



# STAFF REPORT

DATE: 04/02/2025  
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
FROM: Planning and Development Department

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2025-120

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

### **SUBJECT:**

REQUEST BY COUNCIL MEMBER SPEAKE ASKING THE CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE TO THE CITY'S HERITAGE INVENTORY TO INCLUDE CERTAIN COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This staff report asks the City Council to provide direction to city staff on updating the City's Heritage Inventory to include certain commercial structures not currently listed. Structures placed on the Heritage Inventory are considered properties that should be preserved because of the era it was constructed and its association with a historic event. Properties listed on the Heritage Inventory are eligible to be nominated as a local historic landmark on the City's Register of Historic Resources.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the City Council provide direction to City staff based on one of the options presented in the staff report.

### **BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

The Planning Commission adopted Resolution 2040 on April 21, 2003, establishing the City's Heritage Inventory. The Heritage Inventory lists 544 properties. The properties on the Heritage Inventory are identified by age, architecture, and type (residential or commercial). Each property is also ranked as high, medium, and low for potentially being listed on the Corona Register as a local landmark.

The initial survey of historic properties was done in 1983 by City librarian Gloria Freel which contained approximately 400 properties. In 1986, the City hired a consultant to continue the survey of historic buildings. The consultant added 286 properties to the survey done by Ms. Freel, bringing the total to approximately 700 properties.

In 2002, the properties on the survey were reevaluated by City staff, a community volunteer, and seven consecutive interns over a period of 19 months. In the end, the City recommended that 459 properties be listed on the Corona Heritage Inventory and notified the affected property owners of the city's recommendation. Eventually, 452 properties were added to the inventory adopted by the Planning Commission on April 21, 2003. Over time additional properties have been added to the Heritage Inventory, totaling 544 properties.

Properties listed on the Heritage Inventory are:

- Eligible to be listed on the Corona Register as a local landmark.
- Subject to a demolition delay of 30 days.
- Demolition requests are decided by the Historic Preservation Board.
- Demolition requests are based on meeting one of the findings listed in [Corona Municipal Code Section 17.63.120\(E\)\(4\)](#).

Section 17.63.100 of the CMC outlines the process to list or expand the listing of the Heritage Inventory. An application "may be initiated by the City Council, the Planning Commission, City officials, local entities or a member of the public" at any time (CMC 17.63.100 (A)). The application for each property must include "an official survey describing the features, merits and quality of the site, improvement or natural feature" and a justification of how it meets the criteria listed in CMC 17.63.090.

The following summarizes the process involved in expanding the listing of the Heritage Inventory.

1. Property is identified and surveyed according to [CMC Section 17.63.090](#).
2. Copies of the property survey are distributed for review and comment to the Heritage Librarian, the Corona Historic Preservation Society, and any other agency affected by the expanded listing according to [CMC Section 17.63.100\(F\)\(1\)](#).
3. Any property owner directly affected by the listing is notified according to [CMC Section 17.63.100\(F\)\(2\)](#).
4. The public comment and review period shall be no less than 30 days according to [CMC Section 17.63.100\(F\)\(4\)](#).
5. The public hearing notice on the expanded listing of the Heritage Inventory before the Historic Preservation Board shall be no less than 10 days according to [CMC Section 17.63.100\(G\)](#).
6. The Historic Preservation Board adopts a resolution expanding the listing of the Heritage Inventory according to [CMC Section 17.63.100\(I\)](#).

**ANALYSIS:**

Expanding the listing of the Corona Heritage Inventory would require each added property to be surveyed according to [Section 17.63.090 of the CMC](#). For a site, historic artifact, improvement, or natural feature to be listed on the Heritage Inventory, it must demonstrate that it should be preserved because of its age, and either its context in the neighborhood, its association with a historic event or period, or its significance to the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, cultural, social, artistic, political or military history of Corona.

In current practice, properties that are eligible for listing as a local landmark need to have been in existence prior to 1950. The City would use the same criteria for properties to be listed on the Heritage Inventory since the properties on the inventory are eligible for listing as a local landmark on the Corona Register.

Expanding the Heritage Inventory is not limited to initiation by City staff. Any member of the public can request that certain property be added to the Heritage Inventory by following the process described in CMC Section 17.63.100.

Options for the City Council to Consider

The following are options for the City Council to consider regarding expanding the Heritage Inventory.

1. Current practice - Proceed with current practice, expanding the Heritage Inventory as interested parties submit applications as described in CMC Section 17.63.100. Staff time would be limited to processing applications as they are submitted.
2. Public awareness - Conduct a public awareness campaign notifying property owners about the Heritage Inventory and the process of listing a property. Staff would create informational and social media posts to educate residents about the Heritage inventory that could also be shared by CHPS or other interested parties. Applications would be processed per the current practice.
3. Proactive update - Direct staff to proactively update the Heritage Inventory according to a specific scope of work identified by the City Council (e.g. certain types of properties of a certain age within an identified geographical area). If the council were to direct staff to conduct a survey of potentially eligible properties and screen them for eligibility, it would take considerable effort. It is unknown at this time how many properties would be evaluated and considered for inclusion in the Heritage Inventory. Like the initial surveys, staff would also rely on help from volunteers experienced in historic preservation to identify which properties should be added to the Heritage Inventory and retain a qualified consultant in helping to identify additional properties based on the characteristics listed in CMC Section 17.63.090. Applications for each property would need to be individually prepared but a bulk submission for review may reduce the overall staff time required for processing.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

Option	Amount of Time	Potential Cost
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<p>1. <b>CURRENT PRACTICE</b> - There is no application fee to list a property on the Heritage Inventory. However, there is an application fee to remove a property from the Heritage Inventory. The same amount of time used in removing a property from the Heritage Inventory would be similar to adding a property.</p>	<p>4 months approx. Review of each property, public comment period and noticing requirement.</p>	<p>\$3,896 per property (approx. staff time cost)</p>
<p>2. <b>PUBLIC AWARENESS</b> – Staff create a short informational campaign about listing properties on the Heritage Inventory that can be shared on social media, informational fliers, and through CHPS.</p>	<p>2-3 months</p>	<p>Less than \$2,000 of staff time for campaign and approximately \$3,896 per property (as above).</p>
<p>3. <b>PROACTIVE UPDATE</b> - Depending on the scope of work identified by the City Council, the number of properties is unknown. If a list of identified properties is not provided to staff by a qualified organization that specializes in historic resources, a consultant would be hired to assist with evaluating and vetting properties, conducting the surveys, and application preparation.</p>	<p>Up to 12 months for identification and evaluation of properties prior to the 4 months for review and approval.</p>	<p>\$75,000 to \$100,000 for a consultant to identify and evaluate properties, and \$10,000 for staff time to process the properties and prepare for public hearing.</p>

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that 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. There is no possibility that this activity will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

**PREPARED BY:** JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Exhibit 1 – Request from Council Member Speake dated April 2, 2024