



**STAFF REPORT**  
**5/19/2021**

**TO:** Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** Luis Lopez, Development Services Director  
**SUBJECT:** Pulte Coachella Subdivision Project

- SPECIFICS:**
- Tentative Tract Map (TTM 38084) and Variance (VAR 21-04) to allow the subdivision of 26.81 acres of vacant land into 107 single-family residential lots (having less than the minimum 7,200 square feet) ranging in size from 6,017 square feet to 13,171 square feet, with an average lot size of approximately 7,500 square feet, with public streets and common-area lots accessed from Avenue 51, on property located on the north side of Avenue 51 between Van Buren Street and Chiapas Drive (APN #768-050-002).
  - Architectural Review (AR 21-03) to allow the construction of 107 single family homes using three production models, within Tentative Tract Map No. 38084 to include: 1) A one-story (3-Bedroom, 2-Bath) residence with 1,959 square feet of floor area; 2) A two-story (4-Bedroom, 2 ½-Bath) residence with 2,404 square feet of floor area; and 3) A two-story (5-Bedroom, 3-Bath) residence with 2,825 square feet of floor area, all with attached two-car garages and a variety of architectural themes (Spanish, Craftsman, and Prairie) and color palettes for the models' exterior finishes and roof tile. Pulte Home Company, LLC (Applicant)

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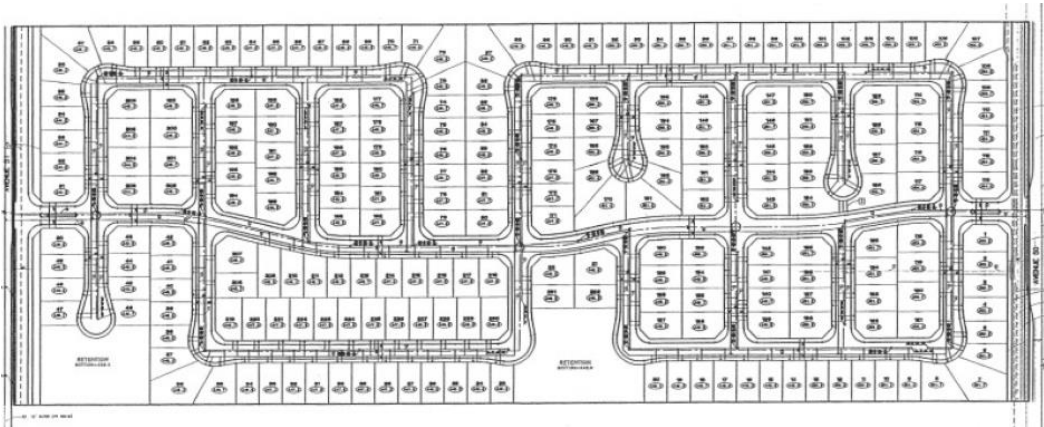
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the attached resolutions recommending to the City Council approval of Tentative Tract Map (TTM 38084), approval of Variance (VAR 21-04) and approval of Architectural Review (AR 21-03) for the Pulte Coachella Subdivision Project.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2004, the subject site was originally approved as the second phase of Tentative Tract Map No. 32075 (TTM 32075 known as the "Prado" gated community) in 2005. The second phase of TTM 32075 expired in 2014, and at that time the Prado Homeowners Association ("Prado HOA") requested the owner to pursue the following modifications to the project:

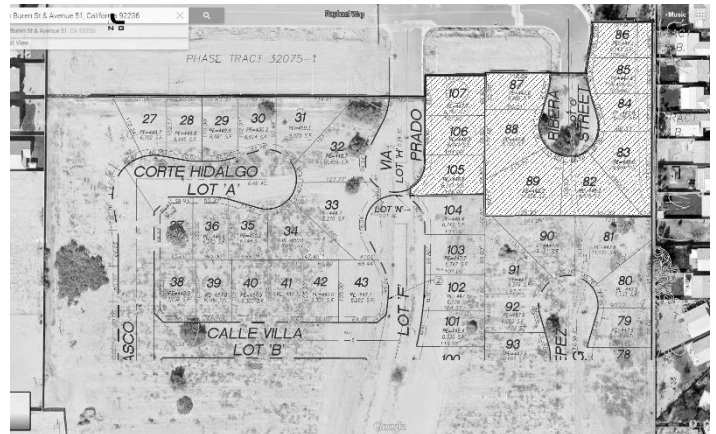
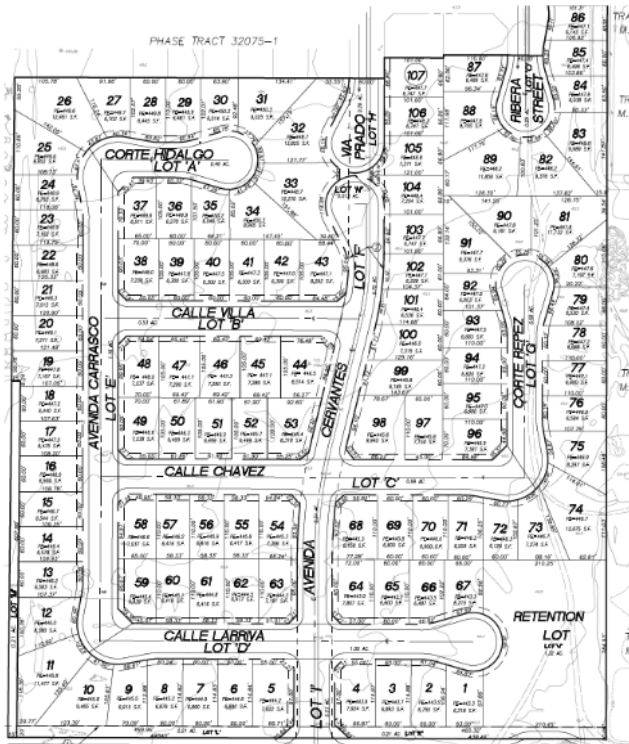
- 1) Consider gating off the second phase of the project to reduce the amount of traffic entering and exiting from Avenue 50.
- 2) Incorporate added open space amenities to the existing Prado gated community.
- 3) Complete the installation of street lights along Via Prado as originally approved for the gated community. Below is the original Prado phase 1 and 2 concept:



Based on the HOA's directives to the prior owner, the subject site was re-designed as a "public street" subdivision, known as Tentative Tract Map No. 36555 ("La Opra") as shown below:

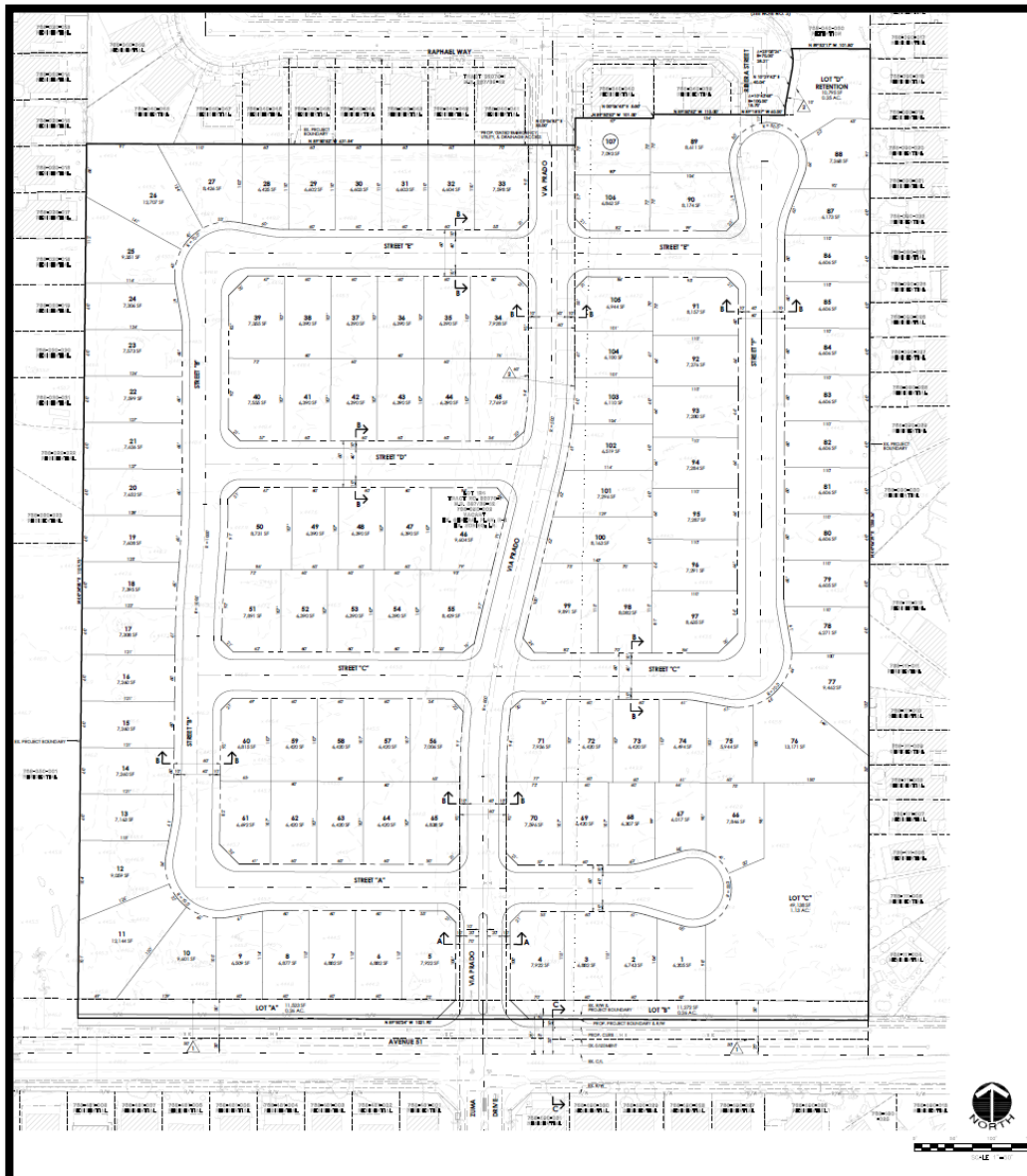
TTM 36555 Street configuration

11 New Lots within gated community



As shown in the exhibit above, the “La Obra” project proposed two new cul-de-sacs and 11 new homesites within the existing “Prado” community at Via Prado and Rivera Street. However, this prior design is no longer feasible for the Prado HOA and the current landowner, as explained below.

The “La Obra” subdivision expired in 2020 and the prior vacant land inside the Prado community were sold to D.R. Horton and built to completion. Currently, the Prado HOA has indicated that they do not wish to acquire new lots into their community, and the City is unable to impose this requirement on the new owners. As such, Pulte Homes Company, LLC has re-designed the subdivision to have no impact upon the “Prado” gated community, as shown below.



All interior streets are proposed to have standard 6-inch curbs with parking allowed on both sides of the street. A 1.13-acre retention basin is proposed in the southeastern corner of the project site that will be landscaped with a perimeter ADA path to provide exercise stations as an amenity for the residents. There will be no improved parkland within the community as this neighborhood is within close walking distance to a large community park (Bagdouma Park). Therefore, the future home builder will pay the City's full Parks Dedication and Parks Improvement development impact fees.

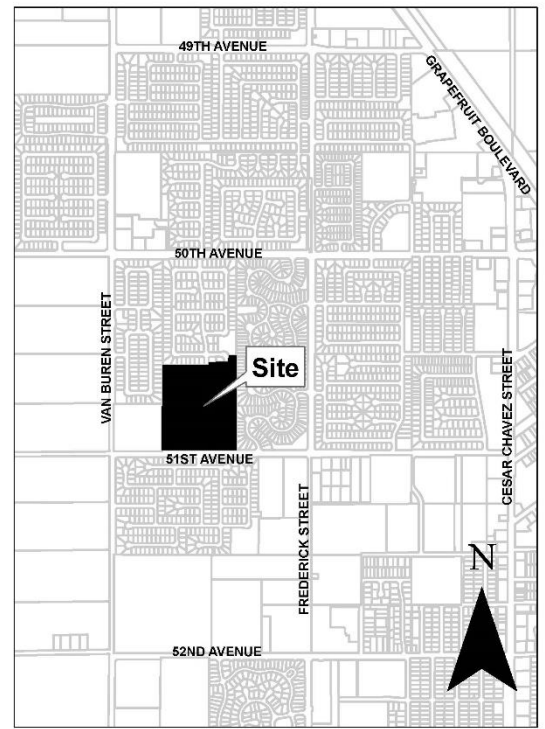
The lot sizes will range in size from 6,014 square feet to 13,825 square feet in size. The minimum standard for lot sizes in the R-S zone is 7,200 square feet and a 60-foot width for corner lots. Therefore, the applicant has submitted a request for Variance (Variance 21-04) to allow lots less than 7,200 square feet, as discussed further in this report.

### **PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:**

The project is located north of Avenue 51 between Van Buren Street and Chiapas Drive (APN #768-050-002, 008). The project site is a vacant property that is surrounded by developed single family residential neighborhoods, and a ranch property. Specifically, the surrounding uses are as follows:

- North: Single Family Residential (Prado Gated Community)*
- South: Single Family Residential*
- East: Single Family Residential*
- West: Rural/ Ranch Property*

The site is vacant and was previously rough graded and improved with a sewer mainline along Via Prado extension as part of the "Prado" phase 2 development which was to have a gated entrance on Avenue 51, connecting internally to Via Prado and Avenue 50. Currently the north half-street portion of Avenue 51 is lacking the required road-widening street dedication for future improvements.



Vicinity Map

### **Avenue 51 Improvements and Parkway Design:**

The half-street improvements for Avenue 51 are shown as a 45-foot half street with 35 feet of pavement and 10 feet of parkway. The City's General Plan 2035 calls for a 90-foot "Collector with Bicycle Facility" including 30 feet of pavement with bike lanes, and 10 feet of parkway. There are painted medians identified for Avenue 51. The applicant proposes an enhanced parkway area of 25 feet along Avenue 51, which would create a perimeter landscape area with a meandering sidewalk with a total landscaped setback of 35 feet from curb face to the perimeter wall. A bus

turnout area was required along Avenue 51 for the original Tentative Map 32075. However, the Sunline Transit Agency has not required this transit improvement for the project at this time. There is already a bus turnout at the northwest corner of Avenue 51 and Frederick Street that can serve this future community.

Drainage:

Since the proposed subdivision is a public-street subdivision, all the common area landscaping and retention basins would be maintained through the City's Landscape and Lighting Maintenance District.

The proposed subdivision will drain from northwest to southeast into the main retention basin area at the southeast corner of the project site. Similarly, in the northeast portion of the site, the lots will drain into a secondary retention basin in the northeast corner, abutting the Prado community.

Landscaping/Fencing:

The applicant has submitted conceptual plans showing the placement of 24-inch box and 36-inch box shade trees and accent trees around the retention basin, in the neighborhood streets, and along the Avenue 51 perimeter. California fan palms are proposed at the main entry, creating a formal entry feature at Avenue 51 frontage with a landscaped median. A variety of species trees are proposed in the retention basins including Sweet Acacia, Mulga, and Palo Verde trees. Although, no street trees are shown along the Avenue 51 frontage, staff is conditioning the project to use a minimum of one 24 – inch box species tree for every 50 feet along the street frontage of Avenue 51.

Staff has had detailed discussions with the adjoining Prado Community HOA regarding the emergency access gate along Via Prado and the terminus of Ribera Street. There are existing sewer lines and the need to maintain an emergency access gate at Via Prado is not a negotiable item. Therefore, a decorative wrought iron gate will be installed at Via Prado (to substantially match the Prado gate at Avenue 50) to be installed. Additionally, the HOA specifically requested a solid masonry wall at Ribera Street which will be left as a “stub” street within the Prado community. This presents some challenges because there are existing utilities in this location. However, there is an ability to abandon the dry utilities here, and the City controls the wet utilities (water and sewer) and has agreed to enter into an encroachment permit to allow a solid masonry wall to be installed in this location. An exhibit of the common-area landscaping is attached to this staff report.

Non-gated communities require maintenance of common-area lots via the City's Landscape and Lighting district. Accordingly, this project will be required to form a new LLMD for the common area maintenance assessments for maintenance of common area landscaped lots, emergency access gates and perimeter wall at Ribera Street and related common-area improvements.

**CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN:**

The subject site is currently in a "Low Density Residential" land use category of the General Plan, which allows a density of 0-6 dwelling units per acre. The proposed subdivision is proposed to have a density of approximately four dwelling units per acre which is consistent with the current General Plan designation. However, the City's draft General Plan 2035 document calls for this property to have a "General Neighborhood" designation of 12 dwelling units per acre average, with a predominance of detached single family residences. While the project will not achieve the desired average density, the project will be providing a lot size that is smaller than the current zoning district regulations, and as such staff is supporting the requested variance application to allow lot sizes less than 7,200 square feet, and corner lots less than 70 feet in width.

**CONSISTENCY WITH ZONING CODE:**

The subject zoning on the property is RS (Single Family Residential) which requires a minimum lot size of 7,200 square feet and minimum lot width of 60 feet for interior lots, 70 feet for corner lots, and 40 feet for knuckle or cul-de-sac lots. The project will provide lot sizes ranging in size from 6,014 to 13,825 square feet, and corner lot widths of 65 to 100 feet in dimension. This configuration of lot sizes is similar to the original Prado community to the north and the existing Aventine community to the south. There are no irregularly-shaped lots proposed and all other development standards of the RS zone can be complied with when future homes are built on the project site.

**TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 38084:**

Section 66474 *et seq.* of the Subdivision Map Act describes the grounds under which a City may approve or deny a tentative map. Section 16.12.100 of the Coachella Municipal Code includes the findings of the Subdivision Map Act that are required for granting approval of a tentative map. Staff has included findings and conditions for a recommendation of approval to City Council on the tentative map. As outlined in this staff report, the proposed subdivision and attendant variance request have complied with City's minimum policy directives under the General Plan and current zoning regulations. All public street subdivisions are maintained by the City's Landscape and Lighting Maintenance District. Based on the above discussion, staff has drafted the recommended findings and conditions for approval of the subdivision, as explained below.

**VARIANCE NO. 21-04:**

The applicant is seeking a variance to the minimum lot size established in the RS zone district. Section 17.16.030 (Residential – Single-Family Zone - Property Development Standards) § B-1 (Lot Area Requirements – Interior Lots) of the Coachella Municipal Code requires that the minimum lot size shall be no less than 7,200 square feet for interior lots, and that all lots average at least 7,000 square feet. The applicant is proposing lots that range in size from approximately 6,014 square feet to 13,825 square feet, and an average lot size of approximately 7,500 square feet.

In accordance with Chapter 17.76.020(B – Findings), in order to grant a variance to the above code section(s), the Planning Commission must make five findings as listed below. Each finding granting a variance shall be supported by written findings of fact showing specifically how the determination is substantiated by evidence.

In order to grant a variance, the Commission must make all the following findings in the affirmative, as specified in Section 17.76.020-B of the City Zoning Code.

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *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.*
- *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*
- *That the granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the general plan.*

Staff finds that the subject site has unique circumstances associated with the adjoining gated community that was originally supposed to be extended to Avenue 51. This has resulted in the need to modify street configurations and utility service designs that make the project infeasible without a reduced lot area pattern. At the time that the approvals for the prior subdivision map, known as Tentative Tract Map No. 36555, there was a lot boundary discrepancy to be deeded to the westerly neighbor and measuring 16 foot x 620 foot (9,148 square feet) on the southwest

corner of the proposed development. In order to keep the design similar to that of the prior proposed project with 107 lots, without having to re-write the environmental assessment for the prior-approved project, the variance to the lot size standard is needed in order to not reduce the allowable number of lots on this subdivision.

The General Plan 2035 document allows for nearby properties within the same existing zone designation and vicinity to develop at a higher density, including developments with lots of 6,000 square foot minimums for single-family homes. Further, the development directly east of the proposed project is a PUD with lots that are 6,000 and an average lot size of less than 7,000 square feet. As such, there are adjacent developments with same-size or smaller lots, and the design of the development will have a layout of not having through streets that will act as a by-pass for the major intersections, thus slowing and mitigating fast moving traffic through the development. Accordingly, staff has prepared findings for recommending approval of the Variance request, to the City Council.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW NO. 21-03:**

The applicant has submitted architectural exhibits for three model production plans that are currently being built in the Valencia Community, located at the southeast corner of Avenue 50 and Van Buren Street. The proposed architectural review proposes three production homes including:

*Model 1 - One-Story (3-Bedroom, 2-Bath) residence with 1,959 sq. ft. of floor area;*

*Model 2 - Two-story (4-Bedroom, 2 ½-Bath) residence with 2,404 sq. ft. of floor area*

*Model 3 - Two-story (5-Bedroom, 3-Bath) residence with 2,825 sq. ft. of floor area.*

All homes will have an attached two-car garage, and there will be a variety of architectural themes (Spanish, Craftsman, and Prairie) and color palettes for the models' exterior finishes and roof tile.

The architectural theming is shown in the exhibits below:





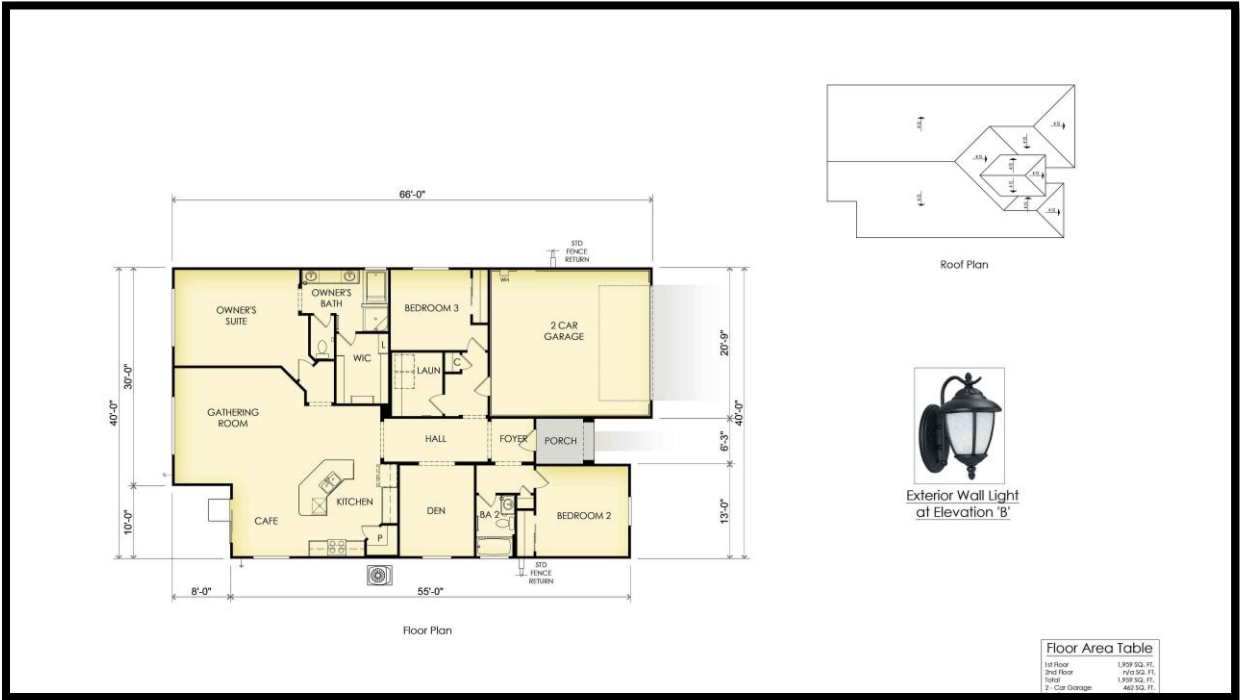
*Plan 1 - Spanish Elevation*



*Plan 1 - Craftsman Elevation*



Plan 1 - Prairie Elevation



Plan 1 - Floor Plan



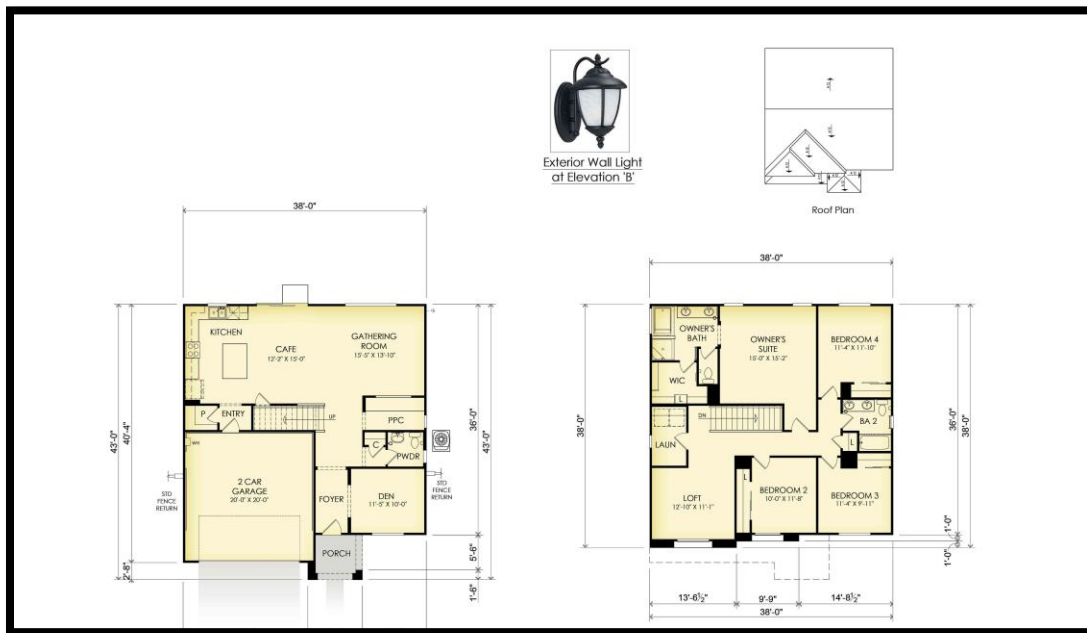
*Plan 2 - Spanish Elevation*



*Plan 2 - Prairie Elevation*



*Plan 2 - Craftsman Elevation*



*Plan 2 – Floor Plan*



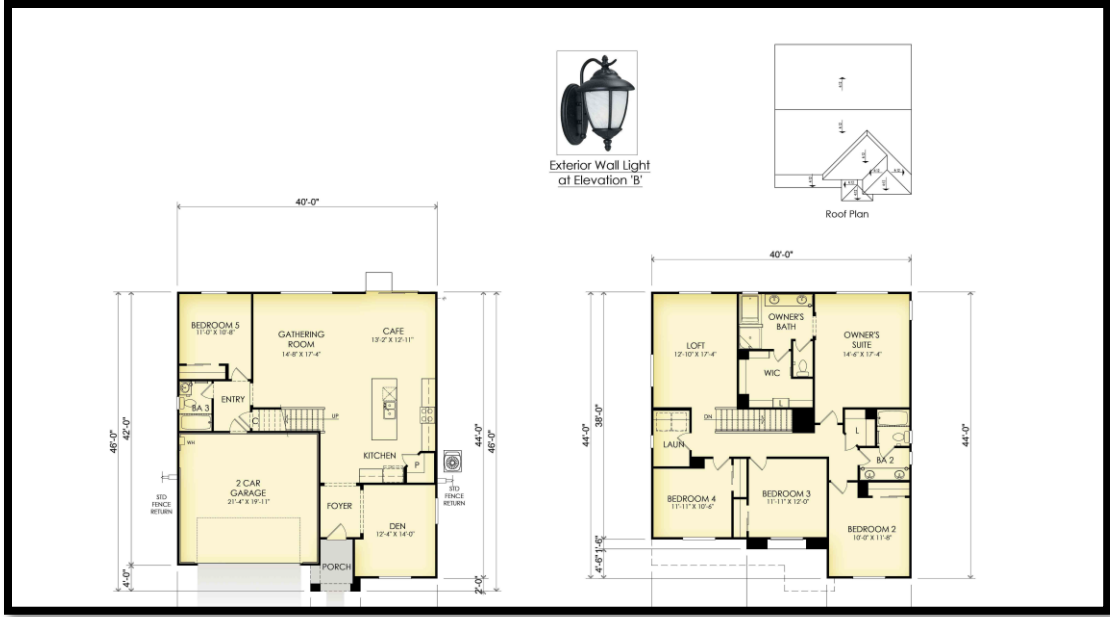
*Plan 3 - Spanish Elevation*



*Plan 3 - Craftsman Elevation*

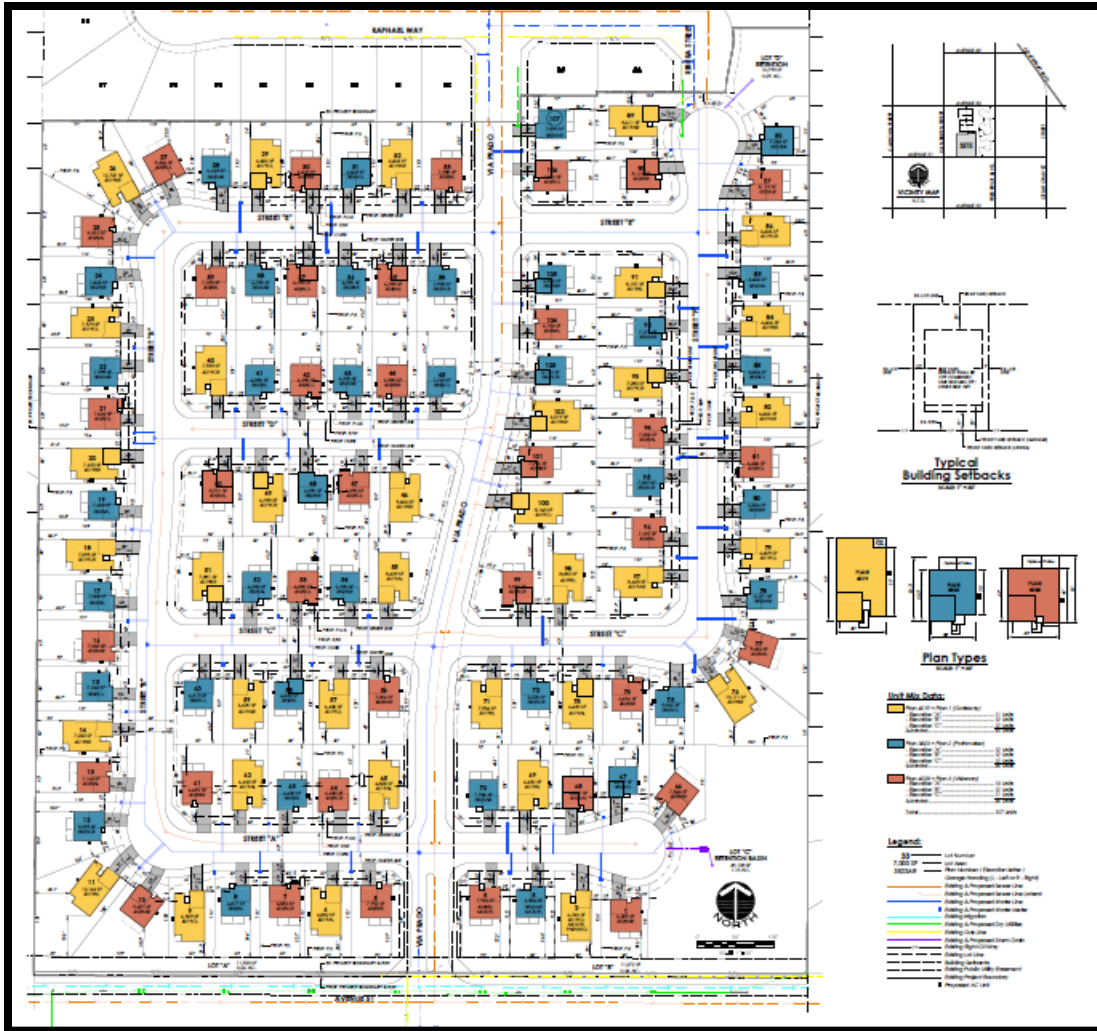


*Plan 3 - Prairie Elevation*



*Plan 3 – Floor Plan*

The proposed materials sample boards showing the various color palettes for the roof tile and exterior field colors, and trim/door colors are attached to this staff report. Additionally, the preliminary plotting plan for the overall community is shown below:



Staff has previously approved the three architectural elevation types proposed herein in the immediate vicinity of the site, at the Valencia community which is currently being developed. As such, staff is recommending approval of the proposed architectural review exhibits for this project. Accordingly, staff has prepared findings and conditions of approval for the approval of the request for Architectural Review No. 21-03.

**CEQA ADDENDUM TO MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION (EIS 04-05):**

On June 9, 2004 the City Council adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Prado project, as part of Tentative Tract Map 32075 and Environmental Initial Study (EIS) 04-05. The proposed project is a re-designed version of Tentative Tract Map 32075 with a modified circulation plan, and would not increase the total number of residential lots previously proposed on the site. All prior



mitigation measures for EIS 04-05 have been made a part of the proposed project. As such, no additional environmental review is required.

The Planning Commission must find adequacy in the previous environmental documents (attached), and recommend to the City Council approval of the project based on the prior-adoption Mitigated Negative Declaration, including all mitigation measures listed in the attached Resolution approving the tentative map.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions.

- 1) Consider the environmental documents contained as part of Addendum to Mitigated Negative Declaration for Environmental Initial Study (EIS 04-05) and recommend to the City Council a finding of consistency with prior approved Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Measures.
- 2) Recommend to the City Council approval of Variance No. 21-04 and Tentative Tract Map No. 38084 with the findings and conditions listed in the attached Resolution No. PC2021-05.
- 3) Recommend to the City Council approval of Architectural Review No. 21-03 with the findings and conditions listed in the attached Resolution No. PC2021-06.

Attached Exhibits: Resolution No. PC 2021-05  
Resolution No. PC 2021-06  
Tentative Tract Map No. 38084 Exhibit  
Common Area Landscape Plans  
Addendum to Mitigated Negative Declaration (EIS #04-05)  
Architectural Exhibits  
Material Sample/Color Palette Board  
Correspondence

