

Zone Text Amendment Narrative

Project Background:

Dr. Jeremy Chau and Dr. Melissa Ven Dange are both newly graduated orthodontists who have leased a commercial suite at 17041 Beach Blvd in Huntington Beach. 17041 Beach Blvd is subject to zoning regulations of the Neighborhood Center Segment of SP14. In its current form, the Neighborhood Center Segment prohibits dental spaces on the ground floor. In response, Dr. Chau and Ven Dange are requesting to amend the specific plan to allow their orthodontic practice on the ground floor.

Neighborhood Center Segment of SP14:

A Specific Plan is a tool for the systematic implementation of the General Plan but is not a component of a General Plan. It provides specific land use direction and development regulations for an area within the City, consistent with the General Plan and other City regulations. Often, Specific Plans are used to establish a link between implementing policies of the General Plan and individual development proposals in a defined area. Specific Plans are adopted and amended in the same manner as a General Plan, except that a Specific Plan may be adopted by resolution or by ordinance and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the City Council. The City of Huntington Beach approved the Neighborhood Center Segment in efforts to enhance overall economic development, physical beauty and functionality.

The Neighborhood Center Segment was created with the following objectives in mind:

1. Position the city such that it would remain competitive and attractive to businesses;
2. Re-position disinvested corridor properties to capture value in the contemporary marketplace;
3. Realign development policies and planned public investments to capitalize on the current primary market trends;
4. Provide a reliable environment for investors that spell out municipal requirements in sufficient detail and that provides enhanced reliability and clarity as to character of future development; and
5. Capitalize on residents with discretionary spending potential to support restaurants, quick foods, electronics, fashion and accessories and services, thereby spinning off additional retail spending.

The BECSP designates eight Corridor Centers and Segments. Land uses and development standards specific to the Town Center – Core segment are listed in Section 2.1.3 of BECSP.

Ocean Plaza is a lifestyle center that offers a great variety of restaurants, goods and services. The center is conveniently located at the intersection of Beach Boulevard and Warner. A copy of the property site plan is provided as Exhibit A.

Amendment Requests:

The Neighborhood Center Segment of SP14 currently permits Medical Services within the Town Center – Core with Special Conditions C2 (upper floor only). Special Conditions C2 limit Medical Service to the second floor. Ocean Plaza contains one general office building constructed for general office use without the proper infrastructure or parking to support a dental use. The parking and accessibility is also difficult for parents with young and special needs children. The remainder of Ocean Plaza is comprised of single-story commercial retail buildings. Thus, Special Conditions C2 have precluded Medical Services within the Town Center – Core as a whole. Since its inception, the BECSP has led to numerous developments and improvements seen throughout the Beach Boulevard and Edinger Avenue corridors including the Luce Apartment Project, The Broadway by Windsor Mixed Use Project, and Beach Promenade Shopping Center to name a few. Despite the revitalization that the corridors have experienced since the enactment of the BECSP, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown adverse effects on local retail market trends. Demand for traditional retail uses such as gift and flower shops, designer merchandise sales, and dry-cleaning service, has declined given the shift to online purchases and the work from home trend, while with the aging population, demand for health and medical services continues to gain traction. The current space in questions has been vacant for several years and the large dry-cleaning space adjacent, Zips, is now vacant as well. These are two of the most prominent spaces in Huntington Beach, but due to changing market conditions and an overabundance of restaurant and retailers these spaces have been very difficult to fill. Two prominent spaces both empty along Beach Blvd is neither attractive or productive for the community.

Medical services are crucial throughout the community and being able to provide them in the “core” of Huntington Beach is pivotal for the health and wellness of all citizens in the area. Amendment of the Specific Plan’s development standards in Section 2.1.3 would remove the current requirement for medical service patrons to walk upstairs to access their services, eliminating what might be viewed as an obstacle for them.

The Tenant is requesting to strike Special Conditions C2 from Medical Services as illustrated below. This change is needed to permit ground level Medical Services at Ocean Plaza. A full copy of the proposed change is provided as Exhibit B.

Amendment to Section 2.2.1, 3) Office, b) Medical Services (page 29)

Section 2.2.1 of BECSP defines Medical Services as “Medical workplace uses and establishments with employees with medical licenses such as those listed. Medical & dental Offices or facilities (permitted), Indoor veterinary clinics (conditionally permitted), Acupuncture, physical therapy, chiropractor (permitted), Psychiatric (permitted), Mortuary services (permitted). Per the definition stated above, all Medical Services are permitted by right. Dr. Chau and Ven Dange have completed extensive research showing this area of Huntington Beach as having a need for orthodontic and pediatric dental services. Their unique vision will have a contemporary retail store front and will drive parents from around the area who will stay, shop and eat while visiting their practice. The Tenant is requesting to strike the “upper floors” text from the Neighborhood Center Segment of SP14.

Suggested Finding for Approval:

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment to amend the Neighborhood Center Segment of SP14 to permit medical services on the ground level within the Town Center – Core segment is consistent with general land uses, programs, goals and policies of the General Plan as follows:

Goal LU-11. Commercial land uses provide goods and services to meet the 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 proposed Specific Plan Amendment will allow much needed medical services within Ocean Plaza, one of the City's most conveniently located and easily accessible shopping center. This could encourage the establishment of new businesses, job creation, and increase sales tax revenues. Its scope will not affect General Plan land uses or programs. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment is compatible with the uses authorized in, and the standards prescribed for, the zoning district for which it is proposed because it does not propose any new land uses or revise development standards. The space currently in question has been vacant for over 3 years providing no benefit to the city and community. The extended vacancy is showing that there is not a need for additional restaurants or retailers. Additionally, a demographic study has found that Huntington Beach as a whole is in need of additional dental services and specifically of those related to orthodontics and pediatric dentists.