



REPORT to the LA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE: July 16, 2025

SUBJECT: PROJECT 2022-1599 (CALI QUESO CORP)

DESCRIPTION: CONSIDERATION OF A SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A DRIVE-THRU QDOBA RESTAURANT LOCATED AT 8303 PARKWAY DRIVE, APN 490-592-04-00 AND 490-592-02-00 IN THE C-G-D (GENERAL COMMERCIAL/ GROSSMONT OVERLAY/ URBAN DESIGN OVERLAY) ZONE

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Community Development

SUMMARY:

Issue(s):

1. Should the Planning Commission approve a Site Development Plan to authorize the development of a drive-thru restaurant in the Grossmont Specific Plan Overlay zone?

Recommendation:

1. Adopt a resolution (**Attachment A**) approving the Site Development Plan, subject to conditions of approval.

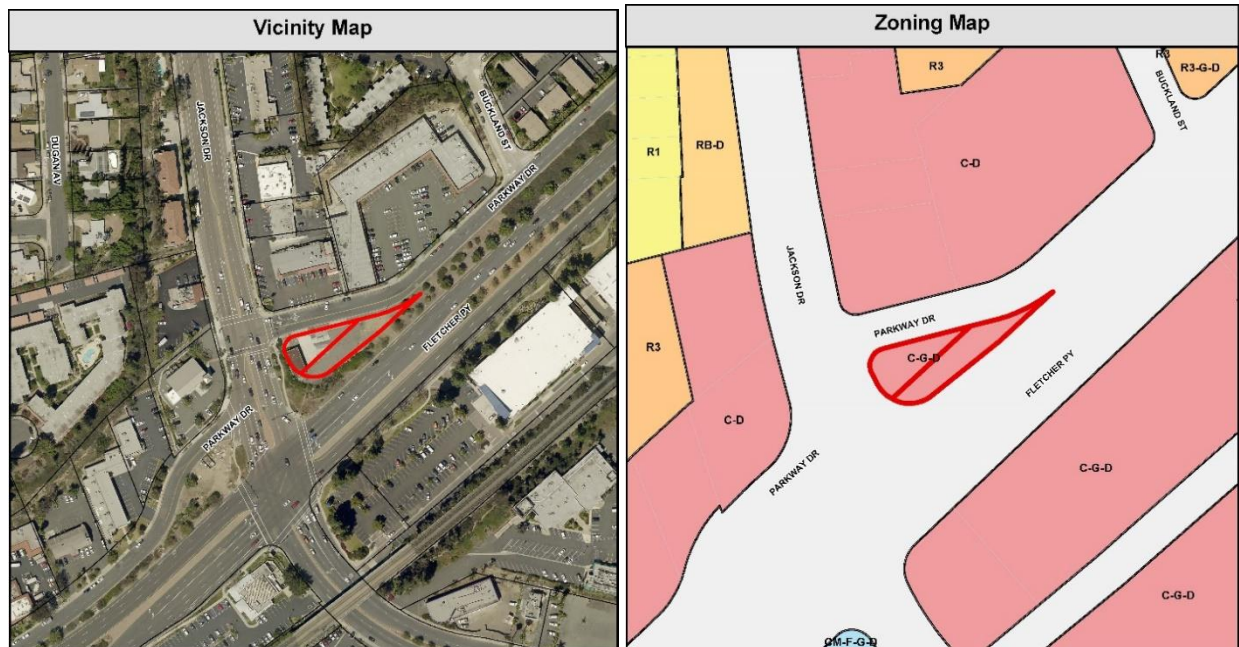
Environmental Review:

The project is exempt from environmental review under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15303, which exempts new construction of restaurants not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2,500 square feet in floor area. The project meets the criteria for the categorical exemption and none of the exceptions listed in Section 15300.2 apply.

BACKGROUND:

The 0.39 project site is comprised of two lots located at 8303 Parkway Drive, bounded by Jackson Drive to the west, Parkway Drive to the north, and Fletcher Parkway to the south as seen on the vicinity map. The project site is triangular and resembles the shape of a tear drop. The property is currently developed with a vacant commercial building and associated parking lot. Existing right-of-way improvements along Parkway Drive and Jackson Drive include sidewalk, curb, gutter, streetlights, traffic stoplights, and two curb openings. Right-of-way improvements along Fletcher Parkway include curb, gutter, streetlights, and a large, landscaped area. Photos of the project site are provided as **Attachment B**.

A City of San Diego water main pipeline runs underneath the project site, and a City of San Diego no-build easement is located on the entirety of the southern property for an existing water main pipeline. The City of San Diego has reviewed the project and provided a letter noting their approval of the conceptual design (**Attachment C**). In order to build within the easement, the City of San Diego will require that an Encroachment Maintenance Removal Agreement (EMRA) be executed upon project approval by the City of La Mesa.



Zoning for the project site is C-G-D (General Commercial/ Grossmont Specific Plan Overlay/ Urban Design Overlay), and the General Plan planned land use designation is Regional Serving Commercial. General Commercial zoning is generally applied along major streets and in shopping centers and provides areas in which all types of retail businesses, offices, and services can be conducted. Surrounding development includes commercial uses and shopping centers to the north, southeast, and west.

The Grossmont Specific Plan states that all new projects within the Specific Plan area require Site Development Plan review by the Planning Commission and Design Review through the Design Review Board (DRB) and City Council. The entitlements for the proposed project consists of a Site Development Plan review by the Planning Commission, Lot Consolidation review by the Director of Community Development, and Design Review by the DRB, subject to City Council ratification. On May 12, 2025, the DRB reviewed the application and unanimously approved the project, with conditions (**Attachment D**). On June 23, 2025, a staff report and Notice of Decision for the lot consolidation was posted for public review. After five (5) calendar days, the Community Development Director considered the staff report and public comments received and approved the lot consolidation (**Attachment E**).

DISCUSSION:

The Applicant, Cali Queso Corp, proposes to demolish existing on-site improvements to construct a one-story, 1,903 square foot drive-thru restaurant, with a new parking lot, paving, and pedestrian access as shown on the project plans (**Attachment F**). The Site Development Plan review evaluates whether the development requirements are complied with, design objectives are met, and no detriment to the public health, safety, or welfare would result from the project. The project as proposed meets the development requirements and design objectives for a commercial project in the General Commercial zone and Grossmont Overlay zone, and no detriment to the public health, safety, or welfare would result from the project as further discussed below.

Compliance with Development Requirements

General Commercial Development Requirements

The project complies with the development standards for new projects located in the General Commercial zone, as listed below:

Setbacks

In the underlying C zone, there are no building setback requirements, unless the property abuts a property located in any “R” zoned lot. The subject property and all surrounding properties are located within the C zone and does not abut an “R” zoned lot. Therefore, there are no setback requirements for the project site. Although there are no setback requirements, the building is setback approximately 12 – 15 feet away from the north and

west property lines, with the drive-thru portion located within the setback.

Height

The maximum height limit for a building in the General Commercial zone is 46 feet. The proposed building height is 19 feet six inches, which is within the required height limit.

Parking

The parking requirement for restaurants is one (1) parking space for each 250 square feet of gross leasable area, exclusive of the dining area, plus 1 parking space for each 3 persons seating capacity in the dining room. There is 1,231 square feet of proposed gross leasable area outside of the dining area, and a 32-person seating capacity in the dining room, equating to 16 required parking spaces. The project meets this requirement by providing 16 off-street parking spaces. The parking area includes interior and perimeter landscaping around the paved areas to meet the City's Parking and Landscape Standards. The project meets the Off-Street Parking Design Guidelines by providing concrete curbing around landscaped areas, striping and wheel stops, and use of compact parking spaces.

Landscaping

A total of 20,401 square feet of landscaping is proposed for the project, with 3,006 square feet of landscaping located on-site (within the private property) and 17,395 square feet of landscaping located within the public right-of-way. The Applicant would be responsible for maintenance of the landscaping within the right-of-way and an EMRA with the City of La Mesa will be required to ensure ongoing maintenance of this area. A total of 40 trees are proposed for the project, including seven trees within the property lines and 33 trees within the public right-of-way. One tree for every 500 square feet of landscaping is required on the property, and the project meets this requirement by proposing a total of seven (7) trees within the property lines surrounding the parking lot. These trees include a combination of accent and broad-spreading shade trees and are proposed together with accent plants and shrubs that were selected for low water use. The DRB reviewed the landscape plans for consistency with the Urban Design program design principles on May 12, 2025, and requested the inclusion of a condition to replace the Canary Island Pine trees proposed adjacent to the street on Fletcher Parkway with Jacaranda trees to maintain a consistent street tree design along Fletcher Parkway.

Trash and Recycling

New commercial developments are required to provide areas for the storage of trash and recyclable materials in a trash enclosure at least 20 feet back from any public street, measured from the street curb, and in a size adequate to serve the development. The proposed trash enclosure is proposed to be constructed with standard CMU and metal gates which are compatible with the proposed building and located 46.5 feet away from the street curb. The trash hauler, EDCO, reviewed the size and capacity of the proposal

and approved the design.

Grossmont Specific Plan Development Requirements

The project is subject to the urban design principles of the Grossmont Specific Plan, including site design and building design. The DRB reviewed the project for consistency with the urban design principles on May 12, 2025.

Design Objectives

The project is subject to the design objectives of the Urban Design Program and the Grossmont Specific Plan. The DRB staff report is included as **Attachment G** and the DRB Certification of Action is provided as **Attachment D**.

Public Health Safety, and Welfare

The project would not result in any detriment to the public health, safety, or welfare. Construction permits will be required to ensure compliance with Building and Fire codes, including accessibility. Local noise ordinances limit construction hours to minimize neighborhood disturbance. In addition, demolition of the existing building is subject to state and federal air quality regulations.

Utility services are available to serve the new buildings. Existing and proposed utilities are identified on the project plans. As mentioned previously, a City of San Diego water main pipeline runs underneath the project site, and a City of San Diego no-build easement is located on the entirety of the southern property for the existing water main pipeline. The City of San Diego provided a letter noting their approval of the conceptual design (**Attachment B**) and would require that an EMRA be executed upon project approval by the City of La Mesa. A condition of approval requiring an EMRA prior to permit issuance is included in the draft resolution (**Attachment A**).

To continue to provide sufficient, safe, and minimally disrupted walkways and traffic, the existing curb opening would remain unchanged. The internal site circulation will change due to the new building and addition of the drive thru. Signage would be provided to direct customers through the drive-thru and on-site parking area. In order to further address these internal circulation changes, a queuing analysis was submitted to ensure that the proposed project provides safe and adequate circulation within the site and at project intersections and is included as part of the Traffic Assessment Letter (**Attachment H**). The Applicant/business owner has agreed to a condition of approval that would reserve the right of the City to compel changes to internal circulation, at the full cost to the owner/operator, if the City Engineer determines that queueing from the site is significantly affecting traffic flow and safety.

CONCLUSION:

With the implementation of the draft conditions of approval, the project as proposed is consistent with Title 24 (Zoning) of the La Mesa Municipal Code and the Grossmont Specific Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

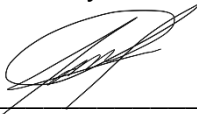
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the draft resolution (**Attachment A**) approving the site development plan for Project No. 2022-1599, subject to conditions of approval.

Respectfully submitted by:



Laura Traffenstedt
Associate Planner

Reviewed by:



Jared Chavez
Assistant Director of Community Development



Lynnette Santos
Director of Community Development

Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution approving the Site Development Plan
- B. Site Photographs
- C. City of San Diego Approval Letter
- D. DRB Certificate of Action

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- E. Notice of Decision NOD 2025-05
- F. Project Plans
- G. May 12, 2025 Design Review Staff Report
- H. Traffic Assessment Letter