



Staff Report

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**File #:** 24-0445

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**REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION**

**DATE:** 06/05/2024

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**FROM:** Planning and Development Department

**SUBJECT:**

WAIVER FROM CORONA MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 15.60.080 ON THE UNDERGROUNDING OF EXISTING OVERHEAD UTILITY WIRES LOCATED ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF VICENTIA AVENUE AND RAILROAD STREET (APN 117-031-040) (APPLICANT: AMER MAKKAWI)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This staff report asks the City Council to consider a waiver from Corona Municipal Code [Section 15.60.080](#) on the requirement to underground overhead utility wires located along Railroad Street and Vicentia Avenue adjacent to APN 117-031-040 (project site). Overhead wires that transmit less than 34,000 volts are to be placed underground when an addition is made to an existing building, or a new building is being proposed. In this case, the applicant is proposing to construct two new structures on the project site. 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 on Vicentia Avenue and Railroad Street adjacent to [APN 117-031-040](#).

**BACKGROUND & HISTORY:**

The project site is 0.49 acres and located at the southeast corner of Vicentia Avenue and Railroad Street. It is vacant, and the owner is proposing to do an urban lot split to subdivide the property into two parcels and construct two new single-family houses. The zoning of the project site is R-1-7.2, which permits single-family residential.

Existing overhead utilities parallel the property's frontage along Vicentia Avenue and Railroad Street. Three existing utility poles with overhead wires exist on Vicentia Avenue and one with overhead

wires on Railroad Street adjacent to the project site. The overhead wires extend beyond the boundary of the project site and connect to other power poles located on both streets. Corona Municipal Code [Section 15.60.080](#) requires existing overhead utility wires of less than 34,000 volts to be placed underground when any new building or structure, which any utility facility will provide service, is constructed.

The applicant submitted a request to the City on May 1, 2024, requesting that the City Council grant a waiver from undergrounding the overhead wires along the project site's frontage. The applicant has indicated that the overhead wires will continue to exist above ground beyond the boundary of the project site to the south along Vicentia Avenue and to the east and west along Railroad Street and that the existing appearance of the overhead wires along both streets would remain unchanged. Additionally, the cost of this public improvement would be financially infeasible based on the project's scope.

**ANALYSIS:**

Corona Municipal Code [Section 15.60.080](#) recognizes 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 or building intended to serve. However, [CMC Section 15.60.060](#) allows the City Council to grant a waiver to this requirement if the finding is that undergrounding 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 overhead wires will continue to remain above ground beyond the boundaries of the project site to the east and west of Railroad Street and the south on Vicentia Avenue.
- b) Approximately 330 feet of underground electrical conduit would need to be installed to relocate the overhead electrical lines between the existing power poles, which is an approximate cost of \$70,000. The property owner is constructing all other missing public improvements adjacent to the property on Vicentia Avenue, but the cost of this additional public improvement would make the prospects of constructing the single-family houses 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 question 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 from Corona Municipal Code Section 15.60.080, to place overhead utility lines underground, will have a

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significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

**PREPARED BY:** CASSIDY JONES, ASSOCIATE ENGINEER

**REVIEWED BY:** JOANNE COLETTA, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

**Attachments:**

1. Exhibit 1 - Location Map
2. Exhibit 2 - Photograph of Project Site
3. Exhibit 3 - Letter from the applicant requesting a waiver from CMC Section 15.60.080