



# STAFF REPORT

DATE: 07/02/2025  
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
FROM: Economic Development Department

---

**2025-280**

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBJECT:**  
NORTH MALL REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS REVIEW

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This staff report asks the City Council to provide feedback and direction on the North Mall Redevelopment conceptual scenarios prepared by staff and an architectural consultant. The purpose of this action is to identify a preferred level of development intensity that balances revitalization objectives with community compatibility and long-term fiscal sustainability.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the City Council:

- a. Receive and file the Conceptual Master Plans; and
- b. Select a preferred development intensity; and
- c. Direct the City Manager to initiate development of the entitlement process for the selected development option, including further planning studies and environmental reviews as needed.

**BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

The North Mall site, located at the Northeast corner of 6th and Main Streets has a site area of approximately, 9.6 acres and 7.7 acres of developable area. With strong direction from the Council and significant community input over multiple years, it was identified as a critical catalytic project of the City's long-term Downtown Revitalization vision, as outlined in the 2020–2040 General Plan, the 2022 Downtown Revitalization Plan, and the adopted Downtown Design Guidelines. Recognized as a strategic infill opportunity, the site is envisioned to become a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use destination that serves as a cultural, residential, and economic hub for the community. The ultimate goal for this project is to spur an overall redevelopment effort within the core of the historic Corona to rebuild a vibrant downtown.

In May 2025, a conceptual master planning study for the site was prepared with the assistance of an architectural consultant, Arcadis, providing four development options with varying levels of intensity. The intent of these scenarios is to frame potential buildout configurations and inform policy direction from the City Council on future entitlement and implementation efforts.

The design philosophy for this project is to draw from the significant buildings of Corona's past, those historic buildings that were demolished in the gradual redevelopment of the downtown area in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This "Corona Revival" style will rely on honest building materials, such as brick, tile, wood, and historic architectural proportions to recreate the original look and feel of what was originally the core of civic, employment, shopping, and dining life for residents. This project will balance architectural consistency with the downtown, while providing updated flexibly commercial space and new housing opportunities in the historic heart of the city.

This project will be a model for continued private redevelopment in the area for decades to come, which fosters the need to design this project in a thoughtful manner to provide an example for the projects that will follow and reinforce the revitalization of downtown.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The master planning process evaluated four different development scenarios of progressively increasing intensity. Each development option includes three components: retail, housing, and a hotel.

- Retail (including dining, entertainment, and commercial) is essential to creating a vibrant, walkable area and to restoring Downtown Corona as an active regional shopping and dining destination.
- Housing adds new residents and introduces new housing options downtown, which supports both existing and future retail, while helping to sustain the economics of the overall redevelopment effort. New housing in the downtown core, in the form of mixed-use projects that include retail, dining and employment opportunities, has been the centerpiece of downtown planning efforts for more than thirty years across General Plan updates, the Downtown Revitalization Plan and, most recently, the Downtown Corona Revitalization Specific Plan. More residents downtown helps support the current and future businesses in the area, provide passive observation and security, and helps establish downtown as a worthwhile

place to invest, work, and play. Affordable housing as a part of the new housing development is also a necessary component as housing funds were used to purchase some of the retail suites in the North Mall in the early 2000's when the initial redevelopment efforts were undertaken. Affordable housing intermixed with market rate housing provides an opportunity to ensure that the affordable component won't appear inconsistent or out of character with the market rate housing.

- The final component, a boutique hotel, is intended to initially support Corona Regional Medical Center and other nearby medical uses, such as City of Hope, by providing accommodations for traveling medical professionals and the friends and families of patients. The hotel will also enhance the viability of downtown's retail and dining offerings.

A summary of each development option is presented below.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>Hotel Rooms</b>	<b>Commercial Space</b>	<b>Parking Stalls</b>
<b>1</b>	0.77	138	108	73,200 sf	681
<b>2</b>	1.09	196	144	107,300 sf	962
<b>3</b>	2.00	452	224	143,900sf	1,709
<b>4</b>	2.99	772	224	179,400sf	2,485

Option 1 presents retail area, comparable in scale to the existing site, with a modest addition of housing to create a mixed-use project. This project would provide new vitality in the downtown core by providing modern flexible retail space, improved outdoor public plazas for event programming and dining opportunities, and new housing. This option, being the smallest, is the most consistent with today's downtown and may set a tone of keeping future developments smaller than what is permissible and may limit the overall positive impact to the downtown core and city in general.

Options 2 and 3 present development options of increasingly larger scale, and are consistent with the vision for the North Mall as presented in the Downtown Specific Plan and previous direction to develop a mixed use development at this site. These options scale up the amount of commercial space and housing units in order to provide the support for a more vibrant and active development. They reflect the vision that the new buildings constructed in this effort will serve the residents of Corona for 50-100 years, and will set a standard for the type of downtown envisioned for the future.

Option 4 was prepared as a part of this master planning exercise to show what the theoretical maximum development possible under the existing development standards. This option is not considered by staff to be a viable redevelopment option for the North Mall.

Any of the viable options, 1, 2 or 3, will inject new life into the downtown core and will demonstrate that additional private investment in the area is worthwhile. Each option will also add a new housing option in the downtown for individuals looking for urban housing without private yard space, which can include first time buyers or older households looking to downsize. All of the housing options are planned to include amenities, such as gyms, community spaces, pools and patio spaces, to provide recreation and private outdoor spaces. The hotel to support the current and future CRMC facility, and to support future tourism and business travel, will also add a unique and supportive element to the site for businesses in the area.

Once the City Council provides guidance about the options from the four presented, or a hybrid of the options, staff will begin the development of the plans and technical studies, such as traffic and infrastructure impact studies, needed to present the project to the Planning Commission for entitlements. This entitlement effort will increase the value of the project for a private development as it removes the time and monetary costs of working through the Planning Commission process, and removes uncertainty by providing a guarantee of a specific project that the City supports and that can be built. This city-run effort, most importantly, guarantees that the City will get a project that is best suited to the area and consistent with the City Council's vision and direction for this key initial step in building a downtown Corona for today and for the future.

Concurrent with the development of the refined plans, staff will continue to vet the final project through consultations with technical consultants and, most importantly, with experienced developers to refine the design to guarantee an achievable project.

Once the City has an entitled project that is ready to build, staff will commence a competitive selection process to identify a development partner. The City will be working to identify a highly experienced development that understands the local economy, understands the community, and supports the City's vision for the downtown. The City Council will have full oversight of this selection process and the eventual development agreement with the development.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact from the selection of a development option. The anticipated cost for preparation of the entitlement package is available in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

Each of the presented development options is consistent with the general development assumptions for the site included in the City's General Plan. Once a development option is selected and as the entitlement plans are fully developed, there may be the need to prepare various technical studies to analysis specific elements of the project to ensure all impacts of the project are analyzed and appropriately mitigated.

**PREPARED BY:** JOEL BELDING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**REVIEWED BY:** JUSTIN TUCKER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Exhibit 1 – City Council Presentation