



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 09/09/2024
TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Planning and Development Department

2024-10

APPLICATION REQUEST:

ZTA2024-0003: Zone text amendment to Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code amending Chapter 17.63, Historical Resources. (Applicant: City of Corona, 400 S. Vicentia Avenue, Corona, CA 92882)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the Planning and Housing Commission recommend APPROVAL of ZTA2024-0003 to the City Council, based on the findings contained in the staff report.

BACKGROUND

Chapter 17.63 of the Corona Municipal Code (CMC) governs historic resources in the city. The Historic Resources ordinance was adopted in 2001 and establishes definitions, criteria for listing properties on the city's heritage inventory and local landmark register, criteria for deleting or reducing a listing on the heritage inventory or local landmark register, and criteria for the alteration, relocation or demolition of historic resources. The ordinance also covers other miscellaneous requirements associated with historic resources.

The City Council at its study session meeting on April 19, 2023, and March 20, 2024, discussed certain amendments to the Historic Resources ordinance which included adding a new historic resource category for a structure of merit and replacing the responsibilities delegated to the Planning Commission to a Historic Preservation Board. Most of the City Council agreed to the proposed changes and directed staff to prepare the appropriate amendment to the ordinance, which is the reason for ZTA2024-0003.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

ZTA2024-0003 amends several sections of Chapter 17.63. The redline changes are shown in its entirety in Exhibit 1.

Noteworthy changes to the Historic Resources ordinance are described below.

- **Section 17.63.020 Definitions.** Definitions for California Historical Landmarks, Historic Artifacts, Historic Preservation Board and Structure of Merit were added. Other definitions were also amended to commensurate with the changes being made to the ordinance.
- **Section 17.63.050 Corona Register – Landmark Listing Criteria.** For a landmark to be listed on the local register, one of the criteria is for the age of the historic resource to be in existence for a period of 50 years. Rather than stipulating the number of years for a historic resource, this is being amended to identify an era. The amendment changes a property to be in existence before 1950, or if in existence after 1950, is of exceptional historical importance to the community.
- **Section 17.63.065 Corona Register – Structures of Merit Listing Criteria.** This is a new section being added to the Historic Resources ordinance. The structure of merit category is below the listing of a landmark but is worthy of being nominated to the local register because it includes physical elements that contribute to the city's heritage and are worthy of preservation. A property identified as a structure of merit would be eligible for a Mills Act contract, which would allow the property owner to receive a reduced property tax in exchange for the maintenance and preservation of the property as a historic resource.
- **Historic Preservation Board.** The ordinance delegates authority to the Planning Commission when it comes to reviewing local landmark nominations, adding or removing properties from the Heritage Inventory or Corona Register, and reviewing major alterations, relocation, or demolition of a historic resource on the Corona Register. Other duties of the Planning Commission include the review of any amendment to the Historic Resources Element of the General Plan, a recommendation to survey potential historic resources to be listed on the Corona Register or Heritage Inventory, and public outreach programs regarding the management and preservation of historic resources. The amendment is proposing a Historic Preservation Board to oversee these responsibilities instead of the Planning Commission. Title 2 of the CMC is being amended to add Chapter 2.38 establishing the Historic Preservation Board. This proposed chapter will be reviewed concurrently with ZTA2024-0003 by the City Council. Proposed Chapter 2.38 is provided as Exhibit 2 for reference but is not subject to review by ZTA2024-0003.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Per Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.06 of the City's Local CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project because a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule 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. The proposed amendment involves text revisions to the Historic Resources Ordinance in Chapter 17.63 of the CMC and will have no significant effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT

ZTA2024-0003 is an application initiated by the city. Therefore, no application fees are associated with this request.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A 10-day public notice was advertised in the Sentinel Weekly News and posted on the city's website. As of the preparation of this staff report, no comments have been submitted to the city.

STAFF ANALYSIS

ZTA2024-0003 updates the city's Historic Resources ordinance and provides an additional avenue through the proposed structure of merit listing to encourage the preservation of historic resources. The amendment also adds new definitions and replaces the Planning Commission with a Historic Preservation Board that will focus on landmark nominations, and major alterations to historic landmarks, including the demolition of historic resources.

FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL OF ZTA2024-0003

1. Per Section 15061(b)(3) of the State Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 3.06 of the City's Local CEQA Guidelines, a Notice of Exemption has been prepared for the project because a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule 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. The proposed amendment involves text revisions to the Historic Resources Ordinance in Chapter 17.63 of the CMC and will have no significant effect on the environment.
2. ZTA2024-0003 is consistent with the General Plan for the following reason:

- a. *The Historic Resources Element of the General Plan has goals and policies related to the management of historical resources to help preserve historic structures and retain Corona's heritage, which is the purpose of ZTA2024-0003.*
3. ZTA2024-0003 is consistent with the intent of Title 17 of the Corona Municipal Code for the following reason:
 - a. *Title 17 governs the development standards of land uses within the city and establishes other regulatory procedures described in the Zoning Code, which is consistent with ZTA2024-0003 because it will provide updated regulations and application processes for historic resources regulated by Chapter 17.63.*
4. The proposed amendment will provide for the public health, safety, and welfare for the following reason:
 - a. *ZTA2024-0003 establishes regulations for historic resources to promote the recognition, preservation and continued viability of historic resources in the city which supports cultural enhancement and the general welfare of the public.*

PREPARED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Exhibits:

1. Proposed CMC Chapter 17.63 Redlined.
2. Proposed Chapter 2.38, Historic Preservation Board.
3. Environmental Documentation.