



## STAFF REPORT 11/19/2025

**TO:** Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

**FROM:** Adrian Moreno, Associate Planner  
Kendra Reif, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Resolution No. PC2025-20 and Resolution No. PC2025-21: Request for conditional approval of PC2025-20 for the architectural review application AR 25-12, for the 6<sup>th</sup> St. Senior Apartments for the development of 4-story 53 affordable senior apartment units, 4,375 square feet of commercial space, 1,100 square foot community room, and associated improvements on a 0.86 acre lot (APN #778-113-001 and -002) at the southeast corner of Tripoli Ave. and 6<sup>th</sup> St., and for the request for condition of approval of PC2025-21 for the variance application VAR 25-06 from municipal code standards including design requirements, and determining that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 – In-fill Exemption - Applicant: Chelsea Investment Corporation

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC 2025-20 conditionally approving architectural review application AR 25-12 with the modification to include Engineering conditions of approval provide at the time of the meeting for the development of a 4-story 53 affordable senior apartment units, 4,375 square feet of commercial space, 1,100 square foot community room, and associated improvements on a 0.86-acre lot (APN #778-113-001 and -002) at the southeast corner of Tripoli Ave. and 6<sup>th</sup> St, and recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC 2025-21 conditionally approving a variance from municipal code standards including design requirements.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On May 24, 2024 the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Senior Apartments project was presented to City Council for preliminary design direction. On August 14, 2025, the applicant, Chelsea Investment Corporation submitted an architectural review application for the development of one 4-story 53 affordable senior apartment unit building with a



Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

1,100 square foot community room, 4,375 square feet of ground floor commercial space and associated improvements at the southeast corner of Tripoli Ave. and 6<sup>th</sup> St.

The subject site is a currently vacant and heavily disturbed property along 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Tripoli Avenue, and Date Avenue. Historical aerial photographs show the property has been vacant since at least 1996. Chelsea Investment Corporation has recently completed the construction of the neighboring Covalda apartments which are comprised of 108-units and 2 commercial spaces and the Pueblo Viejo Village apartments which are comprised of 105-unit mixed-use development.

The Engineering Department's conditions of approval will be addressed and discussed during the Planning Commission meeting.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:**

The surrounding land uses and zoning designations are as follows:

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>North:</b> | Existing Commercial Development and Pueblo Viejo Villas, (Downtown, DT-PV).                               |
| <b>South:</b> | Existing Single-Family Homes and Covalda Apartments, (Downtown, DT-PV, and General Neighborhood, G-N).    |
| <b>East:</b>  | Existing Commercial Development and Single-Family Homes (Downtown, DT-PV, and General Neighborhood, G-N). |
| <b>West:</b>  | Existing Commercial Development and Covalda Apartments, (Downtown, DT-PV).                                |
| <b>Site:</b>  | Vacant (Downtown, DT-PV).   |

**Site Plan:**

The applicant is proposing to develop a four-story mixed-use development consisting of 53 affordable senior apartment unit building with a 1,100 square foot community room, 4,375 square feet of ground floor commercial space. There will be 46 1-bedroom units and 7 2-bedroom units. The 1-bedroom units will be 578 square feet in size and the 2-bedroom units will be 733 sq ft in size. 49 on-site parking stalls are provided. The project includes a variance request from covered parking requirements; however, covered parking may be provided by the applicant to meet their funding requirements.

A copy of the site plan is included below:

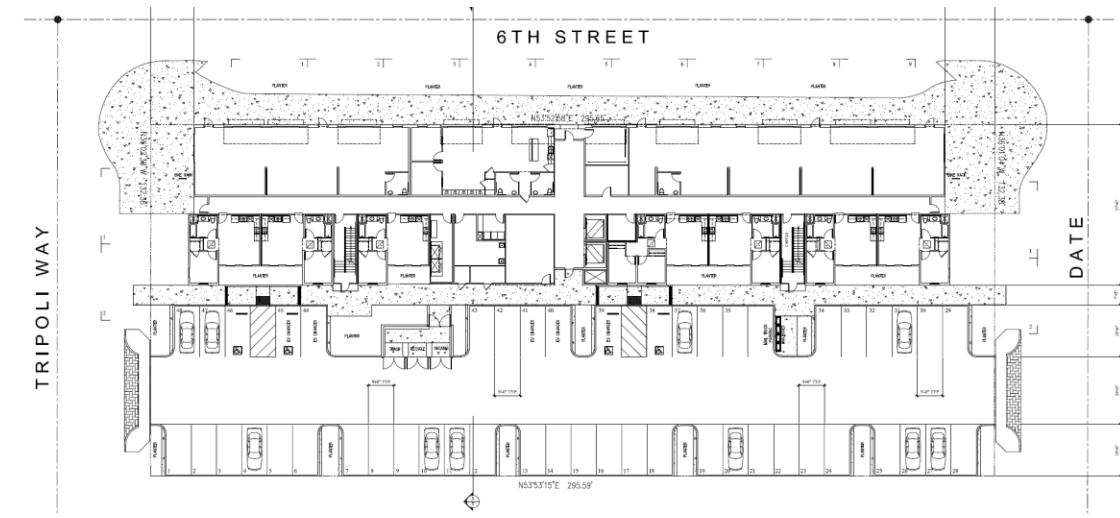


Figure 2 Site Plan

## **FINDINGS:**

### **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW:**

Each determination granting architectural review approval shall be supported by written findings of fact showing how the determination meets the following criteria and requirements:

#### **1. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan;**

The proposed project is consistent with the general plan. The proposed project is within the Downtown Center land use designation of the General Plan 2035 Land Use and Community Character Element. The Downtown Center is intended to bring the entire community together in a one-of-a-kind Coachella Center, which allows for commercial uses. The General Plan allows for a residential density of 20-65 dwelling units/acre and a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5-3 for commercial uses. The project proposes a density of 62 dwelling units per acre and is thereby consistent with the General Plan. The project is consistent with the policies of the Land Use and Community Character's Sub-Area #2 policies, which recognize that Downtown is the heart of the City where mixed use development is encouraged and creates a new gateway to downtown near intersection of Sixth Street and Cesar Chavez Street.

#### **2. The proposed project complies with zoning regulations;**

The proposed project complies with zoning regulations. The proposed project complies with the zoning regulations of Chapter 17.18 of the Coachella Municipal Code and the design regulations of Chapter 17.20 Objective Design Standards for Multi-Family Residential. The project is in compliance with Chapter 17.76 Variance Ordinance, for those municipal code and design standards requested as part of this project that include a design variance, open space variance, and covered parking variance.

**3.The proposed project is consistent with the city's design guidelines;**

The proposed project is consistent with the city's design guidelines. As noted in Architectural Review Finding #2 above, the proposed project is developed in accordance Chapter 17.76 Variance Ordinance in order to provide a design that includes a variance from city's design guidelines for vertical modulation, horizontal modulation, and roofs.

**4.The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties and improvements in the vicinity; and**

The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties and improvements in the vicinity as the project, a mixed-use residential development that includes first floor commercial uses is which is consistent with general plan guidelines for the Downtown Center general plan designation that recognizes the area will include mixed-use buildings. Further, the proposed mixed-use is compatible with the existing Pueblo Viejo Villas development to the north and the Covalda Apartments to the west. The proposed use is not known to create detrimental effects to the public health, safety, welfare, or materially injurious to properties and improvements in the vicinity.

**5.The proposed project is located, designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be compatible with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and shall not change the essential character of the same area.**

The proposed project is located, designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be compatible with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and shall not change the essential character of the same area. The proposed use is compatible with the existing Pueblo Viejo Villas development to the north and the Covalda Apartments to the west. The proposed use is also compatible with the existing single-family residential uses to the south, and the existing commercial buildings to the north and east as the project and the adjacent uses are permitted uses in the DT-PV zone.

VARIANCE:

**1. That the strict application of the provisions of this chapter would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter;**

The applicant requests design variances from design standards in subsections from Section 17.20.015(a) – Vertical Modulation to allow for more than maximum required three building heights and primary facades to comprise of more than 80 percent of the total façade area, Section 17.20.015(c) – Horizontal Modulation to allow for recesses and projection less than the minimum required 10 feet in depth, and Section 17.20.015(d) – Roof to allow for roofs that are not flat, open space variance from private and common open space standards in subsections from Section 17.18.030(a) - Usable Open Space Standards, and a covered parking variance from subsections

from Section 17.54.010(4)(a)(2) – Covered Parking Requirements for covered parking requirements.

The design variances are necessary as the strict application of the provisions of the municipal code would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter to meet both the Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines as required by Section 17.18.030(F) to meet Section 17.20 Objective Design Standards and to meet the design guidelines of the City of Coachella Multi-Family Objective Design Standards for residential development. Policies #1 and #2 of Subarea 2 – Downtown include direction to actively facilitate the implementation of the Pueblo Viejo Plan, and to ensure new development does not conflict with the Pueblo Viejo Plan. Land Use and Community Charter Policy 6.2 includes guidance to follow the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan for the Downtown. Per the guidance of the general plan, the project provides massing and articulation elements that include changes in vertical modulation elements and horizontal modulation elements within every 35 feet per the guidance of Section 3.6.3.1 Massing and Articulation of the Pueblo Viejo Plan Design Guidelines. The project also provides gable roof design that is in conformance with the sloped roof design allowed per the guidance of Section 3.3.1.3 – Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture Roofs of the Pueblo Viejo Plan Design Guidelines. The city finds that the project meets the intention of the general plan guidelines for the Downtown Zone.

The open space variance is necessary as the strict application of the provisions of the municipal code would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter to meet the requirements of Section 17.18.030(a) - Usable Open Space Standards due to the size constraints of a small less than 1 acre lot at .86-acres lot. The practical difficulties that may occur if the applicant were to provide 150 SF of total private open space per unit and 10 feet per unit of common recreational open space would require a total accommodation of 8,480 SF of floor space dedicated to open space for the project to meet municipal code requirements. For comparison, the average floor plan square footage for the project is approximately 12,300 SF. This would require the project to remove required parking spaces, major site plan modifications that may require the construction of a parking structure to accommodate the additional square footage required to accommodate the private open space requirement, or provide an additional building story. This is a major hardship for a small less than one acre parcel. The project is required to provide development impact fees that contribute to park land and park improvement space, and the project is located within a .5 mile of Veteran's Park, Dateland Park, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Street Park that is under construction at this time which would provide sufficient open space for the project. This is in compliance with the Parks and Open Space guidelines of the Downtown Center general plan designation, where in limited instances mini parks and neighborhood parks would also be acceptable. The city finds that the several parks within a .5 mile distance of the project provides sufficient open space for the project.

The covered parking variance is necessary as the strict application of the provisions of the municipal code would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardship inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the chapter to provide covered parking due to the constraints in size of the less than one acre site and proposed parking lot to meet municipal code parking requirements. The general plan and Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines do not provide guidelines on covered parking in the zone.

**2. That there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity;**

As indicated in Variance Finding #1, the small less than one acre parcel is a special circumstance for the proposed mixed use senior housing development and due to its size, there is a constraint in meeting open space, design, and covered parking requirements listed above. The small parcel does not allow for the inclusion of open space on the property. However, there are nearby parks that future residents could utilize. The proposed design cannot add additional depth because the building design would need to be expanded and this is not feasible on a parcel that is less than one acre in size. The proposed project is exempt from parking requirements per SB35.

**3. That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity, but which, because of such special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question;**

As indicated in Variance Finding #1 and Finding #2, the small less than one acre parcel is a special circumstance for the proposed mixed use senior housing development to provide safe, affordable, and healthy housing for every stage of life indicated as a broad goal per the Community Health and Wellness and as indicated by Community Health and Wellness Policy 2.6 to encourage the development of senior housing.

**4. That the granting of such variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located, and;**

The granting of the variance that includes variance from design standards, open space requirements, and covered parking requirements are not anticipated to be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

**5. That the granting of the variance will not adversely effect any element of the general plan.**

As indicated in Variance Finding #1, the design variance, open space variance, and covered parking variance does not adversely affect any element of the general plan.

## **Architecture**

The applicant proposes a Spanish Colonial Revival design that is similar to the design styles of the existing Pueblo Viejo Villas and Covalda Apartments immediately adjacent to the proposed project. The building roofline design integrates a flat roof line for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor commercial retail spaces and provides a mix of flat and gable rooflines for the residential floors. The gable roofline has concrete tile roof. The project has six different roof lines that include at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor a roof height at approximately 38' to the flat roofline and 41' to the gable roof line, and the 4<sup>th</sup> floor provides a roof height at 49' to the flat roofline, 51' to the first gable roof line, 54' 6" to the 2<sup>nd</sup> gable roof line, and 58' to the top roof line. Per the Objective Design Standards Ordinance, gable roof designs are prohibited and a maximum of four roof lines are allowed. The applicant submitted a Variance from these design standards as part of this project, and the design of the roofline is consistent with the Pueblo Viejo Design Guidelines and consistent with the direction city council provided on May 24, 2024.

The project integrates articulation features that include decorative foam tile and a prominent stucco line at the top of the residential gable roof towers. All windows are recessed 2 inches from the façade, and some windows integrate shutters, awnings, stucco trim pop-out, or a Juliet balcony. Commercial tenant spaces feature a metal awning, and the main entrances on all elevations provide a 5-foot recess that provides a covered entrance design.

The project does provide vertical modulation with two primary heights being the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors, and the project does provide horizontal modulation that includes an approximately 6-foot recess between the primary façade and secondary façade elevation. A 10-foot minimum recess is required, however a variance from this standard is included for the project, and the project as designed is in compliance with the general plan.

Per the Objective Design Standards Ordinance, a maximum of four colors are allowed. From the beginning staff has recommend the applicant to provide a distinct and varied color palette for this project that would help this project differentiate from the white and brown color palette of the adjacent buildings. The proposed color design of the project includes white, black, and yellow shades for the primary façade colors and a blue accessory color for awnings and shade structures. Below are images of the Dolores Huerta Apartments provided to the applicant team as an example of a varied color scheme.



Figure 3 - Perspective Elevation



Figure 4 - Colored Elevations (Front)

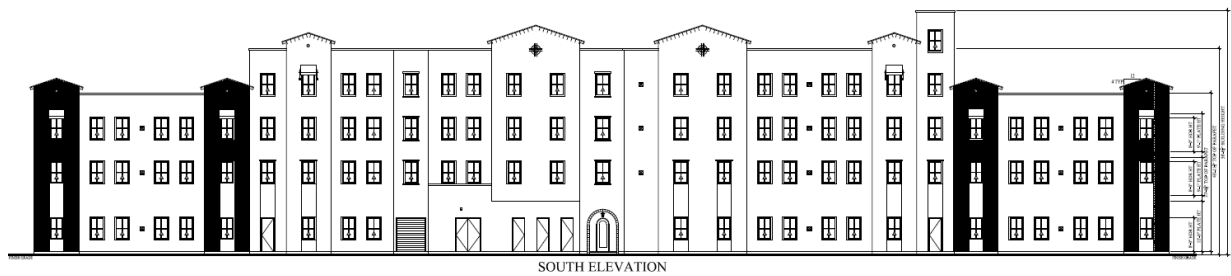


Figure 5 - Rear Elevation



Figure 6 - Side Elevation (East)

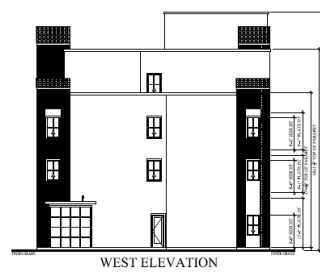


Figure 7 - Side Elevation (West)





*Figure 8 Dolores Huerta Apartments Examples*

## **Site Plan**

The project is proposed between Tripoli and Date Avenue on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. The project site existing off-site improvements, that include the recently constructed separated sidewalk design on 6<sup>th</sup> street. As part of this project, the applicant will provide decorative pavers at the driveway entrances on Tripoli Way and Date Avenue. The building provides a lot coverage of 38 percent at 14,360 SF on a .86-acre lot. Per Chapter 17.18 DT-PV Ordinance, the project is required to provide 3 spaces for one 1,000 FT of gross floor area. The project at a total of 49,133 gross floor area would require 147 parking spaces. However, due to SB 35, parking for the project is not required as the project is within ½ mile of public transit hub.

## **Landscaping**

The applicant proposes a drought tolerant landscape design with ¾ California Gold groundcover for the entirety of the landscape design. The proposed landscape palette shows a variety of trees including the “Hong Kong Orchid”, “Desert Willow”, “Texas Ebony”, and “Drake Elm” that provide parking lot shade coverage and some sidewalk shade coverage for internal sidewalks and for sidewalk on Tripoli and Date Avenue. The planters will include water-efficient shrubs including “Oo-La-la Bougainvillea”, “Compact Texas Ranger”, “Mexican Bush Sage.” Succulents will include “Dwarf Century Plant,” “Blue Flame Agave,” “Red Yucca”, and “Toothless Desert Spoon”. The initial submittal proposed a majority of pink and violet flowering varieties, and staff provided recommended a few changes to the plant palette that would provide a consistent pink a and violet plant palette theme.

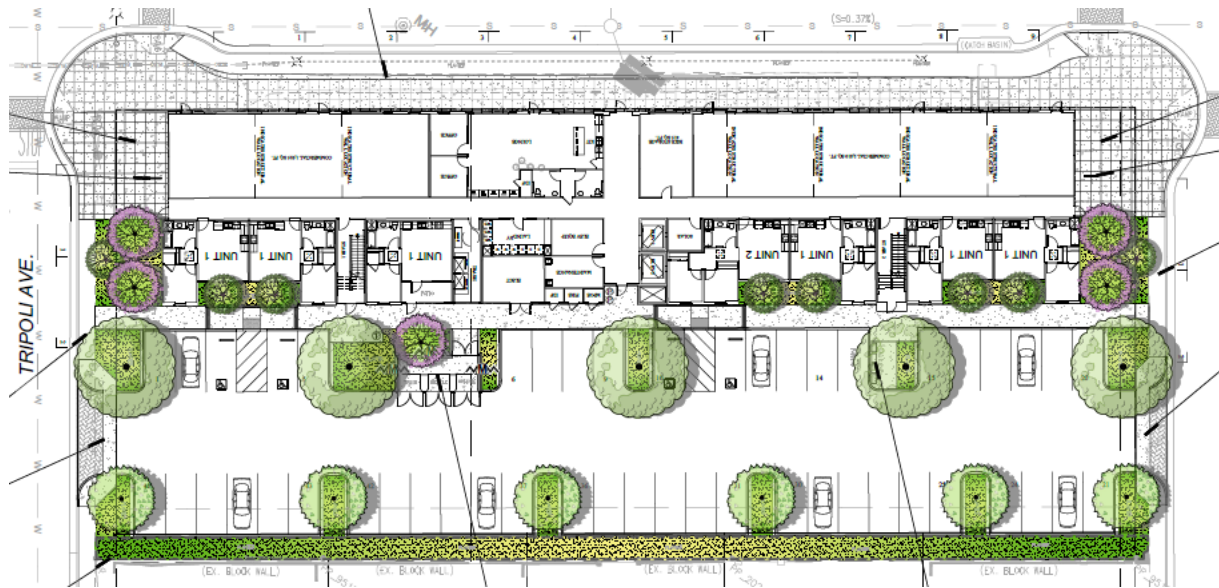


Figure 9 - Landscape Plan

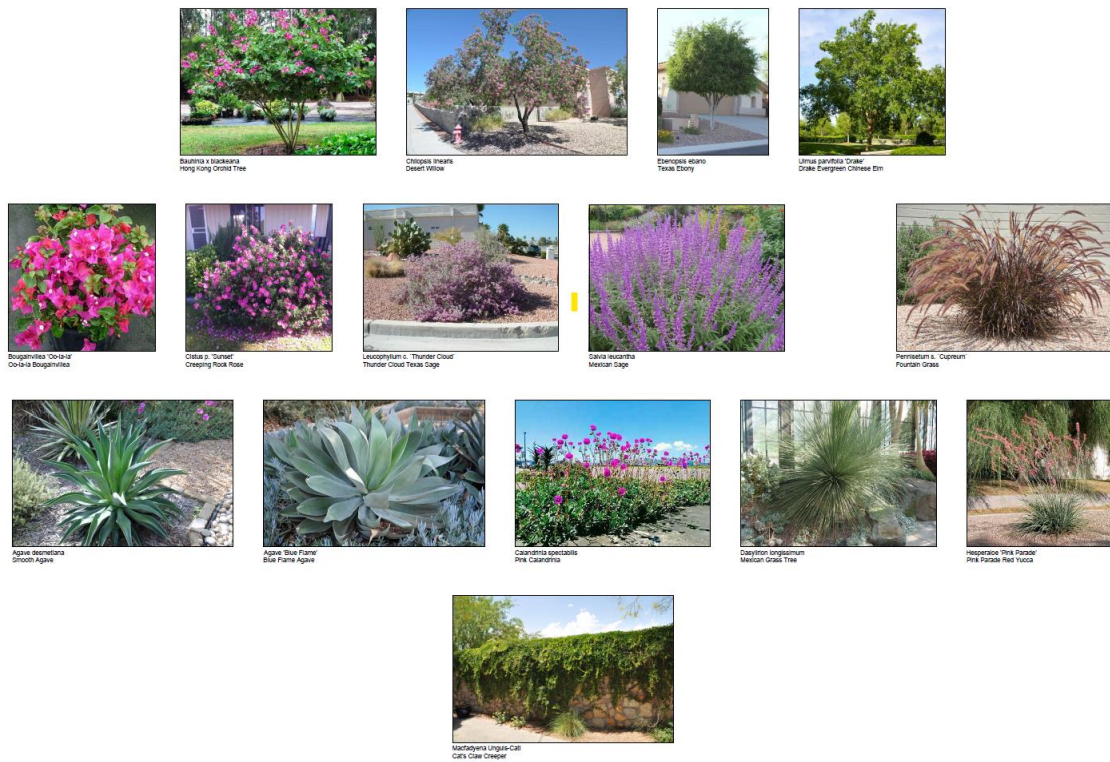


Figure 10 - Landscape Palette

## Signage

Signs programs are required for multi-tenant buildings and must obtain approval by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission review of the sign programs includes, but not limited to, sign placement, color, architectural integrity, construction material, legibility, size and scale, and

illumination. The applicant proposes a sign program consisting of illuminated retail blade signs, and illuminated retail wall sign. There is a condition of approval to work with staff to revise the sign program to require individual channel lettering design for retail wall signage. All retail tenant identification signs are required to comply with the approved sign program consisting of “halo” illuminated individual channel letters.

### **Consistency with General Plan and Zoning**

The project site is currently zoned Downtown (DT-PV) which implements the Downtown Center land use designation of the General Plan. The DT-PV zone permits mixed use development. The Downtown Center is intended to bring the entire community together in a one-of-a-kind Coachella Center, which allows for commercial uses. The General Plan allows for a residential density of 20-65 dwelling units/acre and a Floor Area Ratio of 0.5-3 for commercial uses. The project proposes a density of 62 dwelling units per acre and is thereby consistent with the General Plan. The project is consistent with the policies of the Land Use and Community Character's Sub-Area #2 policies, which recognize that Downtown is the heart of the City where mixed use development is encouraged and creates a new gateway to downtown near intersection of Sixth Street and Cesar Chavez Street. The project is compliant with municipal code standards, and in compliance with Chapter 17.76 – Variances.

### **CEQA**

The City of Coachella, as Lead Agency, has reviewed the Project pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, outlining the three-step process for determining which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, which provides procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. It can be seen with certainty that implementing the Project would not cause a significant adverse effect on the environment because the Project will be constructing a four-story 53 affordable senior apartment units, 4,375 square feet of commercial space, 1,100 square foot community room, and associated improvements on a heavily disturbed and currently vacant 0.86-acre lot (APN #778-113-001 and -002) at the southeast corner of Tripoli Ave. and 6<sup>th</sup> St. The site does not serve as a viable habitat for wildlife and is consistent with the City of Coachella's General Plan land use and zoning designation, and can be adequately served by existing utilities and public services. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 – In-fill Exemption. Further, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions apply to the project.

### **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:**

A notice of a public hearing to consider the Architectural Review application (AR No. 25-12) and the Variance application (Variance No. 25-06) was issued in accordance with Coachella Municipal Code Section 17.74.010.G, inclusive of the publication on November 9, 2025, of a legal public hearing notice published in the Desert Sun, the City's newspaper of record, and the mailing of a

public hearing notice to a certified list of property owners within 300 feet of the subject properties on November 5, 2025.

#### **ALTERNATIVES – ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW**

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC2025-20 approving Architectural Review No. 25-12 with the findings and modifications as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC2025-20 approving Architectural Review No. 25-12 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff with modifications as proposed by the Planning Commission.
- 3) Not approve Resolution No. PC 2025-20 and request that staff prepare a Planning Commission Resolution for denial of Architectural Review No. 25-12.
- 4) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

#### **ALTERNATIVES – VARIANCE**

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC2025-21 approving Variance No. 25-06 with the findings as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. PC2025-21 approving Variance No. 25-06 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff with modifications as proposed by the Planning Commission.
- 3) Not approve Resolution No. PC 2025-21 and request that staff prepare a Planning Commission Resolution for denial of Variance No. 25-06.
- 4) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

#### **Attachments:**

1. Resolution PC 2025-20
  - a. Exhibit A – Conditions of Approval
  - b. Exhibit B – Development Plan Set
2. Resolution PC 2025-21
3. Variance Request Letter
4. Site Photos