

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Ursula Luna Reynosa, Director of Community Development
BY: Hayden Beckman, Senior Planner

SUBJECT:

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT NO. 22-004 (BECSP MEDICAL SERVICES USE RESTRICTION)

REQUEST:

To amend the Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan to allow Medical Services on the ground floor as an allowed use within the Neighborhood Center Segment.

LOCATION:

Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) Planning Area

APPLICANT:

Brian Mills, ROAM Commercial Realty, 30941 Augusta Drive, Laguna Nigel, CA 92677

**PROPERTY
OWNER:**

Various

**BUSINESS
OWNER:**

Drs. Melissa Ven Dange and Jeremy Chau,

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

1. Are the proposed amendments consistent with the General Plan?
2. Does the project satisfy all the findings required for approval of a Zoning Text Amendment?
3. Has the appropriate level of environmental analysis been determined?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission take the following actions:

A) Find that Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) No. 22-004 is within the scope of the BECSP Program Environmental Impact Report No. 08-008 certified by the Planning Commission on December 8, 2009. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163, no subsequent EIR or supplement to the EIR need be prepared for this ZTA and no further environmental review or documentation is required (Attachment No. 1).

B) Recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment No. 22-004 with findings (Attachment No. 1) by approving draft City Council Resolution No. 2022- ---- and forward to the City Council for consideration.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

A) Do not recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment No. 22-004 to the City Council; or

B) Continue Zoning Text Amendment No. 22-004 and direct staff accordingly.

PROJECT PROPOSAL:

Currently, all Medical Services, including medical and dental offices, which are proposed within the Neighborhood Center segment of the BECSP must be located above the ground floor. In most other commercial districts within the city, the same uses are permitted on the ground floor. This proposed amendment would allow Medical Services as an allowed use on the ground floor of properties located within the Neighborhood Center segment of the BECSP

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS:

General Plan Conformance:

The proposed ZTA is consistent with general land uses, programs, goals, and policies of the General Plan as follows:

Land Use Element:

Goal LU-11 – Commercial land uses provide goods and services to meet regional and local needs.

Policy LU-11(A) – Encourage a variety of commercial uses that cater to local and regional demand to create an environment that meets resident needs and increases the capture of sales tax revenues.

Policy LU-11(B) – Encourage new businesses to locate on existing vacant or underutilized commercial properties where these properties have good locations and accessibility.

Goal LU-13 – The city provides opportunities for new businesses and employees to ensure a high quality of life and thriving industry.

Policy LU-13(A) - Encourage expansion of the range of goods and services provided to accommodate the needs of all residents and the market area.

The ZTA will allow essential medical services to be accessible for residents in the core areas of the BECSP planning area which could encourage the establishment of new businesses and job creation within existing vacant or underutilized commercial properties with good locations and accessibility. The expansion of services could also increase sales tax revenues while meeting local and market area needs. Its scope will not affect General Plan land uses or programs.

Zoning Compliance:

Zoning Text Amendment

ZTA No. 22-004 includes the following amendments to Book II – Development Code, Sections 2.1.5 (Neighborhood Center, Building Use Regulations) to implement the applicant's request (Attachment No. 3):

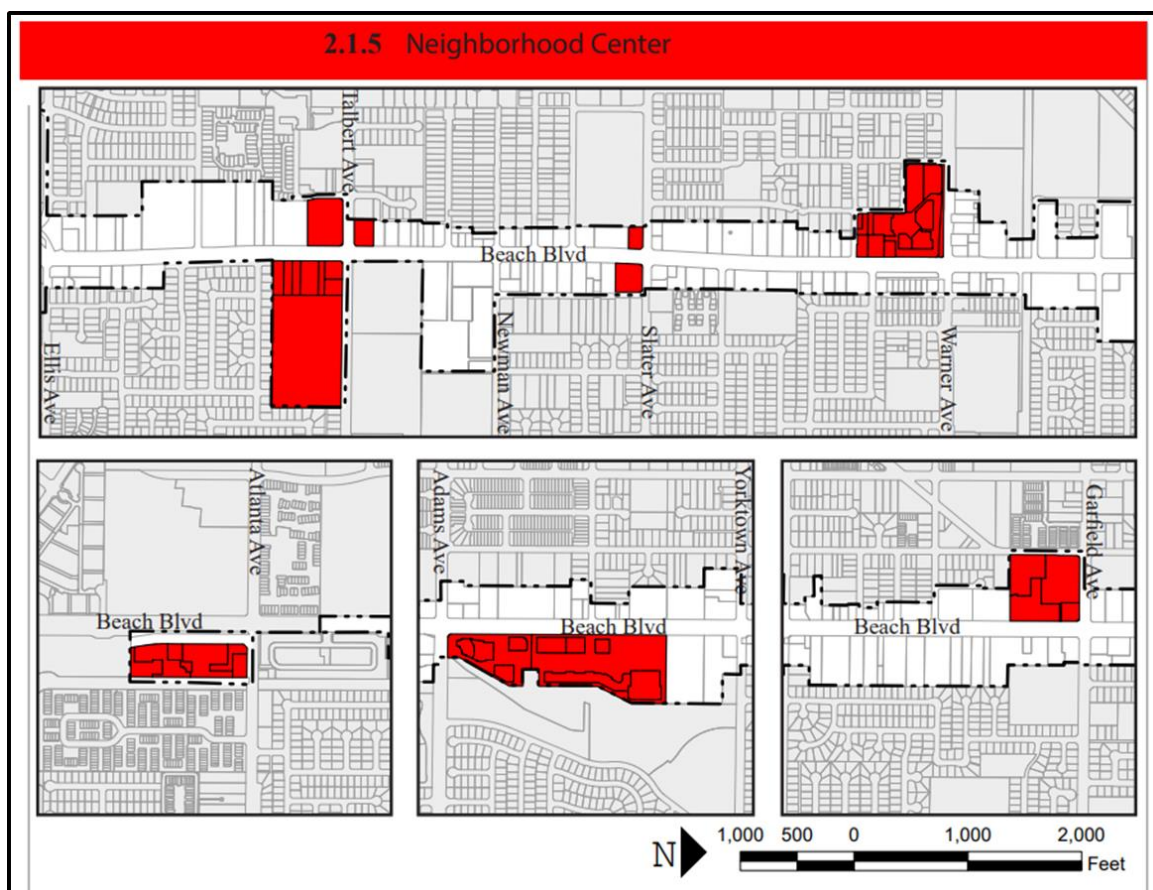
1. Section 2.1.5 (Neighborhood Center), Section 2.2.1 (Use Types), Subsection 3)(b) (Medical Services) – Eliminate Special Conditions “C2” from Medical Services to allow Medical Services on the ground floor of all streets of the Neighborhood Center segment of the BECSP.

The BECSP currently permits Medical Services within the Neighborhood Center Segment with special condition “C2” (upper floor only). Special Condition “C2” limits Medical Service to above the ground floor. Although there exist multiple commercial centers within this segment that offer upper-level commercial spaces, this requirement creates a constraint to otherwise accessible and available ground floor commercial space. Specifically, the applicant desires to establish a dental office located within Ocean Plaza, located at the southwest corner of Beach Boulevard at Warner Avenue, which is one of the highest travelled and visible intersections of the City. Medical and dental offices are desirable uses, serving a wide variety of community members, including the elderly, and young children, and those with special needs. Thus, Special Condition C2 unnecessarily limits Medical Services uses from Neighborhood Center tenancies. The request would provide commercial property owners within the Neighborhood Center Segment more flexibility and options in finding businesses to occupy ground floor commercial spaces.

While the original intent of this segment of the specific plan was to feature ground-level retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses in order to create a more active pedestrian experience, traditional retail and services have diminished over the years due to the rise of e-commerce. Demand for traditional medical services, however, remains the same and is vital for a diverse and aging community. These uses are commonly found on the ground floor of most commercial properties and contribute to an active pedestrian experience. Medical offices operate similarly to retail uses in that they serve the same customers and operate within similar hours as most retail uses.

The proposed ZTA will expand allowable uses within the BECSP that have been excluded since the specific plan was adopted. Over the years, the City has received many inquiries and requests for medical uses in the Neighborhood Center segment. The proposed ZTA will enable property owners to fill vacant tenant spaces with an appropriate use for this segment. Lastly, the ZTA does not propose any new land uses or revise development standards. It addresses a community need for health and wellness by expanding accessibility to Medical Services to a core area of the city and these changes could facilitate the establishment of new businesses, result in new job creation, and increase sales tax revenue. Further, medical services uses, including medical and dental offices, operate in a similar manner as retail and other commercial uses, utilizing similar hours of operation. The request would impact a small number of existing properties within the Beach Edinger Corridor Specific Plan (Exhibit 1), and would result in the activation of street level commercial spaces, furthering the goals of the Specific Plan. No significant impacts to retail tenant space availability are anticipated.

Exhibit 1 – Properties within Neighborhood Center Segment



In March 2022, the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended a similar request to allow Medical Service uses on the ground floor as an allowed use in the Town-Center – Core Segment of the BECSP. The Commission recommended approval to the City Council, who subsequently adopted the amendment in May 2022.

Urban Design Guidelines Conformance:

Not applicable.

Environmental Status:

ZTA No. 21-007 is within the scope of the BECSP Program Environmental Impact Report No. 08-008 certified by the Planning Commission on December 8, 2009. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15163, no subsequent EIR or supplement to the EIR need be prepared for this ZTA and no further environmental review or documentation is required.

Coastal Status:

Not applicable.

Design Review Board:

Not applicable.

Other Departments Concerns and Requirements:

Not applicable.

Public Notification:

Legal notice was published in the Huntington Beach Wave on December 1, 2022 and notices were sent to individuals and organizations requesting notification (Planning Division's Notification Matrix). In lieu of sending notices to all property owners for all properties within the BECSP and within a 500 foot radius, a minimum 1/8 page advertisement was published instead. As of December 5, 2022 no communications regarding the request have been received.

Application Processing Dates:

DATE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION:
Not applicable

MANDATORY PROCESSING DATE(S):
Legislative Action – Not applicable

SUMMARY:

Staff is recommending approval of ZTA No. 22-004 based on the following reasons:

1. It is consistent with general land uses, programs, goals, and policies of the General Plan.
2. It addresses a community need for health and wellness by expanding accessibility to Medical Services to a core area of the city. These changes could facilitate the establishment of new businesses, result in new job creation, and increase sales tax revenue.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Suggested Findings of Approval – ZTA No. 22-004
2. Draft City Council Resolution
3. ZTA No. 22-004 Legislative Draft and Revised BECSP Sections 2.1.5
4. Narrative received and dated August 22, 2022