Moratorium's original expiration date, January 21, 2027, unless the City council shall extend the Moratorium for an additional period of time in accordance with the provisions set forth in Government Code Section 65858. Not later than ten (10) days prior to the expiration of the Moratorium (as extended by this Ordinance), or any extension thereof, the City Council shall issue a written report describing the measures the City has taken to address the conditions which led to the adoption of the Moratorium and its extensions.

SECTION 8. **PUBLICATION**

The City Clerk shall certify as to the passage and adoption of this extension of the Moratorium and shall cause the same to be published in a manner prescribed by law.

[SIGNATURES LOCATED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE]

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Carson, California at a regular meeting on this 3rd day of March 2026.

Lula Davis-Holmes, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dr. Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Sunny Soltani, City Attorney

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) SS:
CITY OF CARSON)

I, Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk of the City of Carson, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance, being Ordinance No. 26-2604, was duly passed and approved by the City Council of the City of Carson at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 3rd day of March 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk

City of Carson

10-Day Report on Interim Emergency Ordinance Establishing
a 45-Day Temporary Moratorium on the Establishment or
Expansion of Restaurant Drive-through Operations Within City
Limits During The Pendency of the City's Review And
Adoption Of Permanent Zoning Regulations For Such Uses

February 17, 2026

On January 20, 2026, the City Council of the City Carson (“City”) adopted an Interim Urgency Ordinance 26-2602U, establishing a temporary moratorium on the establishment or expansion of Restaurant Drive-through Operations within city limits during the pendency of the City’s review and adoption of permanent zoning regulations for such uses within the City (the “Moratorium” or the “Ordinance”). A summary of the Ordinance is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

The City Council determined that the potential new development and proliferation of Restaurant Drive-through Operations can generate concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover and turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses. The City Council further noted that extended idling and stop-and-go conditions associated with Restaurant Drive-through Operations queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the City Council concluded that an over concentration of Restaurant Drive-through Operations exists in pockets throughout the City, which can result in a situation of unhealthy behaviors, because widespread access to fast-food service has been found to contribute to the general rate of childhood obesity and other health problems.

Given these factors, the City Council enacted the Moratorium to protect public health, safety, and welfare by allowing the City time to consider, study, and develop as necessary laws, rules, procedures, and fees related to restaurant drive-through operations. The City Council enacted the Moratorium pursuant to Section 65858 of the California Government Code, which took effect immediately and will expire on March 6, 2026, unless extended by the City Council.

Subdivision (d) of Section 65858 of the Government Code provides that: “[t]en days prior to the expiration of that interim ordinance or any extension, the legislative body shall issue a written report describing the measures taken to alleviate the condition which led to the adoption of the ordinance.”

This report complies with the requirements of Government Code section 65858(d). During the period the Moratorium has been in place, the City has taken the following measures to investigate and alleviate the conditions which led to adoption of the Moratorium:

- Seeking and receiving initial feedback from parties and businesses interested in or affected by the Moratorium;
- Reviewing the City's development standards and land use regulations for Restaurant Drive-through Operations, including assessing the initial adequacy of distance buffers required to address concerns about concentrations;
- Conducting research on the economics of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, and surveying land use regulations and development standards for Restaurant Drive-through Operations in other cities
- Quantifying the total number of Restaurant Drive-through Operations currently in operation within the City; and

- Characterizing the quantity and distribution pattern of various types of Restaurant Drive-through Operations present in the City.

The potential impacts of development, expansion, and modification of the uses subject to this Moratorium necessitate further time and analysis to achieve the purposes of the Moratorium.

Proper completion of the measures outlined above will necessitate extending the Moratorium past the March 6, 2026, expiration date for another 10 months and 15 days. The initial 45-day moratorium period enacted by the Ordinance provides an insufficient amount of time to fully study and consider all the above.

During the period of the extension of the Moratorium, City staff will continue to perform the tasks outlined above to completion in order for the City to establish a comprehensive regulatory system that will protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, while also providing more clarification to existing and potential Restaurant Drive-through Operations operators.

URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 26-2602U

**AN INTERIM URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF
CARSON, CALIFORNIA, ENACTED PURSUANT TO
CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65858
ESTABLISHING A FORTY-FIVE (45) DAY TEMPORARY
MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR
EXPANSION OF RESTAURANT DRIVE-THROUGH
OPERATIONS WITHIN CITY LIMITS DURING THE
PENDENCY OF THE CITY'S REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF
PERMANENT ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SUCH USES**

WHEREAS, the City of Carson ("City") has the authority, under its police power, to enact regulations for the public peace, morals, and welfare of the City pursuant to California Constitution Article XI, section 7; and

WHEREAS, the City has a compelling interest in protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, residents, visitors, and businesses, and in preserving the peace and quiet of the neighborhoods within the City by regulating the establishment and expansion of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations (as defined in this Ordinance below) within City limits; and

WHEREAS, the City is responsible for adopting and implementing land use regulations within its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations have potential negative impacts on circulation, traffic, safety, air quality, walkability, quality of life, and effects on public health; and

WHEREAS, the vision and goal of the City Council is to adopt policy changes to specifically address the growing needs of the community and to create an environment that offers people options and a variety of choices that promote and encourage healthy behaviors; and

WHEREAS, CMC section 9131.1 provides that drive-in or drive-through restaurants are a permitted use in multiple commercial zones including the Commercial, General (CG) zone; and

WHEREAS, CMC section 9141.1 provides that any principal use permitted in any commercial zone, whether automatically, with limitation, or by conditional use permit, is automatically permitted in the industrial zones, subject to the same requirements specified for such use in the commercial zones, with certain exemptions that are not relevant here; and

WHEREAS, CMC 9212.2 provides that Restaurant with Drive-through uses are permitted with a minor conditional use permit in the Downtown Mixed Use (DMX) zone and permitted with a conditional use permit in the Corridor Mixed Use zone. General regulations for such facilities are set forth in CMC 93129.1-93129.4; and

WHEREAS, the CMC does not sufficiently regulate Restaurant Drive-Through Operations on a consistent basis throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations can generate concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses; and

WHEREAS, extended idling and stop-and-go conditions associated with Restaurant Drive-Through Operations queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, undermining adopted public health and environmental objectives, especially in areas already burdened by cumulative impacts; and

WHEREAS, an over concentration of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations exist in pockets throughout the City, which can result in a situation of unhealthy behaviors, because widespread access to fast-food service has been found to contribute to the general rate of childhood obesity and other health problems; and

WHEREAS, the City's existing development standards for Restaurant Drive-Through Operations are insufficient and, together with the City's current land use regulations, could result in establishment of drive-through uses that are detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare of nearby residents and businesses and a proliferation or oversaturation of said uses within the City; and

WHEREAS, absent sufficient regulation, the establishment, proliferation and oversaturation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City poses a threat to the public peace, health, and safety, and, unless the City takes action to regulate, the impacts described above are likely to continue to occur; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to regulate Restaurant Drive-Through Operations to ensure that public rights-of-way and public property remain free of public nuisances, are safe and accessible for all users, are clear of conditions that pose threats to public health, safety, and welfare, to ensure that future development is undertaken in a manner consistent with the City's General Plan, and to ensure that Restaurant Drive-Through Operations comply with State and City regulations that inure to the public's health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the City anticipates that Restaurant Drive-Through Operators, as defined below, may seek to establish additional drive-throughs, or desire to expand existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations before a non-urgency ordinance would become effective; and

WHEREAS, City Charter Section 313 and Government Code Section 65858 expressly authorize the City Council to adopt an urgency ordinance for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, and to prohibit a use that is in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal that the legislative body, planning commission, or the planning department is considering or studying or intends to study within a reasonable time; and

WHEREAS, City staff require time to study and develop appropriate regulations for Restaurant Drive-Through Operations consistent with State and federal law; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the above-described express statutory authority and its police power, the City Council desires, on an interim urgency basis, to temporarily prohibit establishment of new, or expansion of existing, Restaurant Drive-Through Operations within the City.

WHEREAS, all legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Ordinance have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CARSON, CALIFORNIA, DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. FINDINGS

The City Council finds the facts set forth in the recitals in this Urgency Ordinance are true and correct and are hereby incorporated by reference. Additionally, based on the foregoing, both verbal and written testimony at the public hearing, including the staff report, exhibits, and any materials provided by members of the public, the City Council finds as follows:

A. The City Council is adopting this Ordinance in order to allow the City time to thoroughly study and develop the City's laws, rules, procedures, and fees related to the development, operation and establishment of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations to enable the City of Carson (hereafter, the "City") to adequately and appropriately preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the community in the City.

B. For the purposes of this Ordinance, a "Restaurant Drive-Through Operation" includes all restaurants with a drive-through facility where food or coffee-type beverages are purchased by motorists who remain in their vehicles during the sales transaction, including drive-up service, and that is designed to enable persons to receive a service or purchase or consume goods while remaining within a motor vehicle, including any associated drive-through lane(s), queuing/stacking areas, ordering points/menu boards, and pick-up windows. The term "Restaurant Drive Through Operation" does not include drive-through facilities associated with banks, credit unions, pharmacies, or other non-restaurant uses.

C. For purposes of this Ordinance, "Restaurant Drive-Through Operator" shall mean a person that owns, manages, and/or operates a Restaurant Drive-Through Operation, whether for profit or not.

D. The City finds that in the absence of a sufficient regulatory framework to govern Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, the adverse impacts frequently associated with Restaurant Drive-Through Operations likely will occur, resulting in unregulated and significant negative impacts upon the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

E. The City finds that the adverse impacts from Restaurant Drive-Through Operations include the following:

(1) The establishment and proliferation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations throughout the City without sufficient regulation presents a current and immediate threat to public health, safety, and welfare. Restaurant Drive-Through Operations generate undesirable conditions for adjacent properties and residents as a result of concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high-turnover turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions

involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses; and

(2) Extended idling and stop-and-go conditions associated with Restaurant Drive-Through Operations queues can measurably increase localized air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, undermining adopted public health and environmental objectives, especially in areas already burdened by cumulative impacts; and

(3) Widespread and unregulated access to fast-food service has been found to contribute to the general rate of childhood obesity and other health problems; and

F. The City also finds that Restaurant Drive-Through Operations could have a negative economic impact for the City absent sufficient regulation, as follows:

(1) The use may result in inefficient utilization of commercially zoned land that could otherwise support higher-intensity employment-generating uses; and

(2) The continued establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations may displace other commercial, or employment uses that could generate greater long-term fiscal and economic impacts to the City.

G. The City needs time to draft a proposed text amendment to the Zoning Code to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the community in the City with respect to the operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations.

SECTION 2. CEQA COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines ("CEQA," California Code of Regulations Title 14, §§ 15000 *et seq.*), this Interim Urgency Ordinance is exempt from CEQA based on the following: (i) this Interim Urgency Ordinance is not a "project" within the meaning of CEQA Section 15378 because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, either directly or indirectly; and (ii) this Interim Urgency Ordinance is also exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3) because it merely establishes a 45-day temporary moratorium on the establishment and expansion of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, and thus it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment.

SECTION 3. AUTHORITY AND EFFECT

The State Planning and Zoning Law (Cal. Gov't Code Sections 65000, *et seq.*) and the City's Charter broadly empower the City to plan for and regulate the use of land in order to provide for orderly development, the public health safety and welfare, and a balancing of property rights and the desires of the community and the manner in which its citizens envision their city.

SECTION 4. MORATORIUM

A. During the Effective Period of this Ordinance (forty-five (45) days unless extended pursuant to Government Code Section 65858), no permit shall be issued for any development or use of any new Restaurant Drive-Through Operation, nor may a permit be issued for the expansion of an existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operation, within the City. The foregoing shall explicitly prohibit the approval or issuance of any subdivision, use permit, variance, site plan and design review, development and site plan review, zoning compliance review, grading permit, building permit, or any other entitlement for use involving businesses defined as a Restaurant Drive-Through Operation herein during the Effective Period.

B. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operation shall be allowed to obtain their annual City business license. Additionally, permits may be issued for minor construction, rehabilitation, and landscaping, or other purposes not involving an expansion of building area, provided such work does not increase floor area, seating capacity, drive-through capacity, queuing length, or intensity of use. Any Restaurant Drive-Through Operations under construction with a valid building permit, any Restaurant Drive-Through Operations that obtained administrative Planning approval with the concurrence of the City Manager's office or any Restaurant Drive-Through Operation approved by the Planning Commission as of the effective date of this Urgency Ordinance shall be exempt from this Urgency Ordinance.

SECTION 5. STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT

During the Effective Period of this Ordinance, the City shall study and develop as necessary City laws, rules, procedures, and fees related to Restaurant Drive-Through Operations to enable the City to adequately and appropriately preserve the health, safety, and welfare of the community in the City. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65858, the Planning Manager will issue a report for the legislative body on what has been accomplished during the moratorium before it expires or is extended.

SECTION 6. URGENCY MEASURE

It is hereby declared that this Ordinance is necessary as an urgency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, health, safety, and welfare. The City Council finds that its current zoning regulations and land use plans do not adequately regulate the development, establishment and operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, and therefore do not adequately protect the peace, health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of the City or in communities around the City. The City Council finds the urgency measure is necessary in order to ensure adequate regulation of the development and operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations. The facts constituting the urgency are:

The City does not currently have sufficient standards in the Carson Municipal Code related specifically to the development, establishment, expansion and operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations within the City.

The negative impacts frequently associated with operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations will likely increase as insufficiently regulated Restaurant Drive-Through Operations

continue to proliferate throughout the City, resulting in a significant negative impact upon public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

To permit the establishment and proliferation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations to continue within the City without specific regulations that are consistent with the General Plan and take into account the detrimental impacts that such establishments can have if not sufficiently regulated, constitutes a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare. Restaurant Drive-Through Operations generate undesirable conditions for adjacent properties. Examples of common impacts generated by these uses include concentrated vehicle queuing, idling, and high turnover turning movements that impair traffic circulation and increase the risk of collisions involving motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists; obstruct on-site drive aisles and emergency access; and create recurring noise, lighting, litter, and late hour disturbances that are incompatible with nearby residences and other sensitive uses. These impacts can be detrimental to the quality of life for adjacent residents and disruptive to adjacent businesses. Allowing the continued establishment of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations without carefully tailored regulations will result in the immediate potential for disruptions to the quality of life for adjacent residents and businesses.

Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the community can result in loss of potential revenue to the City and provide the City with little economic benefit, as typical wages paid at Restaurant Drive-Through Operations would not increase the City's overall median incomes. Restaurant Drive-Through Operations therefore would not bolster employee densities in commercial and manufacturing zones or increase the per capita median income of the community. Allowing the continued, minimally regulated establishment of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations under the existing zoning ordinance will result in the immediate loss of potential income to City residents and reduce potential employment opportunities throughout the City.

Restaurant Drive-Through Operators are likely to seek to establish or expand Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City based on the lack of clear and sufficient regulations, which will further exacerbate the impacts of such businesses.

Absent the adoption of this Interim Urgency Ordinance, the continued establishment and proliferation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City under the current zoning ordinance would likely result in the negative and harmful secondary effects, as identified above.

As a result of the negative and harmful secondary effects associated with insufficiently regulated development and operation of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations, the current and immediate threat such effects pose to the public health, safety and welfare, it is necessary to adopt a temporary, forty-five (45) day moratorium on the establishment of new Restaurant Drive-Through Operations and the expansion of existing Restaurant Drive-Through Operations in the City.

A moratorium is immediately required to preserve the public health, safety, and welfare and should be adopted immediately as an urgency ordinance to make certain that the establishment and expansion of Restaurant Drive-Through Operations is prohibited for the period of this Ordinance. Imposition of a moratorium will allow the City sufficient time to conclude the preparation of a comprehensive ordinance for the regulation of such activities.

SECTION 7. SEVERABILITY

The City Council hereby declares that if any provision, section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, phrase, or word of this Ordinance is rendered or declared invalid or unconstitutional by any final action in a court of competent jurisdiction or by reason of any preemptive legislation, then the City Council would have independently adopted the remaining provisions, sections, subsections, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, or words of this Ordinance, and as such they shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVENESS OF ORDINANCE.

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by a 4/5 vote, pursuant to the authority conferred upon the City Council by City Charter Section 313 and Government Code Section 65858. This Ordinance shall be effective during the Effective Period, which shall be from its adoption and shall be of no further force and effect forty-five (45) days following the date of its adoption, unless extended in accordance with the provisions set forth in Government Code Section 65858(b).

SECTION 9. PUBLICATION

The City Clerk shall certify as to the passage and adoption of this Interim Urgency Ordinance and shall cause the same to be published in a manner prescribed by law.

[SIGNATURES LOCATED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE]

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Carson, California at a regular meeting on this 20th day of January 2026.

Lula Davis-Holmes, Mayor

ATTEST:

Dr. Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Sunny Soltani, City Attorney [MC]

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES) SS:
CITY OF CARSON)

I, Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk of the City of Carson, do hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance, being Urgency Ordinance No. 26-2602U, was duly passed and approved by the City Council of the City of Carson at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 20th of January 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Khaleah K. Bradshaw, City Clerk



Report to Planning Commission

Tuesday, September 22, 2026, 6:30 PM

NEW PUBLIC HEARING 7C.

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Nathan Freeman, Director of Community and Economic Development

PREPARED BY: McKina Alexander, Planning Manager
Kaneca Pompey, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: ZONING CODE AMENDMENT TO MAKE VARIOUS AMENDMENTS TO THE CARSON MUNICIPAL CODE TO UPDATE, CLARIFY, AND ESTABLISH ZONING REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO CAR WASHES, SUBJECT TO SPECIFIED REQUIREMENTS

PROJECT/APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project Summary:	Consider recommending that the City Council approve a Zone Text Amendment making various amendments to the Carson Municipal Code to update, clarify, and establish zoning regulations pertaining to car washes.
Project Location:	Citywide
General Plan/Zoning:	Various Zoning Designations
Project Applicant:	City of Carson, Community and Economic Development Department
Project Owner:	Not Applicable

I. OVERVIEW

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission continue the public hearing on this item, after taking any public comments, as staff is finalizing information on the proposed zone text amendment. As such, staff is recommending this item be continued to the October 13, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

II. PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Public notice was given in accordance with applicable law. Notice of public hearing was posted to the paper by August 29, 2026. The agenda was posted at City Hall not less than 72 hours prior to the Planning Commission meeting.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

CONTINUE the public hearing to the October 13, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

