



November 6, 2023

City of Costa Mesa  
 Development Services Department  
 Planning Division  
 77 Fair Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**Project Location: 1595 Newport Blvd. Costa Mesa, CA 92627**

**Supplemental Project Details and Operations**

***General Project Information***

Raising Cane's is proposing to construct a Raising Cane's restaurant with drive through service at the southwest corner of E 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Newport Blvd, in the City of Costa Mesa, County of Orange, CA.

***Project Description***

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing home furnishing building (approx. 25,159 SF) and construct a new Raising Cane's, 2,913 SF building, 1,303 SF outdoor patio area, and dual lane drive through. The restaurant entrance faces northeast with the drive through windows facing southwest and the menu boards facing east. The intent of the design is to encourage walkability and bike-ability. By orienting access to and from the property away from the drive through and parking, both pedestrians and bicyclists will be encouraged to access the site/restaurant from the northeast entrance. In addition, the proposed landscaping and pedestrian/bike entranceway will encourage pedestrians and bicyclists to stay off Newport Blvd.

The applicant is proposing a dual-lane drive through and on-site improvements, including: 34 parking spaces, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and utilities. Two accessible parking spaces are proposed on-site: one standard and one van accessible. Two single-port EV chargers will be installed on-site south of the proposed restaurant providing two EV Capable spaces. Of the two EV Capable stalls, one stall will be van accessible to meet CA Green Building Code requirements. An additional six parking stalls will be equipped with conduit and infrastructure for future EV Charger installation per CA Green Building 2022. To meet City of Costa Mesa standards, an existing driveway will be demolished and replaced with sidewalk. A new driveway on Newport Blvd will be constructed for primary site access. A trash enclosure will be constructed as part of this project and will be accessible for regular trash pickups.

***Project Area***

	EXISTING CONDITIONS		PROPOSED CONDITIONS	
TOTAL SITE AREA	43,594 SF	100%	43,594 SF	100%
BUILDING AREA	25,160 SF	57.7%	2,913 SF	6.7%
IMPERVIOUS AREA	12,312 SF	28.2%	26,285 SF	61.0%
PERVIOUS AREA	6,122 SF	14.1%	14,396 SF	32.3%



### ***Building***

Raising Cane's prides itself on constructing best-in-class restaurants. This includes using top-grade building materials like real brick – each location is unique, and materials are chosen to fit the specific environment, region, and climate. In addition to following required building codes, there is an emphasis on aesthetic and best practices, including the “1” architectural feature on the front of the building crafted from recycled car metal, and each restaurant's hand-painted mural that reflects the location and culture of the community. For this location in Newport Blvd and 16<sup>th</sup> Street, a local artist will be used for to hand-painted mural.

### ***Menu***

Raising Cane's has a “focused menu” which contributes to the highest ratings in the industry for order accuracy, speed of service, food quality, and value. Raising Cane's serves only fresh chicken tenders, premium center cut fries, homemade coleslaw, “Texas Toast,” fresh-squeezed lemonade, and freshly brewed tea. The restaurant also serves Coke products and premium condiments.

### ***Restaurant Operations***

Hours of operation are 9:00 am – 2:00 am Sunday through Wednesday, 9:00 am – 3:30 am Thursday through Saturday, and restaurants are closed on major holidays. The dining room and drive through hours are the same unless there are necessary adjustments. Upon closing time, the doors are locked and the drive through is shut down at either 2:00am or 3:30am depending on the day of the week. It typically then takes approximately two hours to clean and close the restaurant. The restaurant will employ 25 - 30 full and part-time employees, with an average of 12 crewmembers per shift. Raising Cane's prides itself on paying above minimum wage, with restaurant managers earning executive-level salaries. Raising Cane's does not serve alcohol. Daily deliveries occur during early morning hours. Raising Cane's has drive through and dining room service, and its facilities are top of the line in the quick-casual restaurant environment.

### ***Drive Through Operations***

Raising Cane's is a leader in drive through speed of service. The current speed of service is 2 minutes and 28 seconds from the time customers place their order to the time they receive their order. On-site cameras showing exterior activity are monitored by the kitchen crew, allowing them to start cooking and stay ahead of the queue.

Speed of service is taken very seriously, and site-specific queueing management plans are deployed to ensure customers receive hot, fresh meals as fast as possible. The restaurant anticipates implementing various operational features to provide an expeditious drive through operation, including handheld tablet ordering, mobile ordering and pickup, trained crewmembers to manage traffic, off-duty police officers (as deemed necessary), and parking management. Raising Cane's also has specialized, cross-functional operations teams available to troubleshoot issues and train onsite crewmembers how to effectively manage drive through operations within the site.



### **Parking Operations**

The site plan proposes to install 34 parking stalls as part of the project<sup>1</sup>. There are 3 stalls proposed within the drive through exit which will be used for employee parking to avoid customers exiting the drive through lanes. Trained crewmembers will assist vehicles pulling out of those stalls to mitigate traffic within the drive through exit. The remaining parking stalls will be available for employee and customer parking during all operational hours. The site is located within two blocks of public transportation (bus stops) and has been strategically designed to include 10 short term bike racks and 1 long term bike locker to encourage multi-modal transportation. Based on other similarly located Raising Cane's, between 40 – 50% of crewmembers are expected to utilize carpooling, biking, walking and or public transportation to get to and from the restaurant. This encourages a healthy lifestyle and allows for a majority of the parking onsite to be utilized by customers. During the first 60 - 90 days of the restaurant's opening, Raising Cane's will rely on additional staff for training<sup>2</sup>, and make all efforts to look at available options<sup>3</sup> for carpooling, employer-sponsored transit passes and/or offsite employee parking, which may consist of a shuttle service from a nearby offsite parking lot. Raising Cane's will work with city staff prior to opening to finalize an offsite parking plan.

### **Minor Conditional Use Permit**

The project requires approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (Minor CUP) for the following items: drive through use, operations after 11pm, and a deviation in parking. The proposed restaurant and drive through is compatible with the surrounding commercial/retail uses, industrial, and the location along an arterial road. The drive through is located at the rear of the property, limiting the view of it from the street. Based on ambient noise conditions from Newport Blvd/Highway 55, and measured noise levels from drive through operations at the proposed project site, the project is not expected to exceed the City's most stringent exterior or interior noise standards. Therefore, noise impacts from project drive through operations would be less than significant and no mitigation or noise abatement features are necessary. Additionally, the menu boards and speakers will not directly face the public street and are six feet away from the immediately adjacent property to the west – reducing noise or light to the surrounding community and public right of way. Lastly, the project requests a deviation from the required 41 parking stalls and is proposing 34 parking stalls along with 10 short term and 1 long term bike parking spaces. Dining trends have shifted significantly post-pandemic, and technology via mobile

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<sup>1</sup> The City's parking standards for commercial/retail space are based on traditional parking demand. With drive through uses, and specifically with Raising Cane's, over 50% of customers will use the drive-thru feature.

<sup>2</sup> Additional staff during the opening 90-day period consists of the following: 1) 10-15 additional staff for 30-days, 2) 5-10 additional staff for an additional 30-days and 3) 5-10 additional staff for the last 30-day period. Staff demands during the opening period are variable and depend on the popularity of the restaurant and the speed at which new employees learn. Therefore, the foregoing figures should be considered estimates. Notably, because there is an existing Raising Cane's in Costa Mesa, the popularity of the new location is not expected to be as significant, compared to the existing Raising Cane's opening period.

<sup>3</sup> The applicant expects to propose a 90-day employee transit/parking management plan to the Director within 60-days of the grand opening that will ensure that the added employees during the training/opening period will not overcrowd on site or off-site parking.



ordering has changed how we get our food; based on this and a site design that encourages pedestrian and bicyclists via a safe and separate approach, 34 parking stalls will be sufficient.

**Minor Modification**

The applicant is also seeking a Minor Modification to encroach four feet into the front setback along Newport Blvd. The proposed minor modification is supported by site design elements that encourage pedestrian and bicyclists use and safe access to the site. The proposed improvement is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and enhances the architecture and design of the existing and anticipated development within the vicinity.

**Landscaping**

To encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the site, the landscaping plan is designed with an emphasis on creating an environment that leads them to the restaurant. The result is nearly double the required amount of landscaping, with 14,396 SF provided (7,301 SF required per Landscape Requirements Section 13.105). This results in a significant secondary effect of cooling the site via shade.

**Public Outreach Strategy**

In 2022, Raising Cane's initiated a community outreach effort and met with city council members, planning commissioners, and immediately adjacent neighbors. Over the last year, both the council members and planning commissioners, who remain, have been kept updated. Additionally, we have engaged with local non-profit organizations, one specifically about hiring local youth from their program. During the next 30 days we will re-engage with our immediately adjacent neighbors, as well as expand our outreach to stakeholders along 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Newport Blvd. It is our belief that actively engaging with our surrounding community builds strong relationships and establishes a process to address potential shared challenges.

**In Closing**

Raising Cane's is excited to partner with the City of Costa Mesa, neighboring residents, adjacent businesses, and the community at large to revitalize and beautify an existing vacant commercial lot into a project encouraging pedestrian and multi-modal transportation. This location is anticipated to alleviate the current demand at the existing Raising Cane's on Harbor Blvd. Aside from providing fresh, hot, delicious chicken, Raising Cane's prides itself on being an integral part of the community by supporting programs that promote local education, feeding the hungry, pet welfare, and active lifestyles.

We appreciate the time and attention from city staff regarding our Minor Modification and Minor CUP application and look forward to a successful project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KRoberts".

Kristen Roberts  
Senior Property Development Manager, Fry Cook & Cashier  
[kroberts@raisingcanes.com](mailto:kroberts@raisingcanes.com)