

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

SUBMITTED TO: Planning Commission
SUBMITTED BY: Jennifer Villasenor, Director of Community Development
PREPARED BY: Jason Kelley, Senior Planner

SUBJECT:

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 25-003 (REAPPLICATION PROCESS FOR GROUP HOMES)

REQUEST:

To amend Section 230.28 (Group Homes) of the Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance to prohibit a group home from reapplying for permits for five years from the date of the denial or revocation of a permit.

LOCATION:

Citywide

APPLICANT:

City of Huntington Beach

**PROPERTY
OWNER:**

Various

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission take the following actions:

- A) Find the project exempt from additional environmental review pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 4501, Class 20, which supplements the California Environmental Quality Act because the request is a minor amendment to the zoning ordinance that does not change the development standards intensity or density.
- B) Recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) No. 25-003 to the City Council with suggested findings (Attachment No. 1).

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

- A) Recommend denial of Zoning Text Amendment No. 25-003 with findings for denial;
or
- B) Continue Zoning Text Amendment No. 25-003 and direct staff accordingly. |

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Background:

On July 20, 2020, the City Council adopted the Group Homes Ordinance amending the Huntington Beach Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance (HBZSO) and the Municipal Code (HBMC) to establish regulations for group homes, sober living homes and residential care facilities. Since the adoption of the Ordinance, there have been sober living facilities that are either operating without the required permits or are in violation of the conditions of approval outlined in their permit. To ensure greater accountability among sober living facilities, the City Council directed staff (Attachment No. 6) to draft an amendment to the HBZSO and the HBMC to prevent group homes from applying or reapplying for a permit for five years once they have been found to be operating unlawfully.

ZTA No. 25-003 represents a request to amend Section 230.28 of the HBZSO to prohibit a group home from reapplying for permits for five years from the date of the denial or revocation of a permit.

A draft City Council ordinance (Attachment No. 2) along with a legislative draft (Attachment No. 4) of the amendment are provided. In the legislative draft, **bold and underlined** indicates new text; ~~strikeout~~ indicates removal of text.

There is an accompanying amendment to Section 5.110 of the HBMC that will be presented to City Council only together with the Planning Commission's recommendation on ZTA No. 25-003. The draft City Council ordinance (Attachment No. 3) and legislative draft (Attachment No. 5) of the HBMC amendment are provided for reference only and not for Planning Commission review or recommendation.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

General Plan Conformance:

The proposed zoning text amendment is consistent with the policies of the City's General Plan including:

Land Use Element:

Policy LU-2(D): Maintain and protect residential neighborhoods by avoiding encroachment of incompatible land uses.

Housing Element:

Policy H-1.1: Preserve the character, scale, and quality of established residential neighborhoods.

The proposed ZTA introduces language to Section 230.28 to strengthen enforcement against unlawful group homes to protect residential neighborhoods and the residents of these facilities. Specifically, the amendment establishes a five-year prohibition on

applying or reapplying for a Special Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit for any group home found to be operating in violation of applicable laws or zoning regulations. Additionally, the amendment defines all categories of group home operators — including owners, operators, individuals, corporations, and landowners — to prevent circumvention of the five-year restriction through changes in ownership or management structure.

Zoning Compliance:

The ZTA amends the HBZSO by introducing regulations for group homes whose permits have been denied or revoked in Section 230.28 (C) Effect of Denial or Revocation of Special Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit. It provides additional reinforcement to hold owners and operators accountable with their uses in residential neighborhoods and ensure a high quality of life for the community as well as residents of these facilities. |

Environmental Status:

ZTA No. 25-003 is categorically exempt pursuant to City Council Resolution No. 4501, Class 20, which supplements the California Environmental Quality Act because the request is a minor amendment to the zoning ordinance that does not change the development standards intensity or density. |

Coastal Status:

The proposed amendment will be forwarded to the California Coastal Commission as a minor Local Coastal Program Amendment for certification. |

Other Departments Concerns and Requirements:

The proposed amendments to the City's existing ordinance were prepared with input from the City Attorney's Office. |

Public Notification:

Legal notice was published in the Huntington Beach Wave on Thursday, July 31, 2025, and notices were sent to individuals/organizations requesting notification (Planning Division's Notification Matrix). In lieu of sending notices to all property owners within the City, a minimum 1/8 page advertisement was published. As of August 19, 2025, no communication regarding this request has been received. |

SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment No. 25-003 with suggested findings and forward to the City Council based on the following:

- It addresses a community need to prevent group homes from applying or reapplying for a group home permit for five years once they have been found to be operating unlawfully; and
- Consistent with General Plan Policies. |

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Suggested Findings of Approval — ZTA No. 25-003
2. Draft Ordinance Group Homes — ZTA No. 25-003

3. ~~Draft Ordinance Chapter 5.110 — Group Homes (Reference Only)~~
4. ~~Section 230.28 — Group Homes Legislative Draft~~
5. ~~Chapter 5.110 — Group Homes Legislative Draft (Reference Only)~~
6. ~~City Council H-Item dated May 6, 2025~~
7. ~~PowerPoint Presentation~~