



Staff Report

File #: 23-0286

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 04/05/2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Planning & Development Department

SUBJECT:

WAIVER FROM CORONA MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 15.60.080 REGARDING THE UNDERGROUNDING OF EXISTING OVERHEAD UTILITY WIRES LOCATED ADJACENT TO 1500 WEST CHASE DRIVE (APPLICANT: ARMSTRONG & BROOKS ENGINEERS)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to consider waiving the requirement of [Corona Municipal Code Section 15.60.080](#) to place underground the overhead utility lines adjacent to 1500 W. Chase Drive. This section requires overhead wires that transmit less than 34,000 volts of electrical energy to be placed underground when an addition is made to an existing building, which in this case is the construction of a new single-family dwelling. However, CMC Section 15.60.060 allows the City Council to grant a waiver from this provision if it finds that the application of this requirement would be unreasonable, impractical, and cause undue hardship to the applicant or the public.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council grant a waiver from [Section 15.60.080](#) of the Corona Municipal Code for the undergrounding of the overhead utility wires located adjacent to 1500 W. Chase Drive.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The property owner of 1500 W. Chase Drive plans to construct a new single-family residence and accessory dwelling unit on the 0.68-acre property. The property is located at the southeast corner of W. Chase Drive and Mangular Avenue.

Corona Municipal Code Section 15.60.080 requires existing overhead utility wires of less than 34,000 volts to be placed underground when any building or structure to which any utility facility provides any service is enlarged or an addition is made thereto is constructed. The overhead utilities run parallel to the property in a north- south direction along the western edge of the property. An existing power pole is located at the front of the property in the public right-of-way for Chase Drive.

Additionally another pole is located inside the southernly neighboring property. The overhead utilities within the western edge of the property include two-tier overhead wires that carry less than 34,000 volts.

The applicant submitted a request to the City on March 2, 2023, requesting that the City Council grant a waiver from the undergrounding of the wires located along the western edge of the property. The applicant has indicated that the overhead wires will continue to exist above ground beyond the boundary of the project site to the south and southeast and that the cost of doing this public improvement would be financially infeasible based on the scope of the project.

ANALYSIS:

[CMC Section 15.60.080](#) recognizes that above ground utility wires exist within the City and are considered nonconforming to the requirement of [CMC Section 15.60.030](#). Section 15.60.030 prohibits above ground poles, wires, and associated structures, irrespective of the use or proposed use of the structure of building it is intended to serve. However, [CMC Section 15.60.060](#) allows the City Council to grant a waiver to this requirement if the finding can be made that the undergrounding of the utility wires would be unreasonable, impractical, and cause undue hardship to the applicant or public.

Staff has determined that the finding exists for the City Council to grant the waiver for the following reasons:

- a) The utility pole within the southernly neighboring property will remain even if the overhead wires along the western edge of 1500 W. Chase are placed underground.
- b) The overhead wires will continue to remain above ground beyond the boundaries of the project site to the south and southeast.
- c) Approximately 215 feet of underground electrical conduit would need to be installed to relocate the overhead electrical lines between the two existing power poles, which is estimated at \$500 per linear foot resulting in an approximate cost of \$110,000. The property owner is constructing all other missing public improvements adjacent to the property but the cost of this additional public improvement would make the prospects of constructing a single-family residence financially infeasible.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The applicant has paid the Utility Underground Waiver Request fee of \$1,628.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies to only projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in questions may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. There is no possibility that this action on granting a waiver to the requirement within the Corona Municipal Code will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

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PREPARED BY: CASSIDY OREWYLER, ASSOCIATE ENGINEER

REVIEWED BY: JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Location Map
2. Exhibit 2 - Waiver Request