



TITLE

Enclave at Canyon Estates Lot 20 Setback Variance

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a Variance to reduce the second story front yard setback from 35 feet to 29 feet for Lot 20 of the Enclave at Canyon Estates Subdivision at 226 Canyon Estates Circle in the Rural Residential Hillside (RRH) zoning district, APN 059-441-017 (File No. PL-26-3)

CONTACT

William He, AICP, Senior Planner

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Table 1

General Plan Designation	Residential Estate (RE)
Zoning District	Rural Residential Hillside (RRH)
Site Size	Approx. 0.56 acres
Present Use	Vacant Residential Site
Surrounding Zoning and Uses	North: RRH / Enclave at Canyon Estates Lot South: RRH / Enclave at Canyon Estates Lot East: Unincorporated Napa County parcel West: RRH / Enclave at Canyon Estates Lot
Access	Canyon Estates Circle

Background

The City Council approved the Enclave at Canyon Estates subdivision in February 2016, establishing 35 custom home lots within the Rural Residential Hillside (RRH) zoning district. The subdivision also included Design Guidelines specifically for Canyon Estates (CEDG).

Since that time, two lots were sold to individuals for custom homes. In 2024, Richmond American Homes (RAH) purchased the remaining 33 lots. RAH has since submitted a Design Permit to develop these lots using nine distinct floor plans ranging from 3,481 to 4,714 square feet. Currently, RAH is constructing one model home, and other floor plans are in the building permit plan check process.

Variance Request

Among the 33 lots owned by RAH, Lot 20 poses a significant challenge. Lot 20, measuring 0.56 acres, is located on one of the highest elevation parcels in the project. RAH is proposing the "Danika" model on this lot. The Danika model is a two-story, 3,671-sq-ft home with a first-floor footprint of 59 ft by 54 ft.

The RRH zoning standards and CEDG require:

- 30 ft minimum first-floor front setback
- 35 ft minimum second-floor front setback (5 ft farther back than the first floor)

However, the Danika design cantilevers the second floor by one foot, making the second floor closer to the street than the first floor - opposite of what the design guidelines envision. As a result:

- The first floor meets the 30 ft front yard setback.
- The second floor, due to the cantilever, is placed 6 feet into the required 35 ft front yard setback.

Constraints Limiting Alternative Placement

To comply with the required 35-ft second-floor setback, the home would need to shift six feet to the rear. That option is constrained by:

- Easements: Two private drainage culverts and associated easements are located behind the building pad.
- Topography: The rear portion of the lot rises sharply, with a 46 ft elevation change from the house pad (174 ft) to the eastern property line (220 ft).
- Usable Area: These constraints limit the flat, developable portion of the lot to approximately one-third of the site.

If the house were shifted away from the street to meet the front yard zoning standard, the usable backyard would shrink to approximately 4 feet. Reducing the 35-foot front yard setback to 29 feet would increase the usable rear yard to approximately 10 feet.

All side and rear yard setbacks remain compliant. This Variance does not constitute a special privilege but provides reasonable relief based on unique lot conditions and allows Lot 20 to have a functional outdoor backyard space comparable to neighboring properties. The applicant's detailed justification letter is provided as Attachment 6.

Public Outreach

City outreach occurred between January 20, 2026, and February 25, 2026. No comments were received during this period. Specific events are outlined below.

COUNCIL PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Economic Development and Vitality: "Attract and expand diverse business and employment opportunities."

FISCAL IMPACT

The Canyon Estates Lot 20 Variance application required a developer deposit for review and processing, so there is no fiscal impact for staff time.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

15305 - The Project is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") under the Class 5 exemption of alteration in land use limitations of Section 15305 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations and said exemption is not negated by any exception under Section 15300.2 of said Regulations.

COMMUNICATION

Level 5: Development Project

Jan. 20, 2026 – Project posted on website

Feb. 13, 2026 – Public Hearing Notice mailed to property owners and residents within 500 feet

Feb. 13, 2026 – GovDelivery Notice of Public Hearing Bulletin sent to email subscribers list (4,340 + people)

Feb. 13, 2026 – Public Notice of Planning Commission Meeting published in newspaper.

Feb. 19, 2026 – Staff report published and GovDelivery Notice of public review workshop sent to e-mail subscribers list (4,340 +/-)

Feb. 25, 2026 – GovDelivery Notice Reminder of Planning Commission meeting sent to email subscribers list (4,340 +/-)

Feb. 26, 2026 – Planning Commission Meeting

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [226 Canyon Estates Variance - Resolution](#)
2. [Exhibit A - 226 Canyon Estates Variance Plot Plan](#)
3. [Exhibit B - 226 Canyon Estates Variance Confirmation of Conditions of Approval](#)
4. [226 Canyon Estates - Location Map](#)
5. [226 Canyon Estates - Floor Plans](#)
6. [226 Canyon Estates Variance - Letter of Justification](#)