



# HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Part 1 - Public Hearing - Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008  
Part 2 - Public Hearing - Design Review DR-2025-0004

FROM: Gregg McClain, Planning Director

BY: Maria Majcherek, Senior Planner

## PROJECT INFORMATION

SUMMARY: Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2024-0008 is a request to permit a drive-thru at a new KFC fast food restaurant – the KFC restaurant currently shares the same building as that of the existing Taco Bell restaurant.

Design Review Application No. DR-2025-0004 is a request for design review of the new establishment. The scope of work includes the construction of a new KFC restaurant with drive-thru, reconfigured parking lot, and landscaping.

LOCATION: 11523 Hawthorne Blvd. APN Nos. 4042-011-026 and 4042-011-024

APPLICANT: Chavonne Jennings, GLMV Architecture

REPRESENTATIVE: Autumn Brightwell, Tessere

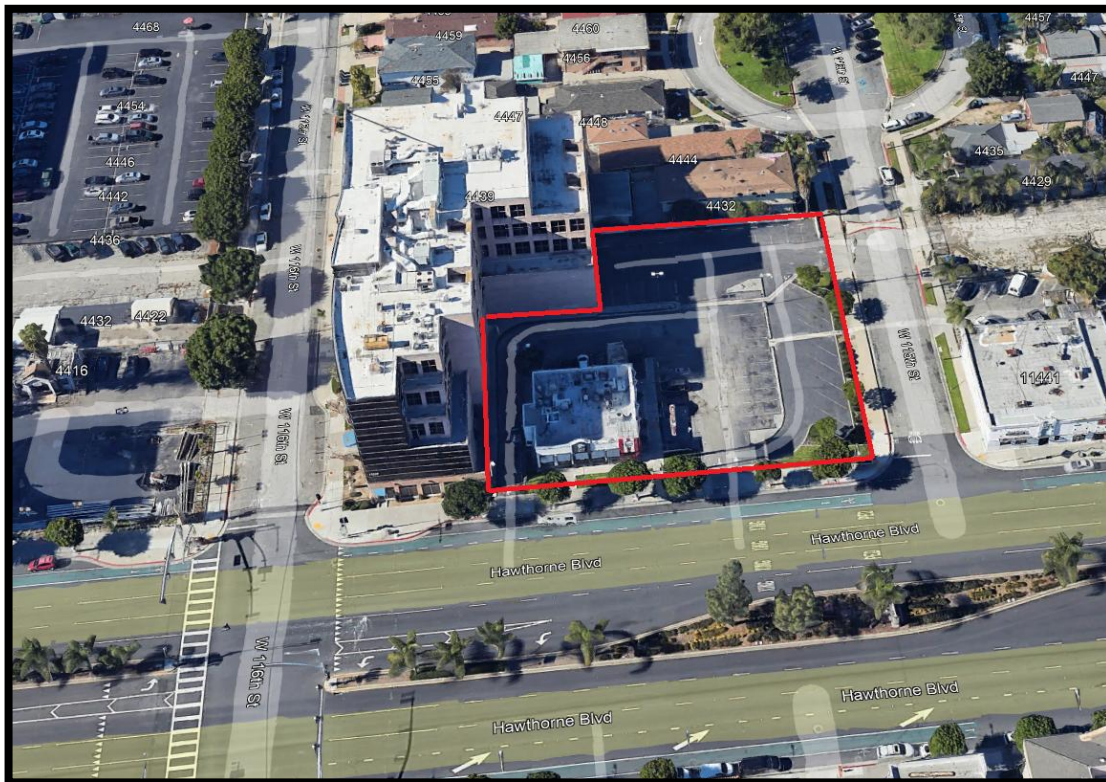
PROPERTY OWNER: Raziel Valiente-Chung, RBD California Restaurants Limited

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applications reviewed herein include a conditional use permit and design review for the property located at 11523 Hawthorne Blvd. The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Application No. CU-2024-0008 is a request to permit a drive-thru at a proposed new building to house the existing KFC fast food restaurant. The Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) Section 17.25.020 includes drive-thru restaurants as a permitted land uses, subject to a conditional use permit.

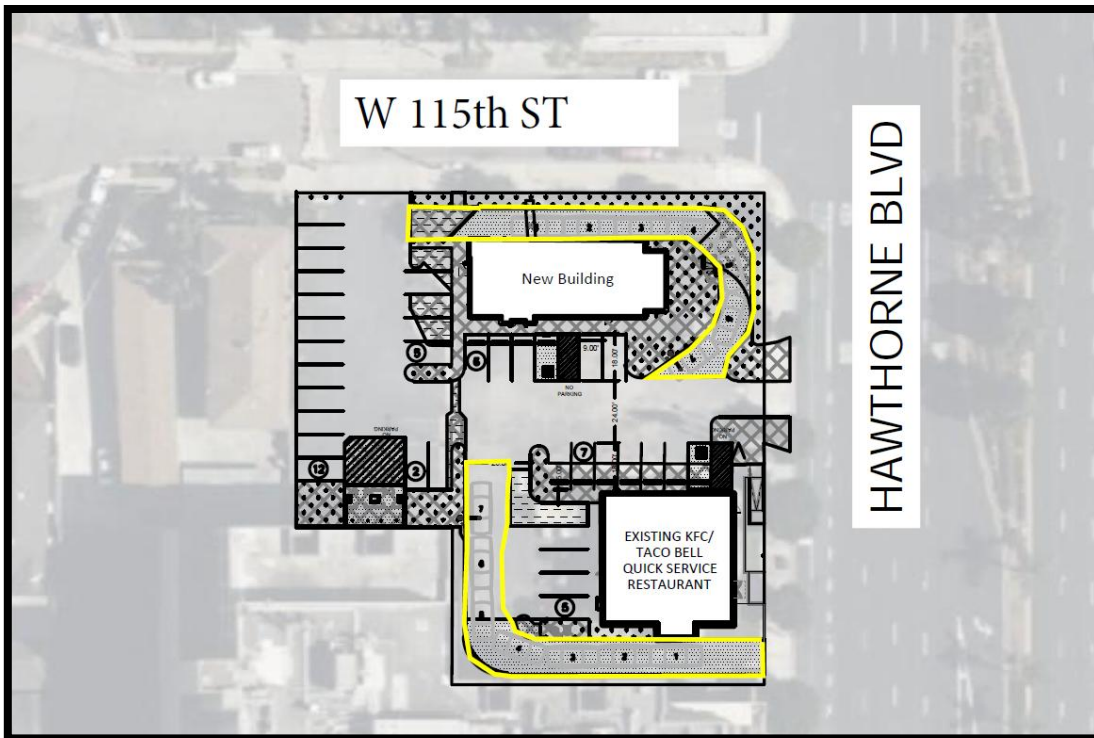
Design Review Application No. DR-2025-0004 is a request for review of the exterior project design for the new building. Chapter 17.99 Design Review of the HMC requires the review of architectural features, site design, and internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The design review will also examine the proposed drive-thru lane, parking lot and paving, and landscaping.

As shown on the vicinity map below, the subject site is located on the west side of Hawthorne Blvd., between 115<sup>th</sup> and 116<sup>th</sup> Streets. The proposed use of the project site is commercial and is appropriately located amongst other urban uses. The property fronts Hawthorne Blvd. and is adjacent to commercial properties to the north, south, and east. Immediately west of the property are multi-family and single-family residential developments.



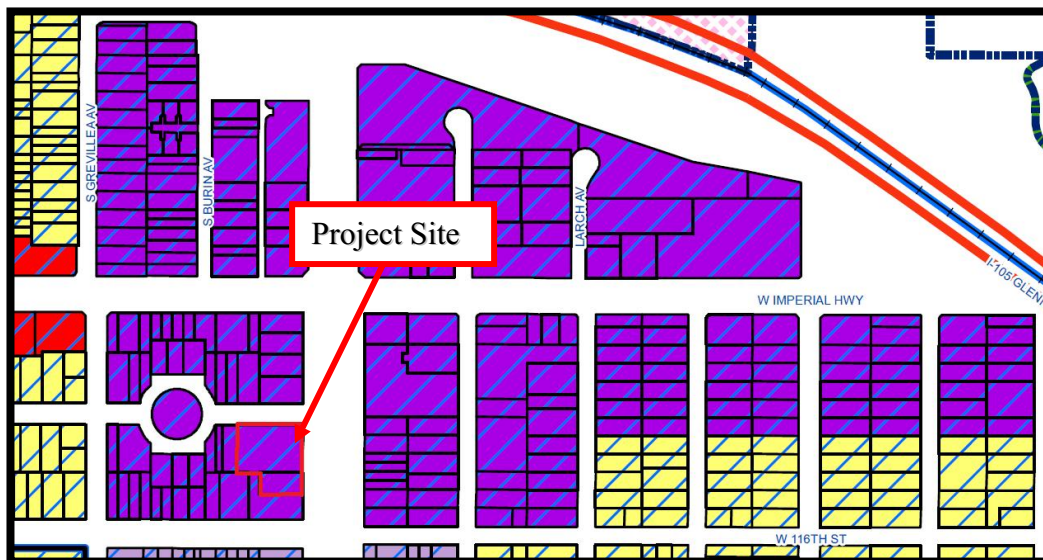
View looking west

The property is comprised of two parcels totaling 30,927 sq. ft. and is currently developed with one 2,609 sq. ft. commercial building housing two fast food restaurants - Currently KFC and Taco Bell share the same building. The scope of the CUP is only for the approval of the drive-thru for the new 2,098 sq. ft. commercial building. If approved, each fast food restaurant would be housed in its own building and each served by its own drive-thru (see site plan below – drive-thru areas in yellow):



**GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND OTHER POLICY PLANS**

The project site is located within the Downtown Hawthorne Specific Plan (DHSP) and specifically, the project site is implemented by the zoning district *Hospitality Commercial (CH)*. The DHSP encourages a mix of retail, office, hotel, dining, entertainment, housing and employment in the area along Hawthorne Boulevard and Imperial Hwy:



As shown on the vicinity map below, the subject site is located in the (CR) Regional Commercial zone. Per the HMC, the Regional Commercial Zone is intended for use by freeway-related commercial development for land uses requiring regional accessibility and visibility. The project is a commercial development and is therefore appropriately located in the Regional Commercial zone.

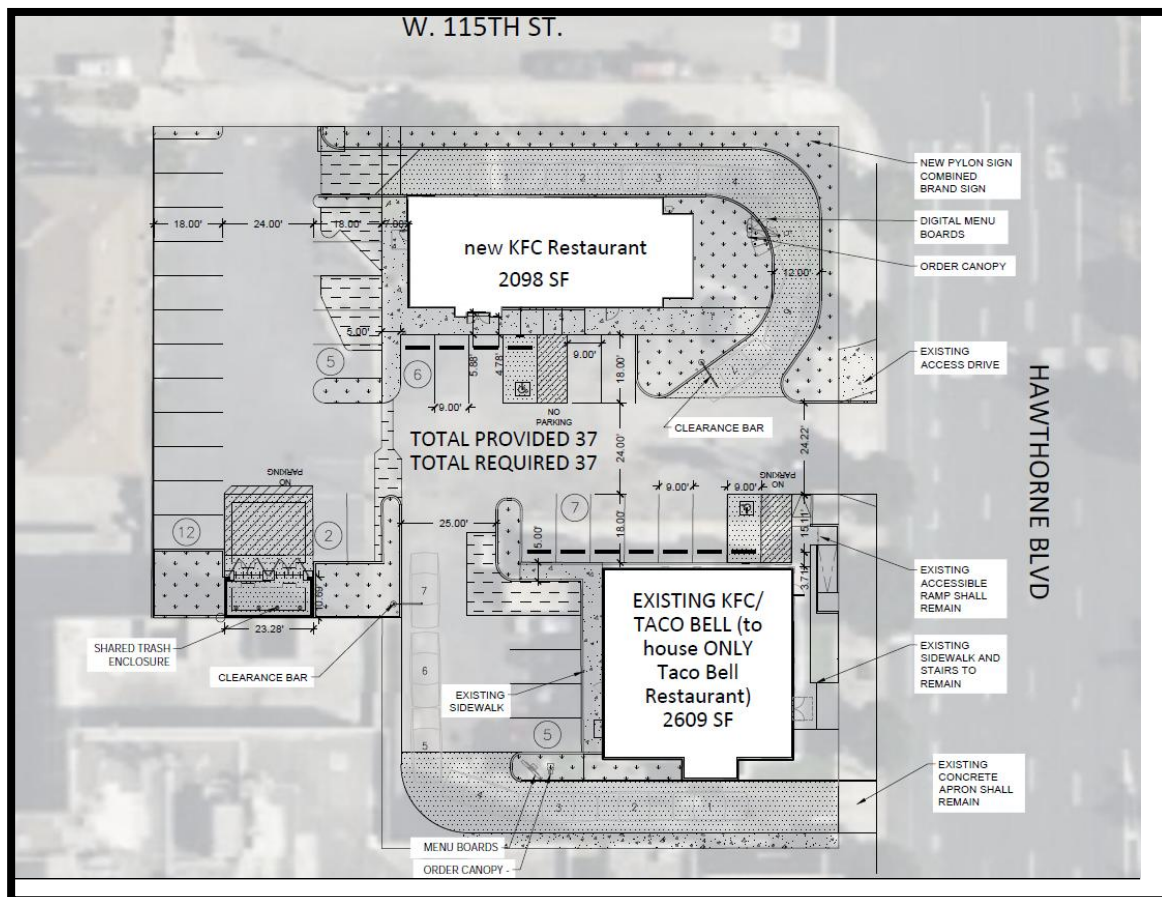
The General Plan Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) is also applicable to these applications as economic growth and success are a City priority. Policy 2.1 of the EDSP lists business retention, growth, and attraction of new businesses as goals. The project site is a large and not fully underdeveloped, with opportunity to be used for economic benefit. Therefore, the project is found to be in compliance with the EDSP as the existing fast food restaurants on the site have been thriving businesses in the City. If approved, the proposal will generate additional tax revenue and job opportunities for the community.

Part 1 – Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008

**I. OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

**A. Introduction**

Conditional Use Permit Application CU-2024-0008 is a request to approve a new drive-thru in conjunction with a proposed fast food restaurant (KFC) – the existing Taco Bell will remain and KFC would occupy the new building. The proposal includes a reconfiguration of the parking lot, access, and new trash enclosure, as shown below:



The Hawthorne Municipal Code (HMC) contains various minimum requirements applicable to all properties within the Regional Commercial (CR) zone as it relates to height, parking, landscaping, and proposed drive-thru restaurants.

HMC Section 17.25.020 Permitted Uses, specifies that restaurants with drive-thrus are subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The CUP requirement allows the City to address the unique and specific circumstances of a drive-thru within the context of its proposed location.

## **B. Required Findings:**

Pursuant to HMC Chapter 17.40 – Prior to granting an approval of an application for conditional use permit, the Planning Commission must make five specific findings, as follows:

1. The proposed use is properly one for which a CUP is authorized by this code, as follows:

As discussed above, the project site is located in the CR zone. HMC Section 17.25.020 permits uses in the CR zone with approval of a conditional use permit and as such, it is a proper use within the zone.

2. The proposed use will not adversely affect the adjoining land uses, or the growth and development of the area in which it is proposed to be located, as follows:

The project location in the Regional Commercial zone is intended for commercial activity and development, including restaurants. Through careful design and subsequent design review, the development will be oriented in a way to minimize interference with the adjacent residential land uses by placing the building and entry to the drive-thru closer to Hawthorne Blvd.

3. That the size and shape of the site proposed for the use is adequate to allow the full development of the proposed use, in a manner not detrimental to either the particular area or health and safety.

The proposed new structure is 2,098 sq. ft. and the existing building, which measures 2,609 sq. ft., cover 15.2% of the existing 30,924.6 square foot lot. The site can easily accommodate the new building and proposed parking. The portion of the site dedicated to the new drive-thru is adequate to accommodate the queue of vehicles. This new drive thru will allow additional queuing of vehicles on the site rather than concentrating all vehicles, for two restaurants, onto one drive-thru.

4. That the traffic generated by the proposed use will not impose an undue burden upon the streets and highways designed and improved to carry the traffic in the area.

The purpose of a drive-thru is to collect cars in an orderly queue to receive service. The proposed queue demonstrates ample space to accommodate vehicles and minimize overflow into the establishment's parking lot and adjacent streets. The drive-thru will be accessible via the main entry off of Hawthorne Blvd. and also via the existing entry off of 115<sup>th</sup> Street. As there will be two drive-thrus, the site will provide signage and directional arrows guiding patrons to each of the restaurants located on-site.

5. That the granting of the conditional use permit under the conditions imposed will not be detrimental to the health and safety of the citizens of the City of Hawthorne.

Provisions of the HMC permit drive-thru restaurants with the approval of a CUP. The findings above demonstrate the project's conformity to the surrounding land uses and regulations of the Zoning Code. Additionally, the conditions of approval enumerated in Exhibit A, subject the project to review by agencies such as Fire, Police, and others regulating public safety.

## **B. Environmental Analysis**

The proposed CUP is a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and qualifies for an exemption from CEQA pursuant to Section 15332. Class 32 exempts in-fill development projects such as these due to the following conditions. The proposed establishment will be located within city limits on a lot of approximately 30,927 sq. ft. The project does not conflict with the General Plan and zoning designation for the site. Nor does the project site serve as a habitat for rare species as the site was previously disturbed and filled with non-native plants and hardscape, and is surrounded by urban uses. Further, the site is located in an area already served by utility service providers and public services. Finally, there are no unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the categorical exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2.

## **C. Public Hearing Notice**

Public Notice (Attachment 2) was given in accordance with Chapter 17.06 of the HMC. The Planning Department published a public hearing notice in the Hawthorne Press Tribune on June 26, 2025 and mailed notification to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site.

## **II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the analysis of the issues and conditions of approval, the proposal complies with the HMC. Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt PC Resolution 2025-09 (Attachment 5) approving Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008.

Part 2 – Public Hearing – Design Review DR-2025-0004

## **I. OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

### **A. Design Review and Zoning Ordinance Compliance:**

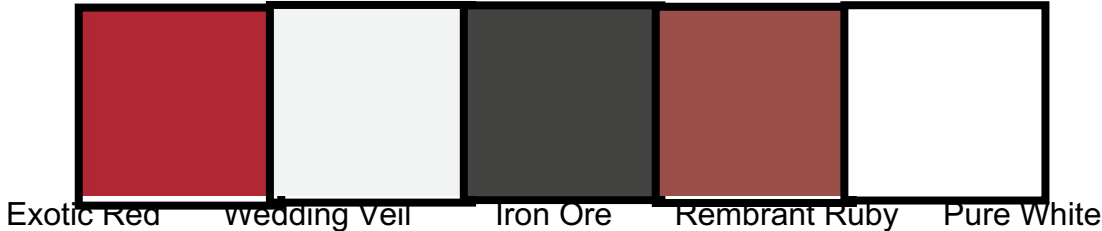
The HMC contains various minimum requirements applicable to all properties within the Regional Commercial (CR) zone as it relates to height, parking, and landscaping. Additionally, the subject site is adjacent to residentially zoned properties and requires the applicability of Chapter 17.99.

1. Architectural Style – Materials and Colors:

The applicant is proposing the new construction of a fast food restaurant (KFC) with a modern facade. HMC Section 17.99.110 – Design Guidelines – Architecture, specifies architectural styles and materials proposed shall be consistent throughout the project site.

The new building is designed with a range of exterior materials and colors that evoke a modern style. The materials utilized include stucco, metal, and wood. The applicant is proposing to utilize materials of this type to produce a sleek and modern exterior facade. The proposed facade colors include the following:

**Proposed Colors – Benjamin Moor**



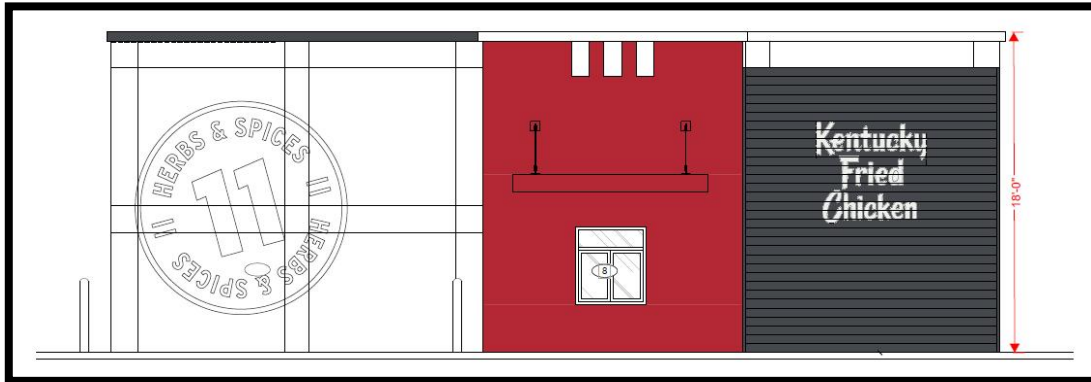
The colors of the new building complement the design by not overusing one color and still provide contrast with the accent colors. Additionally, the materials provide a change in texture that adds architectural detail to the building, as shown in the building renderings below:



These color and finish combinations serve as the required base, accent, and trim colors and meet the minimum requirements of the design review regulations and Section 17.30.010 – Exterior colors for commercial buildings.

Height:

HMC Section 17.25.040 Height, specifies no maximum height is imposed. The proposed building will not exceed a height of 18.5 feet.



South Elevation



North Elevation



East Elevation



**Parking and Circulation:**

HMC Section 17.99.100 (G) specifies parking areas shall be well landscaped and screened to create a safe and attractive parking environment. The project site is located on the southwest corner of 115<sup>th</sup> Street and Hawthorne Blvd. and is adjacent to residential uses to the west. The applicant is providing new landscaping within and along the boundaries of the site but not along the western boundary line with the residential uses. Therefore, Staff recommends a condition of approval to place additional screening material with landscaping be placed along this boundary line. Upon submission of landscape plans, Staff will ensure adequate screening is provided.

Parking requirements for commercial uses are outlined in HMC Chapter 17.58. Restaurant uses must provide one parking stall for each 100 sq. ft. of gross floor area. Accordingly, the project’s proposed gross floor area, including the existing building, of 3,637 sq. ft. requires 37 parking stalls (includes required designated handicap stalls). The proposed design meets these criteria.

The design of on-site vehicular circulation has been optimized to minimize traffic conflict. The parking lot has entry and egress points from 115<sup>th</sup> St. and Hawthorne Blvd. Parking in this area is served by two-way drive aisles which move toward the drive-thru entrances. In addition, it is important to note that patrons exiting out of or entering onto the property will not be able to access the portion of 115<sup>th</sup> street, where residential uses are located, as this portion of the street is blocked to through traffic (see aerial view below):



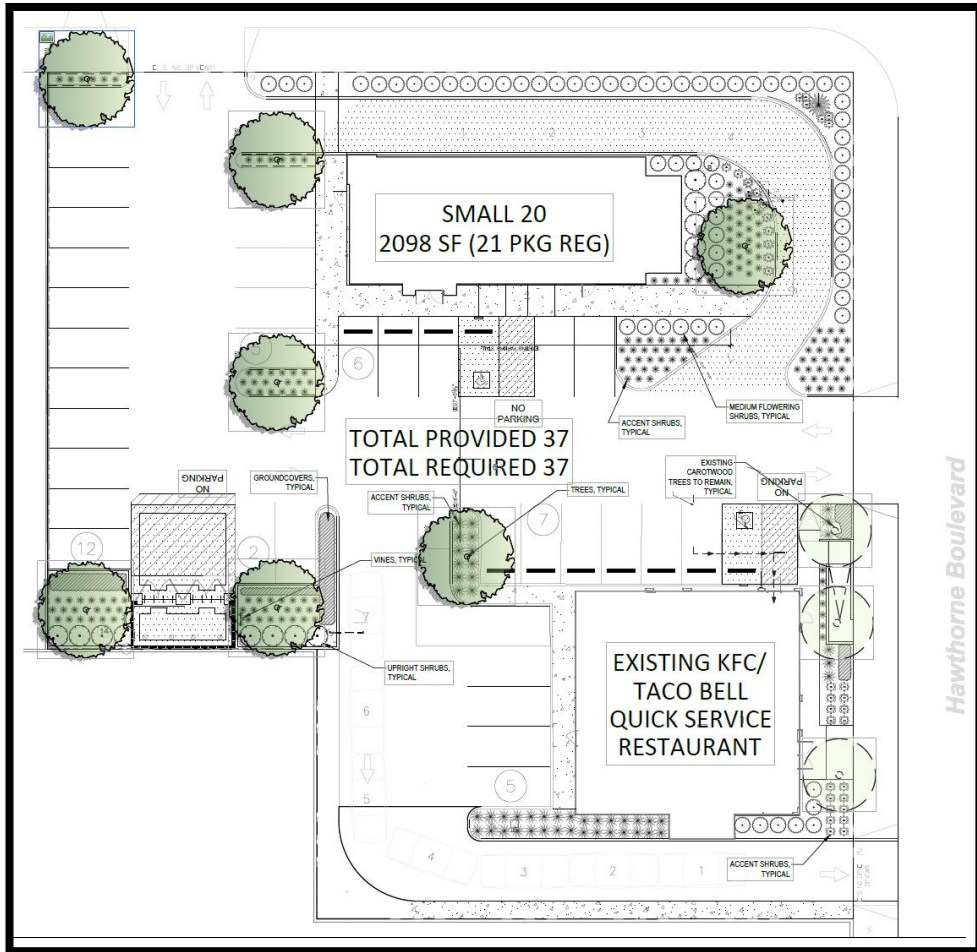
The site design is also in compliance with Code requirements for pedestrian circulation. The sidewalk around the perimeter of the lot is connected to paths of travel to the parking lot and restaurant. The handicap accessible parking stalls abut paths of travel with striping and tactile warning surfaces. These measures ensure pedestrian paths are well connected and provide for safe circulation.

Landscaping:

The applicant provided Staff with landscaping plans as required per HMC Section 17.99.040 (D) – Applicability and Section 17.99.110 (A) Design guidelines – Public Realm Engagement. The landscaping plans indicate the type, size, and location of all proposed plantings and a full list of plants and locations can be found in the landscaping plans (Attachment 1) - plants include:



The proposed landscaping will incorporate a variety of plantings differing in height, texture, and color to enhance and beautify the parcel. A new irrigation system will be installed to maintain the landscaping in good condition. The proposed landscaping will not interfere with pedestrian circulation, on-site or off-site, nor impede the circulation and visibility of vehicles.



**Noise:**

The site design reflects consideration for neighboring properties as the ordering station has been placed over 100 ft. away from the adjacent residential structure. The HMC contains standards to regulate ambient noise levels at commercial properties and the development must abide by the regulations.

**Signs:**

Per HMC Section 17.35.110 Signs – Commercial and Industrial, the property is permitted to include signage on the property and any proposed signage shall be evaluated by Staff to ensure the signage is in harmony with the style of the building facade and does not exceed the allocated signage permitted on the property.

**B. Required Design Review Board Findings:**

Pursuant to HMC Chapter 17.99 – Prior to granting an approval of an application for design review, the Planning Commission, serving as the Design Review Board, must make four specific findings, as follows:

1. The location, size, design, and characteristics of the project will be compatible with and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing in or working in or adjacent to the proposed project.

This project is subject to review by agencies regulating the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents in the City of Hawthorne. These agencies include the Building Safety Department, Public Works Department, the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, and the Hawthorne Police Department. Elements under review include the provision of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, traffic control devices, and safe paths-of-travel. The project site is properly located in the Regional Commercial zone which is intended for freeway-related commercial development requiring regional accessibility and visibility. Therefore, the proposed commercial use is compatible with the project site, and will not be detrimental to adjacent uses.

2. The proposed design is suitable for its purpose, is harmonious with and relates properly to, the surrounding neighborhood, contiguous parcels, and the site itself.

The proposed design is characteristic of a modern fast food establishment. The project site has been thoroughly planned to enable ideal operations such as safe circulation of pedestrians and vehicles and ample space to accommodate queueing of vehicles. These design choices are intended to mitigate periods of high-volume and reduce congestion in the parking lot. The perimeter of the site is connected via public right of ways for pedestrian and vehicle traffic. The surrounding neighborhood has also been considered in the design. Security lighting shall be pointed down so as to limit light spilling onto adjacent parcels. The project shall meet Exterior Noise Standards of the HMC to eliminate cause for nuisance and to be in harmony with contiguous parcels.

3. The overall design will be of a quality that will preserve the integrity of, and upgrade, the existing neighborhood.

The current site is maintained in fairly well condition but the proposed upgrades to the parking lot and new landscape throughout the project site are improvements that benefit the surrounding neighborhood and pedestrian experience along Hawthorne Blvd. and 115<sup>th</sup> Street.

4. The design of the proposed project is in accordance with the General Plan and all applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance.

The Zoning Code permits fast food restaurants in the Regional Commercial zone subject to the issuance of a Conditional Use Permit, which has been submitted in conjunction with this Design Review application.

This project was reviewed for compliance with the General Plan Land Use Policy designations and standards and the DHSP - The project conforms to the General Plan's land use designation for the site.

This project was also found to be in compliance with the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP). Policy 2.1 of the EDSP lists business retention, growth, and attraction of new business as goals of the City. Therefore,

the prospect of continuing a thriving business is an economic success for the City.

### PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice of the public hearing for this item was provided in accordance with Chapter 17.06 of the HMC. The Planning Department published a public hearing notice in the local paper on June 26, 2025, and mailed notification to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008 and Design Review DR-2025-0004 are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15332. Class 32 exempts in-fill development projects such as these due to the following conditions. The proposed establishment will be located within city limits on a lot of approximately 30,927 sq. ft. The project does not conflict with the General Plan and zoning designation for the site. Nor does the project site serve as a habitat for rare species as the site was previously disturbed and filled with non-native plants and hardscape, and is surrounded by urban uses. Further, the site is located in an area already served by utility service providers and public services. Finally, there are no unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the categorical exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2.

### RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis of the issues and conditions of approval, the proposal complies with the HMC and will not result in significant negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. Accordingly, Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt PC Resolution 2025-10 (Attachment 5) approving Design Review Application DR-2025-0004.

### ATTACHMENTS

1. Site Plans
2. Public Hearing Notice
3. Notice of Exemption (NOE)
4. PC Resolution 2025-09
5. PC Resolution 2025-10

Attachment 1  
Site plans

Attachment 2  
Public Hearing Notice



Herald Publications  
531 Main St., #1160.  
El Segundo, CA 90245  
(310) 322-1830 • Fax (310) 322-2787

**PROOF OF PUBLICATION**

(2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
County of Los Angeles,

I declare, that I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk responsible for accepting, formatting and publishing legal notices in the **Hawthorne Press Tribune**, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published weekly in the City of Hawthorne, County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, under the date of **July 31, 1959**, Case Number **187530**; that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to-wit:

6/26/2025

All in the year 2025

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at Hawthorne, California,

this 26 day of June 2025

Signature

Code # HH-28981

This space is for the County Clerk's Filing Stamp

Proof of Publication of:

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION**  
NO. CU-2024-0008 and  
Design Review Application No. DR-2025-0004

**PUBLIC NOTICE** is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the City of Hawthorne will hold a public hearing to consider the following matter:

**CONDITIONAL USE APPLICATION**  
NO. CU-2024-0008: Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2024-0008 is a request for a drive-thru at a new building to house the existing KFC fast food restaurant. The KFC restaurant currently shares the same building as that of the existing Taco Bell restaurant. The Hawthorne Municipal Code permits drive-thru restaurants as an approved land use in the Regional Commercial (CR) zone with the issuance of an approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP) per HMC Section 17.25.020.

**DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION**  
NO. DR-2025-0004: Design Review Application No. DR-2025-0004 is a request for design approval of a new KFC restaurant. The scope of the work includes the construction of a new restaurant with drive-thru, parking, and landscaping.

**PROJECT LOCATION:**  
11523 Hawthorne Boulevard,  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

**MEETING DETAILS:**  
Day: Wednesday  
Date: July 16, 2025  
Time: 6:00 PM  
Place: City Council Chambers  
4455 West 126th Street  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Those interested in this item may appear at the meeting and submit oral or written comments. Written information pertaining to this item must be submitted to the Planning and Community Development Department prior to 5:00 PM July 16, 2025, at 4455 West 126th Street, Hawthorne, California 90250 or emailed to [rmshaher@cityofhawthorne.org](mailto:rmshaher@cityofhawthorne.org). For additional information, you may contact Maria Magjorek at (310) 349-2970 or at the email noted above.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**  
Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008 and Design Review DR-2025-0004 are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. Class 32 exempts in-fill development projects such as these due to the following conditions. The proposed establishment will be located within city limits on a lot of approximately 30,792.57 sq. ft. The project does not conflict with the General Plan and zoning designation for the site. Nor does the project site serve as a habitat for rare species as the site was previously disturbed and filled with non-native plants and hardscape, and is surrounded by urban uses. Further, the site is located in an area already served by utility service providers and unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the categorical exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2.

**PLEASE NOTE** that pursuant to Government Code Section 65009, in an action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul a finding, determination or decision of the Planning Commission or City Council, the issues raised shall be limited to those raised at the public hearing in this notice or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission or City Council at or prior to the public hearing.

Hawthorne Press Tribune 6/26/25  
HH-28981

Attachment 3  
Notice of Exemption (NOE)

**Notice of Exemption**

To: Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk  
County of: Los Angeles  
12400 Imperial Hwy.  
Norwalk CA 90650

From: (Public Agency): City of Hawthorne  
4455 W. 126th Street  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

(Address)

Project Title: Conditional Use Permit Application No. CU-2024-0008 AND Design Review Application No. DR-2025-0004

Project Applicant: Chavonne Jennings, GLMV Architecture

Project Location - Specific:

11523 Hawthorne Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250

Project Location - City: Hawthorne Project Location - County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

CU-2024-0008 is a request to permit a drive-thru at a new KFC restaurant. Dr-2025-0004 is a request for design review of a new restaurant. The scope of work includes the construction of a new KFC restaurant with drive-thru, parking, and landscaping.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Hawthorne

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Chavonne Jennings, GLMV Architecture

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: SSection 15332, Class 32
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:

Conditional Use Permit CU-2024-0008 and Design Review DR-2025-0004 are categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15332. Class 32 exempts in-fill development projects such as these due to the following conditions. The proposed establishment will be located within city limits on a lot of approximately 30,927 sq. ft. The project does not conflict with the General Plan and zoning designation for the site. Nor does the project site serve as a habitat for rare species as the site was previously disturbed and filled with non-native plants and hardscape, and is surrounded by urban uses. Further, the site is located in an area already served by utility service providers and public services. Finally, there are no unusual circumstances or issues that would constitute an exception to the categorical exemptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. There will be no significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, and water quality. In addition, the vicinity is already served by utility and public service providers.

Lead Agency  
Contact Person: Maria Majcherek Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 310-349-2970

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 07/16/2025 Title: Senior Planner

Signed by Lead Agency  Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment 4  
PC Resolution 2025-09

Attachment 5  
PC Resolution 2025-10