



STAFF REPORT

7/16/2025

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

FROM: Vanessa Sanchez-Meza, Planning Technician

SUBJECT: Resolution No. PC 2025-12: Request for Conditional Approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04, 6th Street Tattoo Co.

SPECIFICS: Request for conditional approval for Conditional Use Permit No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04 to allow a tattoo/piercing parlor within an existing 740 square-foot tenant space located at 1030 6th Street Unit 7 (Assessor Parcel Number 778-081-002) and determining that the proposed project is compliant with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). Applicant: Ernest Gonzales

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 2025-12 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04 to allow a tattoo/piercing parlor within an existing 740 square-foot tenant space located at 1030 6th Street Unit 7, pursuant to the findings and conditions in the below staff report and the attached resolution.

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Mr. Ernest Gonzales, is seeking approval for a proposed tattoo/ piercing parlor (6th Street Tattoo Co, located at 1030 6th Street Unit 7 (Assessor Parcel Number 778-081-002). The proposed existing vacant tenant space has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Downtown Center and a zoning designation of Downtown Pueblo Viejo (DT-PV). The vacant tenant space was previously occupied by the Galilee Thrift Store. The previous tenant moved out in December of 2024 and the tenant space has remained vacant since December of 2024. The applicant for 6th Street Tattoo Co., Mr. Ernest Gonzales, has over 15 years of experience working at the previously approved “Art and Ink Tattoo” located in the Valley Verde shopping center in the City of Coachella.

On May 29th, 2025, the applicant submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit requesting conditional approval for the proposed tattoo/ piercing parlor. The proposed site is located within the General Plan Land Use Designation of Downtown Center and zoning designation of Downtown Pueblo Viejo (DT-PV). Tattoo/piercing parlors can be approved with a CUP in the DT-PV Zone. In addition to the CUP requirements for a tattoo/piercing shop in the DT-PV zone, Coachella Municipal Code Chapter 17.87 – Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlors contains additional findings requirements to allow for the conditional approval of the proposed tattoo/piercing use. CMC Chapter 17.87 requires Tattoo Parlors to be at least 500 feet from an existing residential use,

500 feet from any existing religious institutions and youth organizations, and at least 1,000 feet from any other tattoo and/or body piercing parlor. The applicant was informed that a Variance was necessary due to the proposed business's proximity to the Covalda Apartments and Pueblo Viejo Villas on 6th Street, the YSI Youth Group located within the same commercial center, and the existing Art Ink Tattoo parlor further south on Cesar Chavez Street. Based on this information, the applicant opted to proceed with a Variance request.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The applicant is proposing to operate a 740 square foot tattoo studio in an existing commercial center located on the southeast corner of 6th Street and Cesar Chavez Street. The commercial center recently received conditional approval at an adjacent vacant suite for the Los Compadres thrift store. The Los Compadres thrift store received CUP approval by the Planning Commission under CUP No. 253 (Modification) on May 21, 2025. The applicant for Los Compadres thrift store was required to repair any visual damage along the exterior façade, address any unpermitted signage, remove any unpermitted structures on the exterior, address landscape improvements, and to designate employee parking in the rear parking lot at the center. Overall, the property owner is required to complete site improvements prior to the occupancy per the conditions of approval of CUP No. 253.

Currently, the commercial center hosts eight (8) businesses, including a real estate office, a makeup studio, hair salon, nutrition store, youth leadership institute, notary services, a car audio repair shop, and an art studio is in progress of moving in. The proposed tattoo shop would be occupying the seventh suite within the center, leaving no more vacant tenant spaces once approved. As a condition of approval for the proposed project, a lighting plan must be submitted to the Building Services Department for review and approval to ensure adequate illumination of the parking area. All exterior wall signage shall consist of internally illuminated channel lettering and will require a City building permit. Additionally, the exterior design of the proposed establishment shall also be consistent with the architectural character of existing or approved commercial structures within the shopping center to prevent visual blight or deterioration.

In January 2012 the City of Coachella adopted Ordinance 1033 adding Chapter 17.87 to the City's Municipal Code providing regulations for tattoo and body piercing parlors. Prior to the adoption of this ordinance the City of Coachella did not regulate these types of businesses. However, with the growing demand for the establishment of tattoo shops, the City sought to establish regulations and criteria for the development and operation of tattoo parlors in order to address the potential negative secondary effects of tattoo parlors.

Chapter 17.87 restricts the siting of tattoo parlors per certain location restrictions. Chapter 17.87 requires a minimum separation of 500 feet from any existing residence, a minimum of 1,000 feet measured "building to building" from any other tattoo and/or piercing parlor, and a minimum of 500 feet "building to building" from any existing religious institution or youth organization. The proposed location for 6th Street Tattoo Co. does not meet these requirements. It is approximately 50 feet from the Covalda Apartment complex and Pueblo Viejo Villas on 6th Street, approximately 700 feet "building to building" from the existing Art & Ink Tattoo Studio, approximately 400 feet from both La Luz Del Mundo Christian Church and Calvary Landmark Baptist Church located on

Bagdad Avenue, and approximately 40 feet from the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), which is located within the same commercial center. Therefore, the project site does not meet the location criteria established by Chapter 17.87.

General Plan Designation and Zoning District:

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and the City of Coachella Official Zoning Map. The proposed project is within a land use designation of the Downtown Center. According to the General Plan 2035 Land Use Element, the Downtown Center is intended to support a diverse mix of uses, including spaces for local startup business and entrepreneurs.

The proposed tattoo parlor is designated DT-PV (Downtown Pueblo Viejo) zone, as referenced on the City's Official Zoning Map. Tattoo and body piercing parlors are permitted in the DT-PV zone subject to the approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed use will be subject to the standards and regulations contained in Chapter 17.87 Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlor.

Environmental Setting:

The subject site is located on the corner of 6th Street and Cesar Chavez Street. Land uses adjacent to the proposed facility include the following:

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| North: | Pueblo Viejo Villas/DT-PV (Downtown Pueblo Viejo) |
| South: | Covalda Apartments/DT-PV (Downtown Pueblo Viejo) |
| East: | Covalda Apartments/DT-PV (Downtown Pueblo Viejo) |
| West: | Plaza Tonalá and O'Reilly Auto Parts/ C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) |

FINDINGS:

Conditional Use Permit Findings:

The intent and purpose of a Conditional Use Permit pursuant to Chapter 17.74 of the Coachella Municipal Code is to provide for the proper location of certain uses which, because of unusual effects or characteristics, including large land area, potential intensity or public concern, cannot be automatically permitted in, nor absolutely prohibited from, some or all zone classifications without imposition of specific conditions; to ensure that the location of these uses will be in accordance with the objectives of the general plan and the intent and purpose of the applicable zoning district; to provide sufficient and adequate safeguards and conditions to ensure that the conditional use will be operated and maintained in a manner not detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare, or harmful to neighboring property and improvements.

In order to grant a Conditional Use Permit, the Planning Commission must make all the following affirmative findings with facts to support their decision.

Finding 1 – The proposed use will not be in conflict with, but will be in harmony with and in accordance with the objectives of the general plan.

The proposed tattoo shop would not be in conflict with, but will be in harmony with and in accordance with the objectives of the general plan because the proposed tattoo/piercing parlor is within the Downtown District land use designation according to the General Plan 2035, which envisions to bring the entire community together in a one-of-a-kind Coachella center that is the civic heart of the City, and to bring unique local goods, services, culture and society. The proposed project would provide a unique local serving commerce to what is identified as a major gateway to the downtown per the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan.

Finding 2 – The proposed use will be 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 will be located, designed, constructed, operated and maintained so as to be compatible with the existing character of the general vicinity and shall not change the essential character of the same area because the proposed use is within a zoning designation of DT-PV (Downtown Pueblo Viejo) which permits the tattoo/piercing parlor use subject to obtaining a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed use is located along Cesar Chavez Street and is compatible with the adjoining commercial uses and the Conditional Use Permit can be revoked if any of the conditions of approval are violated.

Finding 3 – Consideration is to be given to harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, to the availability of public facilities and utilities, to harmful effect, if any, upon desirable neighborhood character, to the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets, and to any other relevant impact of the development.

Consideration has been given to harmony in scale, bulk, coverage and density, to the availability of public facilities and utilities, to harmful effect, if any, upon desirable neighborhood character, to the generation of traffic and the capacity of surrounding streets, and to any other relevant impact of development, because the existing commercial tenant space is within an existing commercial building with all infrastructure available on-site for the proposed tattoo/piercing parlor use and the existing commercial parking lot.

Finding 4 – Where the proposed use may be potentially hazardous or disturbing to existing or reasonably expected neighboring uses, it must be justified by the common public interest as a benefit to the community as a whole.

Where the proposed use may be potentially hazardous or disturbing to existing or reasonably expected neighboring uses, it must be justified by the common public interest as a benefit to the community as a whole. The Riverside County Sheriff indicated that there are no concerns about the operations of this establishment. The Sheriff's Department does not recommend conditions related to public safety concerns. As such, there are no anticipated hazardous or disturbing effects to the existing and neighboring uses.

Finding 5 – The proposed use will include vehicular approaches to the property designed for reasonable minimal interference with traffic on surrounding public streets or roads.

The proposed use provides vehicular approaches to the property designed for reasonable minimal interference with traffic on surrounding public streets or roads as the commercial center that the

subject business is located in is already existing and traffic and vehicular approaches were already considered and approved by the City Engineer and the Planning Commission. The City of Coachella has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act as an “Existing Facilities” project (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15301a) as the proposed tattoo/piercing parlor use will occur in an existing private commercial structure involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former commercial use on the property.

Variance Findings:

The intent and purpose of a Variance as stated in Chapter 17.76 of the City’s Municipal Code, is to prevent or to lessen practical difficulties and unnecessary physical hardships; to remedy disparity of privilege, nor to permit a use substantially inconsistent with the limitation upon other properties in the same zone and vicinity, not to grant relief from self-imposed hardships.

In order to grant a Variance, the Planning Commission must make all the following affirmative findings with facts to support their decision.

Finding 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 strict application of the tattoo parlor regulations would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the Zoning Code. The proposed site for the “6th Street Tattoo Co.” tattoo parlor is located along Cesar Chavez Street. While 6th Street is within the DT-PV (Downtown Center) zone which allows tattoo parlors with approval of a CUP, much of the developed Cesar Chavez Street corridor and the downtown is adjacent to or at least within 500 feet of residential neighborhoods with the exception of a few retail centers along Cesar Chavez Street, such as on Avenue 50. The strict application of Chapter 17.87 Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlors would prevent a viable retail/service business from operating for this entire sector of Cesar Chavez Street which is a primary arterial street in the City. The Zoning Code seeks to allow a wide variety of multi-family residential housing, office, and retail uses in the DT-PV zone along Cesar Chavez Street. The proposed tattoo/piercing parlor is not anticipated to create any adverse impacts on surrounding residential uses due to the project conditions of approval, and the project would be required to meet all the other applicable regulations contained in Chapter 17.87.080.

Finding 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;

There are special circumstances applicable to the subject property, particularly related to its location and surroundings, that do not generally apply to other properties within the same zone and vicinity. The proposed site for the “6th Street Tattoo Co.” is located at the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street, a primary commercial corridor within the city, and 6th Street, a major commercial hub for retail and other uses as described in the Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan. The intersection is described as a “major gateway” for the downtown. The community vision statement of the

Pueblo Viejo Revitalization Plan describes the gateways on sixth street as an entrance to unique shopping experiences. The proposed tattoo parlor would be a unique retail business for the downtown. Further, the Harrison Street Corridor Study identified that development of this intersection is critical to the success of both the Study and the Revitalization Plan. This specific intersection is identified as a critical to both the downtown and Cesar Chavez Street, as a result the proposed retail business would provide a unique shopping experience that is supported by the guidelines of each of the above city guidance documents. Additionally, the Harrison Street corridor is identified in the General Plan Land Use Policy 9.4 to support local service commerce, which the proposed project would contribute towards achieving this general plan policy. The General Plan Subarea 2 – Downtown also envisions unique shopping experiences. Due to the unique location of the proposed use, there is a special circumstance that do not generally apply to other property in the same zone and vicinity. Also, as described in the above variance finding, most commercial properties along Cesar Chavez and in the greater Downtown area directly abut established residential neighborhoods. This makes it uniquely challenging for properties in this corridor to meet the separation and buffer requirements outlined in Chapter 17.87 of the Zoning Code, which governs the location of tattoo and piercing parlors. Therefore, the site's context presents a special circumstance not common to most properties in the same zoning district for proposed tattoo/piercing parlors.

Finding 3 – That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of 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;

The variance is necessary to preserve the applicant's ability to operate a personal services business—such as a tattoo/piercing parlor—which is a use generally permitted within other commercial zones throughout the City. Due to the unique location of this property at the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street and 6th Street, where commercial centers are commonly adjacent to residential neighborhoods and other sensitive uses, strict application of the separation requirements in Chapter 17.87 creates an unnecessary hardship not typically experienced by other similarly zoned properties that would allow for a tattoo parlor with a conditional use permit. For example, there are certain areas within the city that include General Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial areas along Avenue 48, and Neighborhood Commercial areas along Avenue 54 that would not be impacted by the distance requirements. These zones also allow for tattoo parlors with a conditional use permit. Without the variance, the property would be denied a reasonable and customary commercial use that is otherwise allowed in the same zoning district, limiting its full economic potential and the applicant's right to continue serving their long-standing client base in the community.

Finding 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 proposed tenant space is situated within an existing commercial center along 6th Street and does not directly face any religious institutions or residential properties. Its orientation and placement within the commercial corridor help minimize any potential visual or operational impacts on nearby sensitive uses. Additionally, the proposed use will operate entirely indoors and

is subject to standard City regulations, ensuring compatibility with surrounding properties. As such, the granting of this variance is not anticipated to result in any detriment to public welfare or negatively impact adjacent properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Finding 5 – That the granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the general plan.

The proposed use is located within the Downtown Center land use designation, which is intended to support a diverse mix of uses, including spaces for local startup businesses and entrepreneurs. The applicant has operated within the City of Coachella for the past 15 years and is seeking to continue serving their established clientele at the proposed 6th Street location. The project aligns with the General Plan's vision of fostering local business growth and activity within the downtown core, and therefore, the granting of this variance would not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

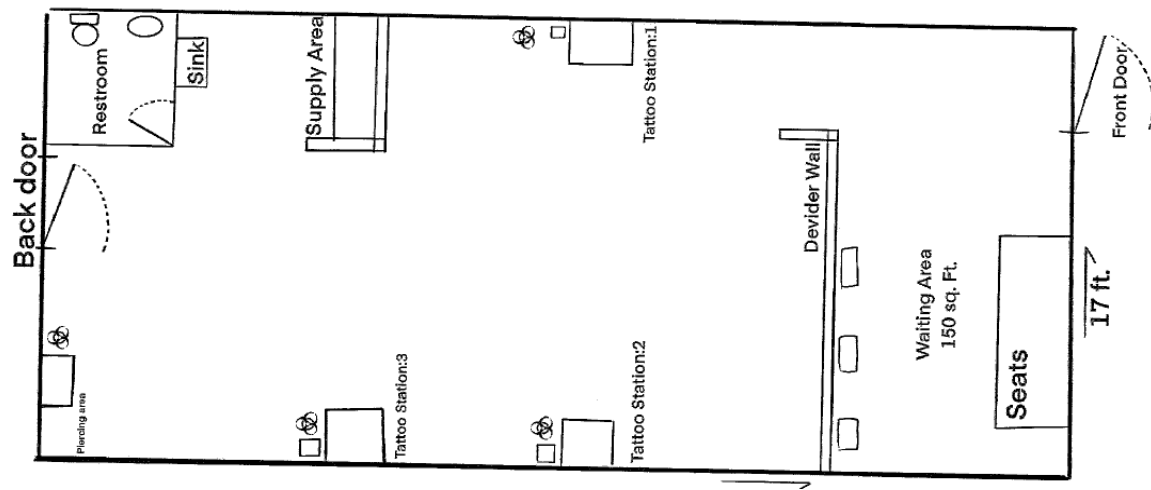
Site Plan/Circulation:

The proposed 740 square foot retail space is located within the existing commercial center located on the corner of 6th Street and Cesar Chavez Street. Primary ingress/egress to the site is from 6th Street with parking directly adjacent to the subject retail space and the rear for designated employee parking.



Floor Plan:

The proposed 740 square foot retail space will provide four defined work and design stations that will be shared by multiple tattoo artists as well as the applicant. The space will include a 150 square foot clearly defined lobby/waiting room within the retail space separate from the work stations. In the rear of the retail space will be a storage room, restroom, a piercing station, and a cleaning station which are required by the Riverside County Health Department



Environmental Consideration:

This project was found to be categorically exempt from environmental review, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQA Guidelines - Section 15301, Existing Facilities). As such, no additional environmental review is required for the project.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

A public hearing notice for the Project was published in the Desert Sun, the newspaper of record, on July 6th, 2025, and a public hearing notice was mailed to property owners within a radius of 300 feet of the subject property on June 30th, 2025, pursuant to Section 17.74.010 of the Coachella Municipal Code. At the time of issuance of this staff report, staff had not received public comments on this application.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04, subject to the findings and conditions of the staff report.
2. Continue Conditional Use Permit No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04 and provide staff and the applicant with direction.
3. Deny Conditional Use Permit No. 394 and Variance No. 25-04 with findings.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The proposed project substantially complies with the City's General Plan policies for the Downtown Center designation, and will comply with City standards and regulations contained in Chapter 17.87 Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlor. Accordingly, staff has prepared the attached resolutions approving the project with findings and conditions of approval.

Attachments:

1. Attach 1 – Resolution No. PC2025-12 for Approval
2. Attach 1 – Exhibit A – Conditions of Approval
3. Attach 1 – Exhibit B – Floor Plan
4. Attach 2 – Vicinity Map
5. Attach 3 – Site Photos
6. Attach 4 – Agency Comments

