



STAFF REPORT 2/4/2026

TO: Planning Commission Chair and Commissioners
FROM: Vanessa Sanchez-Meza, Planning Technician
SUBJECT: Variance 25-05 – Velazquez Setback

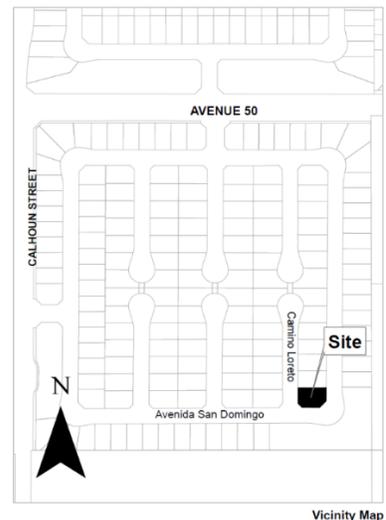
SPECIFICS: A Public Hearing to Consider Resolution No. PC 2026-02 of the Planning Commission of the City of Coachella: Request for conditional approval for Variance No. 25-05 for an existing, unpermitted, and detached 210 square-foot patio structure located less than five feet from the property line at 50346 Camino Loreto; and determining that the project is compliant with section 15073 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. Applicant: Alexis Velazquez

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Resolution No. PC 2026-02 denying Variance (VAR) No. 25-05, a request for a variance to allow an existing, unpermitted, and detached 210 square-foot (SF) patio structure located less than five feet from the property line at 50346 Camino Loreto; and determining that the project is compliant with section 15073 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

BACKGROUND:

On January 15, 2025, Code Enforcement opened a code case for an unpermitted accessory structure located in the rear yard of property address 50346 Camino Loreto. The code case was open due to a code enforcement observation from the public right-of-way, and not a submitted complaint to the code enforcement department. The accessory structure was constructed without permits and does not meet the required setback standards of the Coachella Municipal Code for detached accessory structures. Staff requested that the property owner submit a building permit application for their as-built patio structure. The applicant submitted a building permit application and staff sent the applicant a correction letter requiring the applicant to modify the patio to city standards, remove the patio, or submit a variance application. On November 3, 2025, the applicant submitted a variance application to request a setback variance to allow the



Vicinity Map

patio to remain as existing. On January 6, 2026, the variance application was deemed complete for staff to route the project for city and outside agency review.

- January 15, 2025 – Code case opens
- February 13, 2025 – Applicant submitted building permit application
- February 24, 2025 – Staff sent applicant correction on building permit
- 2 Code Enforcement Notices (January 16th and August 28th); No Citations
- November 3, 2025 – Variance application submitted

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

Table 1 – Property Development Standards

Municipal Code Requirements		Subject Patio
Required Rear Yard Setback	5 foot minimum	3’-7” foot setback
Required Side Yard Setback	5 foot minimum	3’-11” foot setback
Street Line Setback	10 foot minimum	19 foot setback from street line
Height	15 feet maximum	10-4” feet height
Size	400 SF or 30% of size of main dwelling, whichever is greater. Maximum.	210 SF
Setback From Other Structures	10 feet minimum	11-foot setback
Rear Yard Lot Coverage	50% of rear yard, maximum	14%
Attached Patio Rear Yard Setback Requirements on Lots Under 7,200 SF	10 foot minimum	N/A, not attached.

The patio structure is a 14 x 15 structure, with a total 210 SF lot coverage. The subject parcel is 7,840 SF and the existing rear yard setback is 27 feet. The minimum required rear yard is 20 feet per the Coachella Municipal Code (CMC). The existing patio provides a 3’ 7” foot setback from rear property line, and a 3’ 11” foot setback from the side yard property line. A minimum 5-foot minimum rear and side yard setback is required. Accessory structures on a site may not cover more than fifty (50) percent of the required rear yard setback area, per CMC. The patio is at 14% (210 SF) rear yard coverage, not exceeding the maximum 50% rear yard coverage.

Staff has determined that the project does not comply with Findings 1, 2, and 3 of the criteria and requirements required by Section 17.76.020(B) to make the determination to grant a variance.

VARIANCE FINDINGS:

Staff has determined that the project does not comply with Findings 1, 2, and 3 of the criteria and requirements required by Section 17.76.020(B) to make the determination to grant a variance. Below are the variance findings for denial also outlined in Resolution No. PC 2026-02.

1. 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 Coachella Municipal Code. The 7,840 SF corner lot is within the S-N Suburban Neighborhood zone which requires a detached accessory structure to provide a minimum setback of 5 feet from the side and rear property line, as required by the development standards of that zone. The proposed accessory structure proposes a 3’7” rear yard setback and 3’11” side yard setback, below the required minimum 5 foot rear yard and side yard setback required in the zone for detached accessory structures. The subject property has a total existing rear yard setback of 27 feet. The minimum required rear yard setback of a property in this zone is 20 feet. The rear yard exceeds the minimum required setback requirements of this zone, therefore there are no special circumstances within the rear yard of the subject property that would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships with the general purpose and intent of the Chapter of the Municipal Code to construct a detached accessory structure that could meet the Coachella Municipal Code requirements.

Finding 2 – 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. The subject property is oriented in an east-west orientation which is not at the recommended orientation for energy conservation per policy 5.10 of the Land Use and Community Charter of the City of Coachella General Plan which recommends lots at a north-west orientation. The subject property is within the Mariposa Pointe community, a subdivision that is planned for 155 total homes. 31 of the homes within the subdivision are planned to be designed in a north-south orientation, and the remaining 124 homes are planned to be designed in an east-west orientation. A majority, but not all of the homes are designed in an east-west orientation. Therefore, the east-west orientation is not a special circumstance within the subject residential community. The lot width of the subject property is approximately 77 feet, which is more than the minimum 60 foot lot width required within the Suburban Neighborhood zone. The subject property provides an existing 27-foot rear yard setback which is greater than the 20-foot minimum setback required in the S-N Suburban Neighborhood zone. The subject parcel is 7,840 SF, which is more than the minimum required 6,000 SF lot size required in the S-N zone. Due to the subject property meeting City of Coachella Municipal Code standards for lot dimensions and rear yard size requirements, there is sufficient space in the rear yard to provide a detached accessory shade structure within the subject property rear yard that would be in compliance with the Coachella Municipal Code.

Finding 3 – The 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. The subject property does not possess any special circumstances or unique physical characteristics related to its lot size, lot shape, or setbacks for the subject property as indicated in the above Finding 2. The lot is consistent with other properties in the same zoning district and vicinity, and the existing development conforms to standard parcel configurations and setback patterns. The

variance is not necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right of constructing a detached accessory structure, as there are no special circumstances, practical difficulties, or unnecessary hardships that would prevent or restrict the construction of a detached accessory structure that meets Coachella Municipal Code standards.

Finding 4 – The granting of the proposed variance would 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. The existing patio accessory structure would not be detrimental to the public or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located. The patio structure is located in the rear yard of the subject property, and is only visible from internal public right-of-way streets along Avenida San Domingo, Calle Xavier, and Comino Loreto at the southwest corner of the subdivision. The patio structure is in compliance with design standards for accessory structures within single family zones pursuant to Section 17.19.020 (D)(8). The subject patio structure is architecturally compatible with the main house, as the patio is painted a brown to match the colors found at the exterior of the primary dwelling, and provide dark tan shingles compatible with the roof of the primary dwelling. Detached accessory structures are not required to provide roof material that matches the roof material of the primary dwelling. The patio roof provides dark tan shingles that are in compliance with the design requirements of the above section. If the project is approved, the patio structure would be subject to the conditions of approval provided by the Building Division and the Riverside County Fire Department, and the patio structure would be subject to the California Building Standards that will ensure the patio would not be permitted without substantially meeting building safety standards. The conditions of approval for the project if approved, would ensure the variance is not materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone.

Finding 5 – The granting of the variance would not adversely affect any element of the General Plan, as the General Plan does not preclude accessory patio structures within a 5-foot setback or less within the Suburban Neighborhood designation.

Environmental Setting:

The subject site is located at 50346 Camino Loreto within the Mariposa Pointe community, and the subject property is surrounded by Suburban Neighborhood (S-N) zone uses to the north, south, west, and east. The Mariposa Pointe community is located at the southwest corner of Avenue 50 and Calhoun Street.

Agency Comments:

Staff received comments from the Fire and Building Department regarding the subject variance application. The Riverside County Fire Department identified that the existing projection is less than the 5 feet required, and will need to be modified or provide plans detailing compliance with fire-resistance rated requirements (Attachment 7). The Building Department identified that the

existing projection is less than 5 feet required, and would need to be constructed of 1 hour fire rated construction. The structural plans provided also meet the minimum structural design requirements for the city (Attachment 8). Staff concludes, per the comments received from the Fire and Building Departments, that granting of the proposed variance to maintain the patio as is, would 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.

CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN

The project site is within the Suburban Neighborhood land use designation. The intent and purpose of the Suburban Neighborhood land use designation is to provide a lower intensity, quieter family living environment. The intended physical character of the Suburban Neighborhood land use designation is to provide a more naturalistic, landscaped setting than General Neighborhoods, and tend to have larger lots, larger yards, larger setbacks, more landscaping and predominately single-family houses. If the granting of the variance is approved for reduced setbacks for the subject patio structure, the approval of this variance would not adversely affect any element of the general plan.

CONSISTENCY WITH ZONING

The patio structure is in compliance with design standards for accessory structures within single family zones pursuant to Section 17.19.020 (D)(8). The subject patio structure is architecturally compatible with the main house, as the patio is painted a brown to match the colors found at the exterior of the primary dwelling, and provide dark tan shingles compatible with the roof of the primary dwelling. Detached accessory structures are not required to provide roof material that matches the roof material of the primary dwelling. The patio roof provides dark tan shingles that are in compliance with the design requirements of the above section. The patio structure is in compliance with the requirements of Section 17.60.010(F) for development standards for accessory structures. The accessory structure meets the maximum 15-foot height requirements, under 400 SF size requirements, and maximum 50% rear yard lot coverage requirements for accessory structures. The project is not in compliance with the minimum 5-foot side yard setback requirement, and the minimum 5-foot rear yard setback requirement. The subject property rear and southern property line are adjacent to internal streets. If the variance is approved with supportive findings by the Planning Commission, the project would be approved subject to the variance requirements of Chapter 17.76

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

A notice of public hearing to consider the Project was published in the Desert Sun, the newspaper of record, on January 25, 2026, and a public hearing notice was mailed to property owners within a radius of 300- feet of the subject property on January 25, 2026, pursuant to Section 17.74.010G of the Coachella Municipal Code. At the time of issuance of this staff report, staff had not received public comments on this application.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Staff has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act as “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303). The proposed project consists of the location of a small patio structure.

APPROVAL ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. 2026-02 denying Variance No. 25-05.
- 2) Continue this item and provide staff and the applicant with direction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis contained herein and the findings listed below, staff is recommending that the Planning Commission deny Variance No. 25-05 with the findings listed in Resolution No. PC2026-02.

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. PC2026-02
2. Vicinity Map
3. Site Photos
4. Riverside County Fire Department Comments
5. City Building Department Comments