



# STAFF REPORT

DATE: 08/20/2025  
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members  
FROM: Planning and Development Department

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2025-327

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

### **SUBJECT:**

REQUEST BY COUNCILMEMBER SPEAKE TO DISCUSS AMENDING THE CRITERIA IN SECTIONS 17.63.120(D)(6) AND 17.63.120(E)(4) OF THE CORONA MUNICIPAL CODE FOR DEMOLISHING OR RELOCATING A HISTORIC STRUCTURE

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

At the City Council meeting on March 19, 2025, Councilmember Speake introduced a future agenda request to discuss the possibility of amending the criteria listed in Corona Municipal Code (CMC) Chapter 17.63, Historic Resources Ordinance, for demolishing historic resources. The City Council agreed to have additional discussion on this topic. This staff report is asking the City Council to provide direction to staff on amending the demolition criteria listed in CMC Chapter 17.63 for historic resources.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the City Council provide direction to staff on amending the relocation and demolition criteria listed in CMC Chapter 17.63, Historic Resources Ordinance, for historic resources.

### **BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

CMC Chapter 17.63 governs the preservation of historic resources in the City. In October 2024, the City Council adopted an ordinance amending CMC Chapter 17.63 to establish a Structure of Merit listing criteria and to assign duties for the newly created Historic Preservation Board established by CMC Chapter 2.38.

## **Concern**

The concerns raised by Councilmember Speake include the following:

1. Certain historic resources can be granted approval for demolition by the Planning and Development Director for properties listed on the Heritage Inventory without additional review and analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for potential impacts to historic resources, and
2. The criteria listed in CMC Section 17.63.120(D)(6) and Section 17.63.120(E)(4), for the relocation or demolition of historic resources on the Corona Register and Heritage Inventory, respectively, include the criterion under subsection (c) that not relocating or demolishing the historic resource would deprive the property owner of all economically viable use of the site.

## **Item 1**

### **Heritage Inventory Properties**

The first concern raised by Councilmember Speake has been addressed with the ordinance that was adopted in October 2024, amending CMC Chapter 17.63. The proposed relocation or demolition of a historic resource on the Heritage Inventory is now reviewed by the newly created Historic Preservation Board instead of the Planning and Development Director. Since the review by the Historic Preservation Board is discretionary, the relocation and demolition of a historic resource on the Heritage Inventory are subject to review under CEQA.

### **Corona Register Properties**

The relocation or demolition of a historic resource on the Corona Register, which includes landmarks, was previously reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. Per the amendment that was adopted in October 2024, the review is done by the Historic Preservation Board instead of the Planning Commission. The review of the relocation or demolition of a historic resource on the Corona Register was always discretionary and subject to review under CEQA.

Therefore, the concern expressed in item 1 has been addressed because the previous amendment to CMC Chapter 17.63 became effective on November 16, 2024.

## **Item 2**

### **Relocation and Demolition Criteria for Historic Resources**

The second concern is to replace the one criterion in CMC Section 17.63.120(D)(6)(c) and CMC Section 17.63.120 (E)(4)(c) that would allow a historic resource listed on the Heritage Inventory and/or Corona Register to be relocated or demolished if the denial of the request would deprive the owner of all economically viable use of the site with a new criterion that would require review under CEQA for impacts to historic resources and review by the Historic Preservation Board and City Council.

Existing CMC Section 17.63.120(D)(6)(c) and CMC Section 17.63.120 (E)(4)(c):

*(c) Denial of the requested relocation or demolition of the historic resource will deprive the owner of all economically viable use of the site;...*

Proposed request changing CMC Section 17.63.120(D)(6)(c) and CMC Section 17.63.120 (E)(4)(c):

*(c) The relocation or demolition of any historic resource that is listed as High or High with Rehab on the Heritage Inventory and/or Corona Register was reviewed under CEQA for potential impacts to historic resources and reviewed by the Historic Preservation Board and City Council;...*

As mentioned under item 1, the review of relocation and demolition requests for historic resources on the Heritage Inventory and/or Corona Register is discretionary because the review is done by the Historic Preservation Board (with a recommendation made to the City Council for properties on the Corona Register), which would require an analysis under CEQA for potential impacts to historic resources. Therefore, a portion of this concern has been satisfied.

However, the criterion listed in CMC Sections 17.63.120(D)(6)(c) and 17.63.120(E)(4)(c) that the denial of the request would deprive the owner of all economically viable use of the site would remain, unless an ordinance is adopted to remove this criterion from the CMC.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

To delete or amend the regulations in CMC Chapter 17.63, staff would need to process a Zone Text Amendment to Title 17, Zoning Code. The amendment to the Historic Resources ordinance is a public hearing and requires the Planning and Housing Commission to make a recommendation to the City Council. The amendment would require the adoption of an ordinance by the City Council.

After taking into consideration the recent changes to the Historic Resources ordinance, which require the discretionary review by the Historic Preservation Board, and decision by the City Council for properties on the Corona Register, and an automatic analysis under CEQA, the concern pending as outlined by Councilmember Speake includes the following:

1. The criterion in CMC Sections 17.63.120(D)(6) and 17.63.120(E)(4) that would allow a historic resource listed on the Heritage Inventory and/or Corona Register to be relocated or demolished if the finding is made that the denial of the request will deprive the owner of all economically viable use of the site.

It should be noted that although the discretionary review by the Historic Preservation Board would automatically require an analysis under CEQA, Section 17.63.120(B) only lists the environmental review for any plan that may cause a potentially adverse change to a historic resource listed on the Corona Register, but not on the Heritage Inventory. This section existed before the changes were made to the ordinance in October 2024,

which limited the discretionary review to historic resources on the Corona Register. Therefore, this section could be amended to reflect that an environmental review under CEQA is required for requests subject to discretionary review by an administrator, board, commission, council, or the like.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

A text amendment to the Zoning Code is \$6,273 according to the City's adopted fee schedule. The fee is based on the number of hours used by staff to process the amendment. However, no application fee will be associated with this amendment since the amendment is initiated by the City.

**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 the 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. This request is for staff to receive policy direction from the City Council and will not 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 – PowerPoint presentation
2. Exhibit 2 – Future Agenda Item Request from Councilmember Speake