



Community & Economic Development Department

Planning Division

3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522 | Phone: (951) 826-5371 | RiversideCA.gov

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2026
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 2

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Number	PC-2026-00117 (Revocation)	
Request	Consideration of a request to revoke Minor Conditional Use Permit P17-0126 and associated Public Convenience or Necessity Determination (P17-0503) for bar and nightclub uses with entertainment and on-sale of alcohol for Downtown Experiment	
Petitioner	City of Riverside	
Project Location	3601 University Avenue, at the northwest corner of University Avenue and Orange Street	
APN	213-271-010	
Project area	0.22 acres	
Ward	1	
Neighborhood	Downtown	
Specific Plan	Downtown Specific Plan	
General Plan Designation	Downtown Specific Plan	
Zoning Designation	DSP-RC-SP-CR – Downtown Specific Plan – Raincross District and Cultural Resources (Mission Inn Historic District) Overlay Zones	
Staff Planner	Edgardo Caldera, Principal Planner 951-826-5832 ecaldera@riversideca.gov	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. **DETERMINE** that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15321 (Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies) of the CEQA Guidelines, as the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment;
2. **APPROVE** Planning Case PC-2026-00117 revoking Minor Conditional Use Permit P17-0126 and associated Public Convenience or Necessity Determination P17-0503 for bar and nightclub uses with entertainment and on-sale of alcohol based on the findings outlined in the Staff Report (Exhibit 1); and
3. **ADOPT** the Resolution revoking Minor Conditional Use Permit P17-0126 and Public Convenience and Necessity Determination P17-0503. (Exhibit 2).

BACKGROUND

The 0.22-acre site is currently developed and operated as a bar and nightclub (Downtown Experiment) in conjunction with on-sale of alcohol (Type 48 On-sale General Public Premises) (Exhibit 3). Surrounding uses include a restaurant and lounge to the west, parking garage to the north, retail and restaurants to the east (across Orange Street), and offices to the south (across University Avenue) (Exhibit 4).

The Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and the Downtown Specific Plan – Raincross District (DSP-RC) Zone permit nightclubs with entertainment and on-sale of alcohol pursuant to the granting of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP), which may include conditions of approval that establish specific requirements and limitations on the operation for which it is granted in order to preserve the public health, safety and welfare and to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses. The procedures and required findings for granting an MCUP are detailed in Chapter 19.730 of the Zoning Code.

The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), when considering an application for the sale of alcoholic beverages in a Census tract where the anticipated number of alcohol licenses based on population has been reached or exceeded, requires the local jurisdiction to make Findings of Public Convenience or Necessity (PCorN) to justify the issuance of an additional license in an overconcentrated Census tract. The procedures and findings for PCorN findings are detailed in Section 19.450.050 of the Zoning Code.

In August 2018, an MCUP (P17-0126) was approved for Downtown Experiment including a 5,174-square-foot bar and nightclub, in conjunction with entertainment and a Public Convenience and Necessity Determination (PCorN) for over-concentration of on-sale alcohol licenses (P17-0503). The MCUP included approved hours of operation broken down by use:

- Bar
 - Sunday - 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - Monday through Wednesday - 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - Thursday through Saturday - 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.
- Nightclub with live entertainment
 - Thursday through Saturday - 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

The MCUP outlined additional operational requirements for the business, including entertainment regulations and compliance with applicable regulations of the Riverside Municipal Code including the provisions of Title 7 – Noise Control. The MCUP permits Entertainment indoors and on the outdoor patio until 10:00 p.m. Entertainment is limited to indoors only after 10:00 p.m.

PROPOSAL

Based on an extraordinary volume of calls for emergency services and ongoing, noted violations of multiple conditions of approval of the MCUP, the Riverside Municipal Code and applicable State and Federal law, the Community & Economic Development Department is recommending a revocation of Planning Cases P17-0126 (MCUP) and P17-0503 (Public Convenience and Necessity Determination) revoking the bar and nightclub uses (including entertainment) and on-sale of alcohol.

The request to revoke the MCUP and associated Public Convenience and Necessity Determination is a result of multiple and persistent violations at Downtown Experiment. These include documented violations of the MCUP Conditions of Approval, the Riverside Municipal Code, and applicable State and Federal laws. Additionally, the Riverside Police Department has determined that Downtown Experiment has generated an extraordinary number of calls for police services which include numerous criminal incidents. As a result, Downtown Experiment has been identified as a business that is associated with poor management and inadequate security practices.

In order for the Planning Commission to approve the revocation, the Planning Commission must make at least one of findings identified in Municipal Code Chapter 19.730.090.B – Revocation of Minor Conditional Use Permit, listed below:

1. That a permit approval was obtained by fraud;
2. That the permit granted is being or has been exercised contrary to the conditions of such permit or in violation of any applicable licenses, permits, regulations, laws or ordinances; or
3. That the use for which the permit approval was granted is being or has been exercised as to be detrimental to public health or safety or so as to constitute a nuisance.

The activities summarized below support the findings of fact to justify the revocation of the MCUP for Downtown Experiment.

ANALYSIS

I. Extraordinary Calls for Service:

The Riverside Police Department (RPD) memorandum (Exhibit 5) relating to the operations of Downtown Experiment summarizes a list of police responses to the subject property for a five-year period. Each response was examined, and for calls that appeared to be directly related to Downtown Experiment's bar and nightclub, data was compiled. Routine calls such as alarm calls, parking problems, bar checks, etc., were excluded from the memorandum as they do not directly reflect the business practices at the nightclub.

From January 1, 2020, through October 28, 2025, there were a total of 504 calls for police service substantively related to Downtown Experiment, which resulted in the generation of a total of 99 police reports. RPD records indicate that the subject business began generating calls for service

on August 26, 2020, which aligns with the opening date of Downtown Experiment.

A summary of calls generated between 2020 and 2025 include:

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	TOTAL
Calls For Service Per Year.	40	120	118	100	64	62	504

According to RPD, Downtown Experiment management has failed to provide the needed security measures for bar and nightclub uses (including entertainment) creating an environment which threatens the safety of patrons and the public. The following summarizes the events that generated police reports, which are detailed in Exhibit 5.

Summary of Police Reports 2020 - 2025

Year	Report Category	Counts
2020	Physical altercation / battery	1
2020 Total		1
2021	Physical altercations / battery	14
	Intoxicated / overserved patrons (including public intoxication arrests)	6
	Vice / Permit violations (operation during after-hours, alcohol violations etc.)	3
	Suspected drink spiking	2
2021 Total		25
2022	Physical altercations / battery (including security guard assaults)	12
	Intoxicated patrons / unconscious persons	1
	Sexual assault / rape allegation	1
	Shooting / firearm-related assault	1
	Suspected drink spiking	2
	Trespassing	1
	Permit / operational violations	2
2022 Total		24
2023	Theft (cellphones, purse, wallet, debit card fraud)	10
	Physical altercations / battery (including security involvement)	6
	Intoxicated patrons	2
	Suspected drink spiking / medical emergency	1
	Large-scale disturbance (crowd violence)	1
2023 Total		20
2024	Theft (cellphones)	8
	Physical altercations / battery	4

Year	Report Category	Counts
	Intoxicated patrons / public intoxication arrests	2
	Shooting / firearm-related assault	1
2024 Total		14
2025	Theft (cellphones)	8
	Physical altercations / battery (including stabbing)	4
	Sexual assault	1
	Suspected drink spiking	1
	Intoxicated patron arrest	1
2025 Total		15
Total		99

II. Violations of Conditions of Approval of the Minor Conditional Use Permit

Downtown Experiment is regulated by a total of 54 Conditions of Approval established by Planning Case P17-0126 (Minor Conditional Use Permit). Downtown Experiment has violated various Conditions of Approval since the establishment commenced operating, including the following:

a. Condition No. 5, Planning Case P17-0126 (MCUP):

“Operation of the business, including entertainment, shall be in compliance with Title 7 (Noise) of the Riverside Municipal Code. Entertainment shall be allowed indoors and on the outdoor patio until 10:00 p.m. Entertainment shall be limited to the indoors only after 10:00 p.m. All exterior doors shall remain closed while entertainment activities are occurring to minimize noise impacts.”

Violations: Code Enforcement conducted an Administrative Hearing on March 28, 2025, regarding multiple citations related to excessive noise not in compliance with Municipal Code Title 7 (Noise Control) and after-hours operation including outdoor live entertainment. The decision of the Administrative Hearing was upheld.

Per RPD's Memorandum (Exhibit 5), despite repeated warnings and the VICE Unit educating business staff on their MCUP, the business continues to violate its MCUP by operating beyond permitted hours and maintaining amplified music with doors and windows open.

b. Condition No. 13, Planning Case P17-0126 (MCUP):

“This use permit may be modified or revoked by the City Planning Commission or the City Council should they determine that the proposed use or conditions under which it is being operated or maintained is detrimental to the public health, welfare or materially injurious to public safety, property or improvements in the vicinity or if the property is operated or maintained so as to constitute a public nuisance.”

Violations: The failure of Downtown Experiment management to provide adequate skilled security staff and measures have created an environment which threatens the safety of patrons and tourists visiting Riverside's Downtown Entertainment District (DED). Based on the RPD (Exhibit 5), DED officers routinely monitor the area outside Downtown Experiment

every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from midnight to 2:30 a.m. to address recurring assaults and other issues. There are ongoing reports of illegal activity inside the business. RPD determined that Downtown Experiment has generated an extraordinary number of calls for police services which include numerous criminal incidents, illustrating the potential safety risks associated with this location. Police records indicate that from January 01, 2020, through October 28, 2025:

1. The bar and nightclub uses generated a total of 504 calls for service.
2. Ninety-nine (99) police reports were generated.

c. Condition No. 14, Planning Case P17-0126 (MCUP)

"The applicant shall comply with all federal, state and local laws and shall cooperate with the Riverside Police Department (RPD) in the enforcement of all laws relating to this permit. Material violation, as determined by the City Planning Commission, of any laws in connection with this use or failure to cooperate with RPD will be cause for revocation of this permit."

Violations: Based on RPD's memorandum (Exhibit 5), detectives have observed hookah products being provided to customers at Downtown Experiment without proper licensing. According to Riverside Municipal Code Chapter 6.24 – Permitting of Tobacco Retail Establishment, Businesses shall obtain both a California Department of Tax and Fee (CDTFA) Tobacco License and Tobacco Retail Establishment Permit issued by the Riverside Police Department for any tobacco sale. As of the date of writing this staff report, no application for either license has been submitted to the Riverside Police Department nor does the business hold a valid permit for this activity.

d. Condition No. 26, Planning Case P17-0126 (MCUP)

"The business shall utilize a licensed and bonded security firm or employ only licensed and bonded security guards to monitor the activity of their patrons inside the facility as well as the parking lot. All security for the facility shall be subject to the review of the Riverside Police Department."

Violations: Based on RPD's memorandum (Exhibit 5), the RPD VICE Team, in conjunction with the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (B.S.I.S.), has conducted security guard license compliance checks at Downtown Experiment. During the inspections, unlicensed security guards were found working on behalf of the subject business. Incidents of customers being assaulted by the unlicensed security guards were also reported.

e. Condition No. 27.c, Planning Case P17-0126 (MCUP)

"Installation of a security camera surveillance system consisting of the latest high-definition video technology within the minimum requirement of having the ability to save recorded video for a fourteen-day period and which shall also be made available to the Riverside Police Department upon request within 24 hours. An onsite manager shall have working knowledge."

Violations: Based on RPD's memorandum (Exhibit 5), on multiple incidents, the requests for camera footage from Downtown Experiment have been unnecessarily complicated. In one case involving a shooting inside the bar, staff instructed officers to obtain footage through the business's attorney. During an active criminal investigation (Case #230020041), business staff refused to provide camera footage access to police.

Additionally, footage has routinely been reported as unavailable for several business days following incidents, and staff have frequently asserted that no camera coverage exists for key areas. These repeated inconsistencies and delays demonstrate a pattern of noncooperation and obstruction that undermines law enforcement efforts and does not reflect a willingness to work collaboratively with RPD. The following police reports for documentation of the issues can be referred to:

Cases #210032561, 210002995, 210015498, 210032561, 210027619, 220007432, 220015754, 220026123, 220015751, 220035122, 230020041, 230019864, 240030252, 250002220, and 250016114.

FINDINGS

Pursuant to Chapter 19.730.090.B.3.c of the Zoning Code, the following required findings can be made by Staff based on the record noted above.

Finding: The Minor Conditional Use Permit granted to Downtown Experiment as it relates to the nightclub and bar uses (including entertainment) is being, or has been, exercised contrary to the conditions of such permits or in violation of any applicable licenses, permits, regulations, laws or codes.

Fact: Downtown Experiment has violated various Conditions of Approval in the MCUP on numerous occasions including generation of excessive noise, conducting unpermitted tobacco sales, failing to provide adequate security staff, and not meeting the required surveillance camera standards. This demonstrates that the MCUP granted to Downtown Experiment has been exercised contrary to the conditions of the MCUP.

Finding: The use for which the Permit approvals were granted is being, or has been, exercised as to be detrimental to public health, safety or welfare or as to constitute a nuisance.

Fact: RPD has determined that Downtown Experiment has generated an extraordinary number of calls from police services which include numerous criminal incidents. Police records indicate that from January 1, 2020, through October 28, 2025, the bar and nightclub uses at Downtown Experiment generated 504 calls for police, 99 of which resulted in police reports. As a result, the business has become a documented hot spot for criminal activity and public safety concerns. The persistent criminal activity and disorder associated with the business have adversely impacted surrounding businesses, residents, and the overall perception of safety in the Downtown Entertainment District. Moreover, the documented violations of the City's Municipal Code demonstrate the uses granted under the Minor Conditional Use Permit and manner of operation of Downtown Experiment constitute a nuisance per se.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This proposal is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15321, Enforcement Actions by Regulatory Agencies.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

Pursuant to Section 19.60.030 of Zoning Code – Written notice of the date, time, place and purpose of such public hearing were served to the owner of the property for which the Minor

Conditional Use Permit was granted by registered mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, not less than ten days prior to the date of such hearing. Additional public hearing notices were mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the site. As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by Planning Staff.

TIME LIMITS ON REAPPLICATION AND APPEAL INFORMATION

No new application for the same or similar request may be accepted within one year of the date of the action to revoke the Minor Conditional Use Permit, unless the Community and Economic Development Director, or his/her designee determines that a new application is warranted due to a substantial change in land use on properties in the vicinity, improved infrastructure in the vicinity, altered traffic patterns, or any such similar change resulting in a changed physical environment.

Actions by the City Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Community & Economic Development Department, Planning Division, Public Information Section, 3rd Floor, City Hall.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Findings
2. Planning Commission Resolution
3. Existing Site Photos
4. Location Map
5. Riverside Police Department December 17, 2025 Memorandum
6. P17-0126 (Minor Conditional Use Permit) and P17-0503 (Public Convenience and Necessity Determination) Staff Report and Conditions of Approval
7. Site Security Plan
8. General Plan Map
9. Zoning Map
10. Specific Plan Map
11. P17-0126 Project Plans

Prepared by: Winnie Liang, Associate Planner
Reviewed by: Edgardo Caldera, Principal Planner
Approved by: Matthew Taylor, Acting City Planner



PLANNING CASE: PC-2026-00117 (Revocation)

Revocation of Minor Conditional Use Permit Findings Pursuant to Chapter 19.730.090.B.3.c, as outlined in the Staff Report

1. The Minor Conditional Use Permits (P17-0126) granted to Downtown Experiment as it relates to the bar and nightclub and uses (including entertainment) is being, or has been, exercised contrary to the conditions of such permits or in violation of any applicable licenses, permits, regulations, laws or codes; and
2. The bar and nightclub use for which the Minor Conditional Use Permit (P17-0126) approvals were granted is being, or has been, exercised as to be detrimental to the public health, safety or as to constitute a nuisance.