



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 09/17/2025
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Planning and Development Department

2025-360

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT 2024-0003 TO ESTABLISH 57 TOWNHOUSE CONDOMINIUM UNITS ON 2.86 ACRES, LOCATED AT 1717 VIA DEL RIO IN THE R-3 MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONE (APPLICANT: MERITAGE HOMES OF CALIFORNIA, INC.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to affirm the decision by the Planning and Housing Commission in granting Conditional Use Permit 2024-0003 (CUP2024-0003) to establish 57 townhouse condominiums on 2.86 acres located at 1717 Via Del Rio in the R-3 Multiple Family Residential Zone. The R-3 zone permits townhouse condominiums by a conditional use permit, which is the reason for CUP2024-0003. The project will consist of for-sale residential units with 54 units for above moderate income households and three units for very low income households. The Planning and Housing Commission at its meeting on August 25, 2025, approved CUP2024-0003.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council:

- a. Take no action, thereby affirming the Planning and Housing Commission's action granting CUP2024-0003, based on the finding contained in the staff report and conditions of approval.

OR

- b. Set the item for review at a subsequent meeting.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The project site is 2.86 acres and contains a church and two existing telecommunications poles. The zoning of the property is R-3 Multiple-Family Residential and the General Plan is High Density Residential (HDR), which permits a density range of 15 to 36 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).

The applicant is proposing to develop a mixed-income, townhouse condominium project that will consist of 54 units for above moderate income households and three units for very low income households. To accommodate the development of the three units for very low income households, the applicant is processing an Affordable Housing Density Bonus Agreement (AHDB2024-0001) in conjunction with CUP2024-0003. AHDB2024-0001 allows the developer to apply for certain waivers and a concession from the City's development standards, which is a mechanism allowed by the state's density bonus law (Government Code § 65915 – 65918) and Chapter 17.87 of the Corona Municipal Code (CMC) to support the construction of affordable housing. The project also includes a Tentative Tract Map (TTM 38934) to subdivide the property for residential condominium purposes.

Public Outreach

The applicant mailed out flyers to Coronita Elementary School and residences immediately adjacent to the project site in Fall of 2024 to share the redevelopment plan for the project site. The applicant has stated to staff that Meritage did not receive any calls from the residents in response to the flyer, but Meritage continued to have consistent communication with the Corona Norco Unified School District regarding the project's interface with the elementary school.

ANALYSIS:

The existing church will be demolished to accommodate the proposed residential development. The R-3 zone and the General Plan designation of HDR permit townhouse condominiums within a density range of 15 to 36 du/ac. The project proposes 57 residential units on 2.86 acres resulting in a density of 19.93 du/ac which is consistent with the General Plan. The project also includes garage and surface parking, driveways, common open space, landscaping and drainage infrastructure. The project is subject to

the R-3 zone and Residential Condominium development standards established in Chapter 17.24 and Chapter 17.82 of the CMC, respectively.

Site Plan

The project’s site plan includes six detached, three-story buildings. The unit breakdown for each building is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1
Building and Unit Count**

Building	# of Units
1	10
2	10
3	10
4	9
5	9
6	9
Total	57

The existing telecommunications towers are presently enclosed by a block wall and accessible from within the church’s parking lot. After the site is redeveloped, a new and separate gated driveway will be provided at the northeasterly corner of the property to allow cell tower maintenance personnel to access the towers directly from Avenida Del Vista.

Table 2 shows the building setbacks for the project and the waiver of the development standard requested per AHDB2024-0001.

Table 2 Setbacks

Yard Location	Required Yard	Proposed Yard Setback	Meet Condominium Standard?	Waiver Requested by Density Bonus Agreement
Front (Via Del Rio)	20'	18'	No	Yes
Interior Side (Northwest P/L)	15'	22'	Yes	No
Street Side (Avenida Del Vista)	15'	13'	No	Yes
Rear (Northeast P/L)	10'	49'	Yes	No

Floor Plans

The floor plans proposed for the residential units are summarized in Table 3. All floor plans meet the minimum unit size of 600 feet required by the R-3 zone.

Table 3 Floor Plans

Unit Type	Unit Size	Number of Bedrooms	Number of Units
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	(Exclusive of garage, porch, and deck)		
Unit 2531	1,300	2	9
Unit 2531X	1,268	2	9
Unit 1633	1,496	3	21
Unit 1638	1,765	4	18
Total			57

The floorplans include private two-car garages and ground-floor patios enclosed by a three foot high CMU slump stone wall covered in white stucco. The floor plans are three stories and include bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, decks, and great rooms. Plan types 2531, 2531X, and 1633 include a tandem garage measuring 9' w x 40' d; Plan type 1638 provides a side-by-side garage measuring 20' w x 20' d.

The three affordable units are dispersed throughout the development and include a two bedroom unit, three bedroom unit, and four bedroom unit.

Common and Private Outdoor Space

The project is required to provide both private and common outdoor space for residents at a ratio of 200 SF per unit, with 25 percent of the total area apportioned as private outdoor space. Based on the number of units, the project is required to have 11,400 SF of total open space with at least 2,850 SF devoted to combined private open space. The project proposes 17,793 SF of open space, including 10,935 SF of common outdoor spaces in the form of landscaped pathways and various amenities (seating areas, shade structures, BBQs and a tot lot), and 6,858 SF of combined private outdoor space in the form of patios and decks. Per AHDB2024-0001, the applicant is requesting a waiver to omit an indoor recreation facility that is required for multiple family residential projects that have 20 or more units. Table 4 summarizes the project’s outdoor space and amenities.

Table 4 Common and Private Outdoor Space Requirement

Outdoor Space Requirement Per R-3 Zone	Minimum Requirement Per R-3 Zone	Proposed Outdoor Space or Amenity	Meet the R-3 Standard?	Waiver Requested by Density Bonus Agreement
Common Outdoor Space	8,550 SF total	10,935 SF	Yes	No
Private Outdoor Space (balconies, porches) @ min. 50 SF	2,850 SF total	6,858 SF total	Yes	No
Tot Lot	1 Tot Lot	Yes	Yes	No
Indoor Recreation Facility	1 Indoor Recreation Facility	No	No	Yes

Outdoor Recreation Facility	1 Outdoor Recreation Facility	Yes	Yes	No
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Architecture

The architectural design of the proposed buildings would incorporate colors, materials, and a general style inspired by traditional Spanish architecture. The exterior includes concrete roof tiles designed and colored to resemble classic Spanish tiles, and the building facades include decorative tiles surrounding entryways, and walls painted with a white stucco sand finish. The façade will have architectural pop-outs and recessed elements, in conjunction with gridded vinyl windows and navy-blue shutters. The architecture complies with the City’s Residential Development Design Guidelines. The building height is 37 feet, which complies with the R-3 zone’s maximum building height limit of 40 feet.

Trash Receptacles

The applicant has provided a will-serve letter from refuse hauler Waste Management confirming provision of solid waste collection on a weekly basis. As all units are proposed to be individually owned, no communal trash facilities are provided (as would be typical with a “for rent” multifamily development), rather the project proposes to include two, 64-gallon trash bins and one 32-gallon organic/green waste bin within the garage for each unit. On specified days, each resident would be required to place their bins on their respective driveway for pickup/disposal. The bins cannot be placed in the alleys which must maintain a clear, unobstructed fire lane width of 28 feet for fire access.

Landscaping

The project’s conceptual landscape plan encompasses 26,217 SF of landscaping, covering 16 percent of the site, and will feature new trees in addition to varied shrubs and ground cover chosen for compliance with Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) Region 4 (South Inland Valley) guidelines. Trees will be planted at intervals of no less than 20 linear feet, including 15 to be located along Avenida Del Vista and 13 along Via Del Rio to provide a buffer between the street and Buildings 1, 2 and 3.

All new landscaping would be required to be drought tolerant, and irrigation is required to meet the City’s Landscape Design Guidelines for residential projects. Formal landscape and irrigation plans will be subject to final review and approval by City staff.

Perimeter Walls and Fencing:

The wall and fence plan for the project includes the following:

- A six-foot-tall CMU block wall located along the project’s northeasterly property-line and constructed of slump stone, gray in color, and topped with a two-inch slump CMU cap.
- Along the northwesterly property line, a combined retaining wall and wrought iron fence standing a maximum of six feet in height.

- Located in front of each residential unit, a front porch enclosed by a three-foot-tall slump CMU block wall finished with white stucco.
- New tubular steel fencing and gates along the easterly perimeter of the cell tower compound to enclose and secure the compound. The new fence will be tied to the existing block enclosure wall.

The design of the retaining wall and wrought iron fence proposed on the northwesterly property line is influenced by the adjacent Coronita Elementary School's existing wall and fencing, itself situated two feet from the shared property line. To ensure soil and site stability, the proposed wall/fence must be located four feet, eight inches inland from the property line, resulting in a gap of six feet, nine inches between the two fences. A gate is proposed to be installed between the structures (preventing unauthorized access to the gap area) and trees and shrubs will be planted within the space to improve aesthetic and provide buffering. Maintenance of the gap area would be the responsibility of the project's future homeowners' association (HOA) pursuant to a dedicated maintenance easement proposed by associated TTM 38934. The Corona Norco Unified School District (including acknowledgement of the proposed fence design and location) provided the applicant a letter of support.

Lighting

Outdoor lighting would consist of wall and pole-mounted fixtures, as well as ground-mounted path lights along proposed driveways and throughout common areas. All lighting would be directed downward and shielded to minimize offsite spillover. The location of all exterior lighting would comply with standards for glare established in CMC § 17.84.070.

Access and Circulation

Vehicular access to the project site will be provided by two new driveways, located on Avenida Del Vista and Via Del Rio and leading to internal drive aisles circulating within the development. The drive aisles would provide entry to individual garages and guest parking spaces.

Parking

The project is subject to the City's multiple family residential parking ratio in CMC Chapter 17.76. According to the City's parking ratio, the project requires 164 parking spaces. Instead, the applicant is electing to utilize the State Density Bonus Law (SDBL), a California statute, parking requirement in Government Code § 65915(p)(1), which allows the project to provide a parking ratio of 2 spaces for each 2-bedroom unit, and 2.5 spaces for each 3 or more-bedroom unit. These standards would require a total of 104 parking spaces. The project's design proposes 129 parking spaces, which include 114 garage spaces and 15 uncovered guest spaces, resulting in a surplus of 25 parking spaces from the minimum required under the SDBL. Table 5 shows the parking comparison of the City's parking requirement and SDBL parking requirement, and the parking spaces provided in the project.

Table 5 Parking

Unit Type	No. of Units	Parking Ratio Per CMC Chapter 17.76	Required Parking	Parking Ratio Per Gov't Code Section 65915(p)(1)	Required Parking
2 BR	18	2 covered spaces/unit	36 covered spaces	1.5 spaces/unit	27
3 BR	21	2 covered spaces/unit, & 1 uncovered spaces/unit	42 covered spaces 21 uncovered spaces	1.5 spaces/unit	32 (rounded up)
4BR	18	2 covered spaces/unit, & 1 uncovered spaces/unit	36 covered spaces 18 uncovered spaces	2.5 spaces/unit	45
Guest	57	1 uncovered space/ 5 units	11	--	--
Total Required Parking Spaces			164		104

Total Parking Spaces Provided	129*
*114 garage spaces and 15 uncovered spaces	

Public Improvements

The General Plan classifies Via Del Rio as a secondary four-lane road which has an ultimate right-of-way width of 88 feet. Avenida Del Vista is classified as a collector street which has an overall right-of-way width of 68 feet. Both streets have existing roadway pavement, curb and gutter and a 12-foot-wide landscape parkway which includes a five-foot sidewalk along both project frontages.

No widening is required along Avenida Del Vista; however, the applicant is required to dedicate one foot of the property's frontage to the right-of-way for Avenida Del Vista as well as install missing landscaping within the adjacent parkway. The street dedication will occur with the recordation of the associated tentative tract map. Via Del Rio is currently fully improved to its ultimate right-of-way width and thus, no dedication or widening is warranted; however, the applicant is required to install missing landscaping within the adjacent parkway.

Per AHDB2024-0001, the applicant is requesting a concession from Section 15.60.080 of the CMC regarding the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities less than 34 KV adjacent to the project site's frontage (Via Del Rio) when that service to a structure is enlarged or an addition is made thereto. Existing overhead utilities exist along Via Del Rio, adjacent to the project site's frontage and beyond. The overhead utility in front of the project site also extends across Via Del Rio to a pole located in the backyard of 1801 Bern Drive. The cost of undergrounding the overhead utilities that supply power from SCE, which would also require the relocation of existing transformers, is approximately \$815,000. This cost would deter the project from constructing the three affordable housing units.

Due to construction conflict, the lower overhead lines for telecommunications along Via Del Rio will be placed underground in addition to the streetlight power lines along Avenida Del Vista.

Onsite Utility and Drainage Improvements

Water and sewer service to the project site will be provided by the City of Corona. The project will connect to an 8-inch diameter water line and 8-inch diameter sewer line in the proposed private drive aisle located within a public utility easement within the project site. To treat stormwater runoff from the project site, three underground bio-retention basins and one modular wetland system would capture, treat, and slow stormwater runoff before discharging into the City's storm drain system. Electricity would be provided to the project by SCE.

State Density Bonus Concession and Waivers of Development Standards

SDBL, allows eligible housing development projects to receive increased density and/or incentives in the form of concessions, waivers and modified parking requirements to facilitate the construction of affordable housing. The project is providing five percent (5%) of the total units to very low income households (31 – 50% Area Median Income). Per the SDBL, the applicant is allowed to request one concession and an unlimited number of waivers from the City's development standards.

The applicant is requesting the City's approval of the following concession, waivers and use of the SDBL parking ratio:

1. Election to use the parking standard in Government Code Section 65915(p)(1), which requires 104 parking spaces for the project instead of the 164 parking spaces required by CMC Section 17.76.030(A)(5). The project will have 129 parking spaces, a surplus of 25 parking spaces from the minimum requirement using Government Code Section 65915(p)(1).

Justification: The City's multiple family parking ratio would only yield about 52 units, resulting in 5 less units from the proposed project. Based on construction costs to build the project, a lower density project would prevent the development of affordable housing units.

2. Waivers from the following CMC code sections:

- a. **CMC Section 17.24.200(B).** Waiver of the indoor recreational facility requirement in its entirety for residential projects consisting of 20 or more dwellings in the R-3 zone.

Justification: Providing square footage on the project site to accommodate indoor recreational space would require the removal of dwelling units from the proposed project, making the development of the project cost-prohibitive to build at a lower density.

- b. **CMC Section 17.24.100(A).** Waiver of the required minimum front yard setback from 20 feet to 18 feet along Via Del Rio in the R-3 zone.

Justification: Separate water meters are required for each dwelling unit, which are proposed to be installed at the garage drive aprons between the units. The project would be able to provide larger garage drive aprons that can accommodate the water meters while maintaining the number of units proposed for the project to accommodate the three affordable housing units.

- c. **CMC Section 17.82.030(A)(2)(a)(3).** Waiver of the required minimum street (collector) side yard setback from 15 feet to 13 feet along Avenida Del Vista.

Justification: Separate water meters are required for each dwelling unit, which are proposed to be installed at the garage drive aprons between the units. The project would be able to provide larger garage drive aprons that can accommodate the water meters while maintaining the number of units proposed for the project to accommodate the three affordable housing units.

- d. **CMC Section 17.82.030(A)(2)(a)(5).** Waiver of the required minimum building separation of 25 feet to 18 feet for three-story buildings, and 22 feet between Buildings 4 and 5, and Buildings 4 and 6, respectively.

Justification: The project would be able to maintain the number of units proposed for the project to accommodate the three affordable housing units. The building separation is reduced at the “pinch point” areas between buildings. The buildings would still meet the building separation requirements of the California Building Code.

3. Concession from Section 15.60.080 of the Corona Municipal Code (CMC) regarding the requirement to underground existing overhead utilities located adjacent to the project site’s frontage (Via Del Rio) when that service to a structure is enlarged or an addition is made thereto (Southern California Edison overhead lines).

Justification: The cost of undergrounding the overhead utilities that supply power from SCE, which would also require the relocation of existing transformers, is approximately \$815,000. This cost would deter the project from constructing the three affordable housing units.

Waivers can be denied if they will potentially result in a specific, adverse impact upon public health, safety, or the environment. [Gov. Code § 65915(e)(1)]. Concessions can also be denied if they: (1) do not result in identifiable and actual cost reductions; (2) would result in a specific, adverse impact to the public’s health and safety or environment; or (3) conflict with state law. [Gov. Code §65915(d)(1)]. However, the burden falls on the City in providing a preponderance of evidence that would support the findings to deny the requested waivers or concession. The requested waivers and concession have been

reviewed by City staff and determined that they will not result in an adverse impact to public health, safety or the environment.

Vehicle Trip Generation

A Focused Traffic Impact Analysis (dated June 28, 2024) was prepared by Urban Crossroads, a licensed traffic engineer, to compare the residential project’s trip generation to the existing 300-seat church use on the project site. Table 6 shows the trip generation comparison between the two uses. The project is expected to generate an additional 258 vehicle trips per day, 13 more trips in the morning peak hours, 27 fewer trips in the midday peak hours, and 25 more trips in the evening peak hours compared to the existing church use. The added traffic that this project would generate would not be significant because the surrounding roadways have the capacity to support the additional traffic. The City Traffic Engineer has reviewed and approved the traffic study.

Table 6 Trip Generation Comparison

Land Use	Daily Trip Number for AM Peak Hour	Daily Trip Number for MD Peak Hour	Daily Trip Number for PM Peak Hour	Daily Total
Existing Church	9	51	4	120
Proposed Residential Project	22	24	29	378
Net Change in Vehicle Trips	13	-27	25	258

The intersection at Via Del Rio at Paseo Grande, located approximately 1,030 feet northwest of the project site in unincorporated Riverside County, is projected to operate at an unacceptable level of service “F” in the AM and PM peak hours . The deficiency is due to heavier traffic flows that occur over a 20 to 30-minute period with morning drop-offs and afternoon pick-ups occurring at the surrounding existing schools (Coronita Elementary, Cesar Chavez Elementary, and Corona High School) in conjunction with morning commute traffic.

Riverside County Transportation staff has reviewed the traffic study and is requesting that the applicant pay a fair share percentage of the cost of constructing a future traffic signal at the intersection. The traffic study indicates the applicant’s fair share cost of the future traffic signal is 5.8%. Accordingly, a condition of approval for the project requires the applicant to pay Riverside County the fair share cost of the future traffic signal prior to the recordation of TTM 38934.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant paid the application processing fees of \$7,727 to cover the cost of the Conditional Use Permit.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Per Section 15332 of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.31 of the City’s Local CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared as the project qualifies as a Class 32 (Infill Development

Projects) categorical exemption. The project site is less than five acres, is consistent with the site's General Plan land use designation of HDR and applicable General Plan Policies, and the property's R-3 zoning designation, which indicates residential development is imminent on the site. The project would not result in significant impacts relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. Moreover, none of the six exceptions to exemptions cited in Guidelines Section 15300.2 (a–f) are applicable to the proposed project.

PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION ACTION:

At its meeting on August 25, 2025, the Planning and Housing Commission considered the subject matter and took the following action:

Motion was made, seconded (Siqueland/Woody) and carried unanimously, with Chair Longwell and Commissioner Vernon absent, that the Planning and Housing Commission adopt Resolution No. 2670 granting CUP2024-0003, based on the findings contained in the staff report and conditions of approval. The minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting are included as Exhibit 4.

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 – Locational and zoning map
2. Exhibit 2 – Site plan for Conditional Use Permit 2024-0003
3. Exhibit 3 – Planning and Housing Commission staff report
4. Exhibit 4 – Draft minutes of the Planning and Housing Commission meeting of August 25, 2025