



**Planning Department
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AGENDA ITEM NO.: #5 (Action Item – Public Hearing)
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: June 29, 2022
SUBJECT: Conditional Use Permit (CUP)
2022-02/Coso Signs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting a CUP for two gas station signs to include electronic price readers. The property is zoned Highway Services and Tourist Commercial (C-2) and is located at 20 Gills Station Road, in the community of Coso Junction. A gas station and mini-mart have been operating on the site for many years prior to the current new development. The applicant has applied for the CUP to change an existing Chevron sign to include the electronic component to display gas prices; and to update a high rise pole sign to include an electronic component to display gas prices. All other proposed signage changes on the site are compliant with the Highway Services and Tourist Commercial zone (C-2), in which the gas station is located, without a CUP.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Supervisory District: 5

Project Applicant: Donco & Sons, Inc.

Property Owner: Jagdeep Dhillon, Coso Junction Stores, Inc.

Site Address: 20 Gills Station Road

Community: Coso Junction

A.P.N.: 037-510-02

General Plan: Retail Commercial (RC)

Zoning: Highway Services and Tourist Commercial (C-2)

Size of Parcel: Approximately 18.6-acres

Surrounding Land Use:

Location:	Use:	Gen. Plan Designation	Zoning
Site	Gas Station and store with truck parking areas	Retail Commercial (RC)	Highway Services and Tourist Commercial (C-2)
North	Vacant-BLM	State and Federal Lands (SFL)	Open Space (OS-40)
East	Vacant-BLM	State and Federal Lands (SFL)	Open Space (OS-40)
South	Vacant-BLM	State and Federal Lands (SFL)	Open Space (OS-40)
West	Highway 395	NA	NA

Staff Recommended Action: 1.) Approve the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 2022-02/Coso Signs and find the project is exempt under CEQA.

Alternatives:

- 1.) Deny the CUP.
- 2.) Approve the CUP with additional Conditions of Approval.
- 3.) Continue the public hearing to a future date, and provide specific direction to staff regarding what additional information and analysis is needed.

Project Planner: Cynthia Draper

STAFF ANALYSIS

Background and Overview

The applicant is requesting the CUP to upgrade an existing Chevron sign and to update a high rise pole sign to include an electronic price reader to display gas prices (sign plan attached). The existing Chevron sign is illuminated and meets the size requirements per Inyo County Code 18.75.100(C)(2). The high rise pole sign will be illuminated and include an electronic price reader, Chevron and TA Express sign. The electronic price reader is 84 sq. ft. which exceeds the 50 sq. ft. maximum size requirement per Inyo County Code 18.75.100(C)(2). The sign height is 50ft., exceeding the 25ft. maximum height requirement per Inyo County Code 18.75.110(B). The applicant has concurrently applied for a height and size variance. The project is proposed on a property located at 20 Gills Station Road, in the community of Coso Junction (map attached). All other proposed signage changes are compliant with the Highway Services and Tourist Commercial zone (C-2), without a CUP, in which the gas station is located. A gas station and mini-mart have been operating on this site for many years. The applicant has demolished the gas station and store to rebuild a larger facility that will include a store,

gas station, two fast food restaurants, and diesel truck stop. A CUP was approved by the Commission in January 2022 for the truck stop. These changes to this facility have resulted in requiring an update to all of the signage on the site. The applicant is requesting the CUP to include LED lit gas prices on both signs, as defined by the County Code as an electronic sign and requires the CUP in the C-2 zone per 18.75.120. Since this requested use is allowed in the C-2 zone with a CUP, it is appropriate and meets the requirements of the Inyo County Code.

General Plan Consistency

The goal of this project is to allow for two electronic signs to display gas prices. The project is consistent with the General Plan designation of Retail Commercial (RC) in which it is located, as it allows for commercial uses including retail and transportation services such as gas stations.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency

The C-2 designation allows for electronic signs as a conditional use. The current uses on the site are well established and the applicant was granted a CUP for the truck stop. The applicant is seeking the use permit to have two electronic signs to display gas prices, in compliance with County's zoning ordinance. By acquiring the CUP the applicant is creating consistency with the code.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposal is covered by the Common Sense Rule 15061(b) (3) that states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where 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 activity is not subject to CEQA. This application for a CUP is for two electronic signs to display gas prices. No new building or use changes are part of the project and the entire property is disturbed.

NOTICING & REVIEW

The application for CUP 2022-02/Coso Signs has been reviewed by the appropriate county departments. The CUP is being conditioned with meeting all State and County Building Codes including those related to lighting.

The hearing for CUP 2022-02/Coso Signs was noticed on June 18, 2022 in the Inyo Register and mailed to property owners within 300-feet of the project location as required by the Inyo County Code. No comments have been received to date.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Department staff recommends the approval of CUP No. 2022-02/Coso Signs, with the following Findings and Conditions of Approval:

FINDINGS

1. The proposed CUP is exempt by the Common Sense Rule 15061(b) (3) that states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant

effect on the environment; and, the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act have been satisfied.

[Evidence: The Common Sense Rule 15061(b) (3) states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where 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 activity is not subject to CEQA. The application for this CUP is for two gas station signs to include an electronic price component. The property has been in use as a gas station and mini-mart for many years and the applicant was already granted a CUP for the truck stop. The changes will be upgrades to signage on the property. No new development changes are proposed as part of the project and the entire property is already disturbed (graded and compacted).]

2. The proposed CUP is consistent with the Inyo County General Plan Land Use designation of RC.

[Evidence: The goal of this project is to allow for two electronic signs to display gas prices. The project is consistent with the General Plan designation of RC in which it is located as it allows for commercial uses including retail and transportation services such as gas stations; and therefore, the CUP is consistent with the County's General Plan as the sign is directly related to the allowed use.]

3. The proposed CUP is consistent with the Inyo County Zoning Ordinance, which permits "Electronic Signs" as a conditional use in the C-2 Zone.

[Evidence: The C2 designation allows for electronic signs as a conditional use. The current uses on the site are well established and are allowed by an existing CUP. The applicant is seeking the use permit to have two electronic signs to display gas prices, in compliance with County's zoning ordinance. By acquiring the CUP the applicant is creating consistency with the code.]

4. The proposed CUP is necessary or desirable.

[Evidence: The General Plan's Visual Resources Goal VIS-1.5 - Outdoor Advertising: Outdoor advertising shall promote business in a manner that does not significantly degrade natural and community visual resources. The existing Chevron sign that is being changed to add the electronic component, has been at this location for many years and has not caused issues to date. The only change will be that the gas prices will be lit up. The high rise pole sign will be 84-sq-ft and have an electronic component with lit gas prices. It will be 50ft in height, two-sided and illuminated, enabling drivers to see the sign at a further distance from Highway 395. This will give the drivers the ability to prepare for their exit sooner in order to exit the highway safely. It will help promote a local business that caters to visitors and semi-truck drivers; and therefore, is a desirable use.]

5. The proposed CUP is properly related to other uses and transportation and service facilities in the vicinity.

[Evidence: The proposed CUP is to allow two electronic signs to display gas prices. The signs will not likely increase the current level of vehicles exiting and entering

Highway 395; and therefore the project will have no impact on the transportation or service facilities in the vicinity.]

6. The proposed CUP would not, under all the circumstances of this case, affect adversely the health or safety of persons living or working in the vicinity or be materially detrimental to the public welfare.

[Evidence: The proposed CUP is to allow two electronic signs to display gas prices. The signs will not create impacts on the health or safety of persons living or working in the vicinity.]

7. Operating requirements necessitate the CUP for the site.

[Evidence: For the two gas station signs to include the electronic price component, a CUP is required per the Inyo County Code. Therefore, the CUP is necessary for the signs at the site.]

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Hold Harmless

The applicant/developer shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless Inyo County agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action or proceeding against the County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void or annul an approval of the county, its advisory agencies, its appeals board, or legislative body concerning CUP No. 2022-02/Coso Signs. The County reserves the right to prepare its own defense.

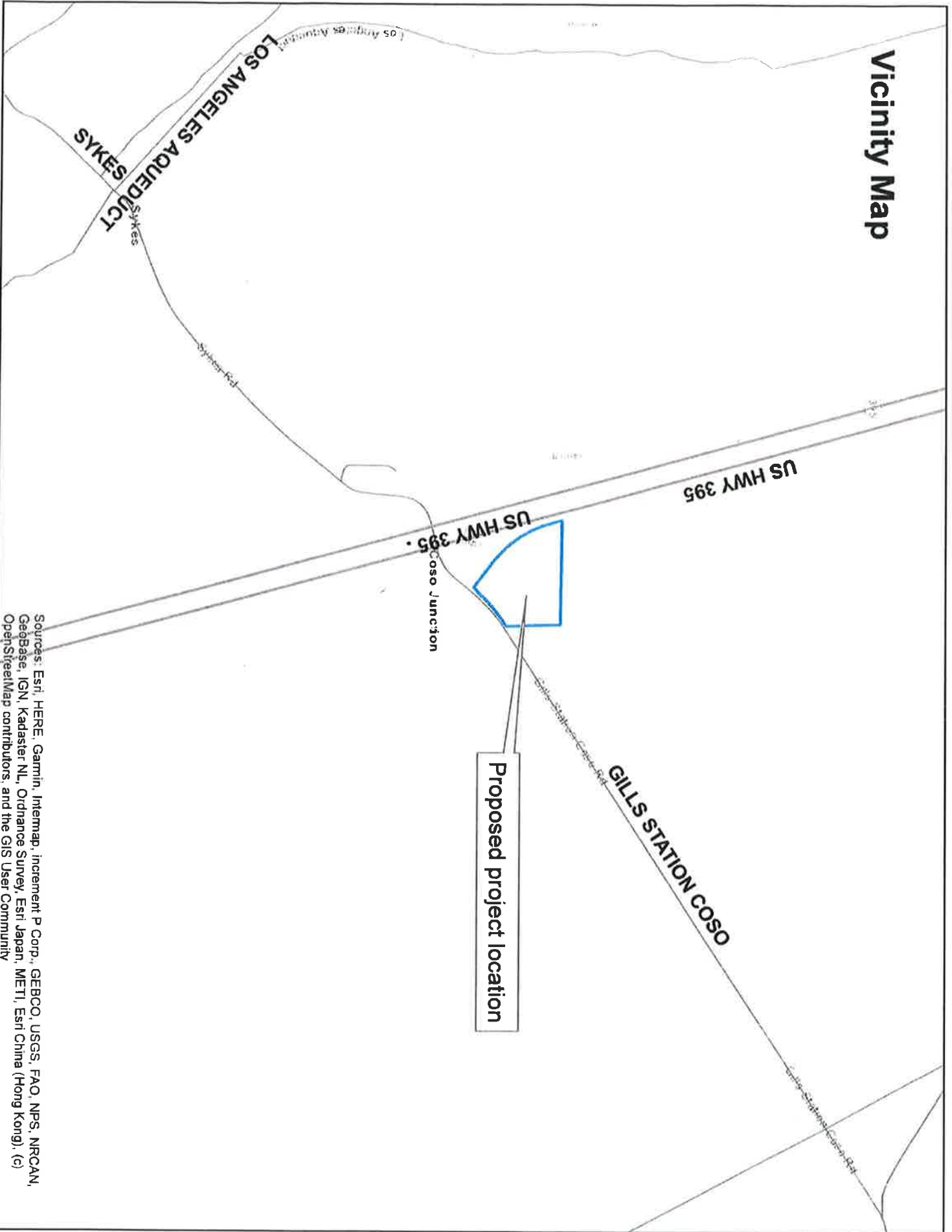
2. Compliance with County Code

The applicant/developer shall conform to all applicable provisions of Inyo County Code including the Building Code and the County Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. Failure to meet these conditions may result in the revocation of CUP 2022-02/Coso Signs. If the use provided by this CUP is not established within one year of the approval date it will become void.

Attachments:

- Vicinity Map
- Sign Plan
- Site photo

Vicinity Map

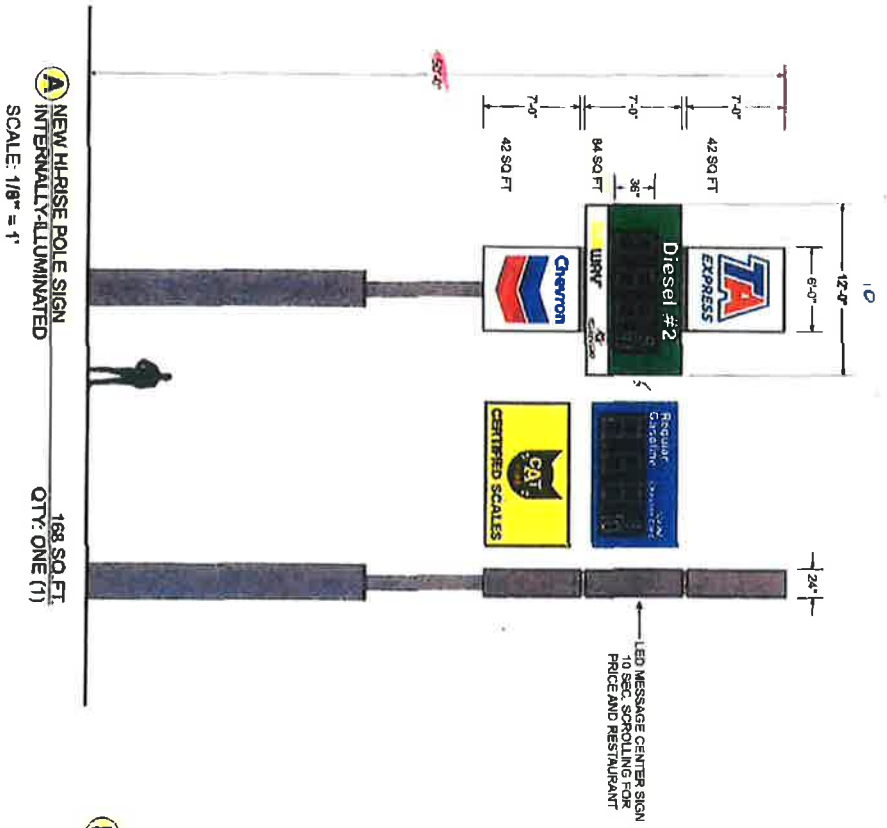


Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Sign Plan

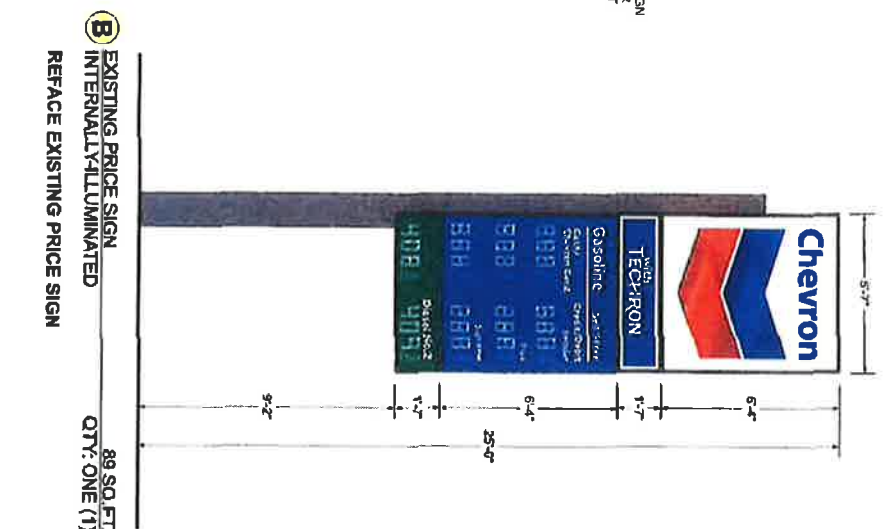
FRONT VIEW

SIDE VIEW



A NEW HRISE POLE SIGN
INTERVALLY-ILLUMINATED
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'

168 SQ. FT.
QTY: ONE (1)



B EXISTING PRICE SIGN
INTERVALLY-ILLUMINATED
REFACE EXISTING PRICE SIGN

89 SQ. FT.
QTY: ONE (1)



Donco & Sons, Inc.
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CHEVRON STATION
US-395 & GILL STATION RD.
OLANCHA, CA 93549
JMG DHILLON

SIGN PLAN

PROJECT ADDRESS:
CHEVRON STATION
US-395 & GILL STATION RD.
OLANCHA, CA 93549

DATE: 1-13-22

REVISION	DATE
1	2-14-22
2	2-22-22
3	3-2-22
4	5-5-22

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'
SHEET NUMBER
2 OF 6

DRAWN: A.S.

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SITE PHOTO

