



## STAFF REPORT 9/3/2025

**TO:** Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners

**FROM:** Anahi Fernandez, Management Analyst

**SUBJECT:** Resolution No. PC 2025-15: Request for Conditional Approval of the Architectural Review application for the Coachella Library Annex Project for the redesign and reconstruction of a 10,804 square foot (SF) Coachella Library Annex building at 1538 7<sup>th</sup> Street and determining that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Applicant: City of Coachella.

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC2025-15 approving Architectural Review (AR) No. 24-08 for the redesign and reconstruction of a 10,804 square foot (SF) Coachella Library Annex building at 1538 7<sup>th</sup> Street pursuant to the findings and conditions attached to this staff report.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In September 2022, the City of Coachella was awarded a grant for \$4,568,807 from the California State Library Building Forward Grant Program to renovate and upgrade its Library Annex building. Built in 1927, the Coachella Public Library Annex infrastructure has reached the need for renovation. The existing building is an old church building comprised of a main building, an office, and a hall with four rooms totaling 7,701 sq. ft.

In December 2024, the Planning Commission reviewed a desert style elevation and proposed floor plan for the library annex project, and directed staff to prepare a complete development plan set for the desert style design to present at a Planning Commission future hearing date.



## Site Plan

The below exhibit depicts the 10,804 SF library annex project. At the building entrance, the site provides a study hall space and a food lab area. The west portion of the building is planned for community room space with a stage, seating, and bookshelves. The east end of the building is planned to be dedicated to a maker space, digital maker space, and a media lab that may include a ceramic studio and a recording room. The floor plan design and project amenities are subject to change.

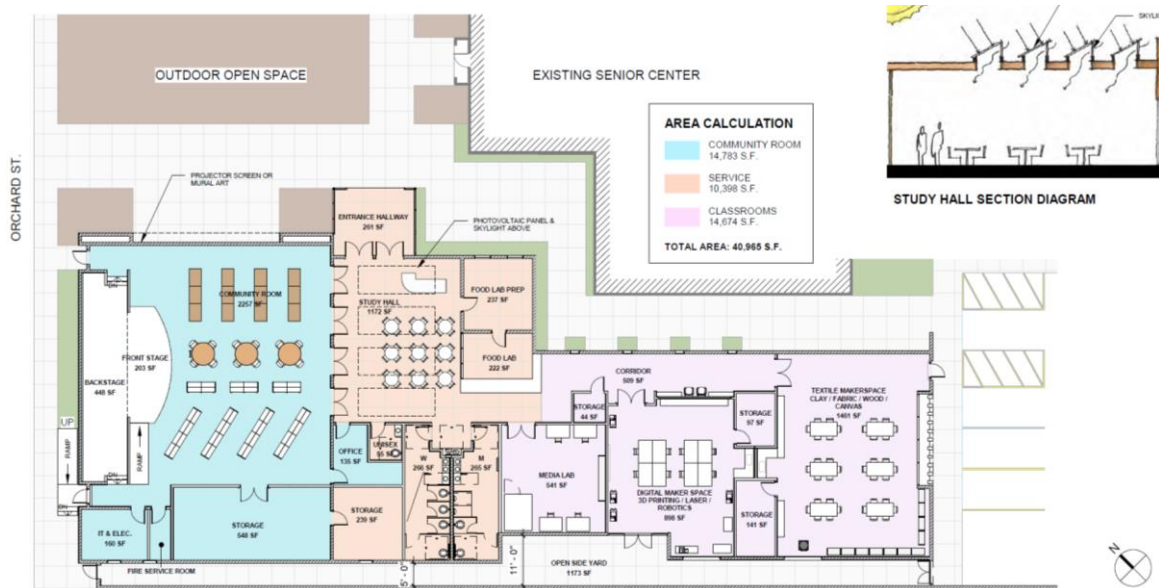


Figure 1 Floor Plan

## Desert Style (Stucco Finish Entrance)

The architectural design includes desert style elevations, a stucco finish at the entrance with clerestory windows and a flat roof. The elevation show a 32 x 17 foot projection surface for an LED screen or mural at the northern elevation, and a mural at the northwest elevation.



## DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The project is not anticipated to provide landscape improvements at the property, as grant funding is only for the building and not for any exterior features such as landscaping. The project is also

exempt from parking requirements as it is proposed near public parking within the Sixth Street downtown area (C.M.C. 17.54).

#### GENERAL PLAN, ZONING, AND SURROUNDING EXISTING USE

	General Plan 2035	Zoning	Existing Use
Site:	Public Facilities	General Commercial	Public Use
North:	Downtown Center	Downtown (DT-PV)	Public Use
South:	Downtown Transition	Downtown Transition (TR-PV)	Residential
East:	Downtown Transition	Downtown Transition (TR-PV)	Residential
West:	School	Suburban Neighborhood (S-N)	Public Use

#### PROPOSED FINDINGS:

##### Architectural Review

Pursuant to Coachella Municipal Code Section 17.72.010, Architectural Review, exceeding 2,000 square feet must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission must make the following findings for Architectural Review approval:

1. The Architectural Review is consistent with the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the Coachella General Plan 2035.

The site has a Public Facilities land use designation that allows for a wide range of public uses, which include libraries, community centers, and similar uses. The proposed uses on the site are in keeping with the policies of the Public Facilities land use classification and the project is internally consistent with other General Plan policies for this type of development. The project will ensure a high quality of life for residents of Coachella by providing equitable access to additional library services and community space, enhancing neighborhood vitality. The project is located near the Downtown area and is integrated within neighborhoods, making it central to residents.

2. The project is in compliance with the applicable land use regulations and development standards of the City's Zoning Code.

The project is consistent with the development standards of the C-G, General Commercial zone. The project complies with the development standards of the Zoning Ordinance for parking, lot requirements, and height. The project is exempt from parking requirements as it is located near the Sixth Street downtown area, where public parking is accessible. The project meets the minimum lot size requirement of 10,000 sq. ft. with a lot size is 36,590 sq. ft. The project proposes a building height of 26-feet, meeting the maximum building height requirement of 35-feet.

3. The proposed project is consistent with the City's Design Guidelines.

The proposed project is so arranged as to avoid traffic congestion, ensure the protection of public health, safety and general welfare, prevent adverse effects on neighboring property and shall be in accord with all elements of the general plan. The proposed uses are compatible with existing adjacent and proposed land uses. The renovated building provides appropriate access points and circulation design that allows for efficient vehicle and pedestrian movement. Access points are oriented toward parking areas and public sidewalks making it more pedestrian oriented. The project also proposes bicycle-friendly infrastructure to accommodate multimodal accessibility.

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.

The project will provide an upgrade to the existing public facility and expand public programs for the community, including a community room, art classrooms and labs, and a service hub and circulation center. The project will also be upgrading the existing building to make it more accessible. The proposed designs are consistent with and meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. The proposed project is consistent with the City of Coachella's General Plan and Zoning Code and will be conditioned to comply with the California Building Codes therefore ensuring that the development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to properties and improvements in the vicinity.

5. The project will be compatible with neighboring properties with respect to land development patterns and application of architectural treatments.

The plans submitted for this project proposes the construction of a new 10,804 sq. ft. library annex building that will preserve some architectural features of the existing building. The proposed design consists of a desert style that is consistent with neighboring properties. The building materials that will be utilized include but are not limited to wood, stone, glass, tile, and concrete which is consistent with neighboring and adjacent properties. The proposed design will be utilizing a neutral color palette consisting of variations of tan, light brown, and white which is consistent with neighboring properties.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

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 involve the demolition of the existing 7,700 sq. ft. building and the construction of an approximately 10,804 sq. ft. library annex facility. The site does not serve as a viable habitat for wildlife, entails installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures 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 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures. 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 public hearing notice for the Project was published in the Desert Sun, the newspaper of record, on August 24, 2025, and a public hearing notice was mailed to property owners within a radius of 300 feet of the subject property on August 19, 2025, pursuant to Section 17.70.050(F) 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 Resolution No. PC 2025-15 Architectural Review No. 24-08 with the findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 2) Approve Resolution No. PC 2025-15 Architectural Review No. 24-08 with modification to the proposed findings and conditions as recommended by Staff.
- 3) Deny Architectural Review No. 24-08.
- 4) Continue these items and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE(S):**

Staff recommends Alternative #1.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. PC 2025-15 for AR No. 24-08  
Exhibit A: Conditions of Approval for AR 24-08
2. Architectural Exhibits