



March 13, 2023

Mr. Jay Paul
City of Escondido
201 North Broadway
Escondido, California 92025

Re: 240 S. Hickory Street Residential Project – Request for Authorization to Proceed with a General Plan and Zone Amendment Application

Dear Mr. Paul,

It has become clear over the years that the rising housing costs and lack of affordable housing options have led to a rise in homelessness in the region, including within the City of Escondido. The conversion of existing buildings to housing allows for the creation of new housing through adaptive reuse of existing buildings, thereby substantially maintaining the existing scale and character of established neighborhoods. This in turn, allows for lower cost rent for the new units, which provides a much-needed housing type for those seeking housing at the lower end of the cost spectrum.

Therefore, Escondido Investments LLC (applicant) is requesting the City of Escondido (City) process a General Plan Amendment (GPA) and Zone Amendment (AZ) to allow the conversion of an existing medical office building located at 240 S. Hickory Street in Escondido (APN: 229-492-14-00) to a 21-unit, one- and two-bedroom multi-family residential development in accordance with Article 19, Planned Development (P-D) Zone, of the Escondido Municipal Code (EMC).

The project site is approximately 0.69 acres in size and contains one, three-story structure historically used for medical offices. The existing building contains a total of approximately 16,885 square feet (sf) of gross building area with 21 office units. The site is surrounded by single-family residences and low-rise medical offices to the north, single-family residences to the east, condominiums and single-family residences to the south, and multi-family residences (Summit Apartments) to the west.

The current land use designation for the project site is Office, which accommodates a variety of activities in an office environment and is intended to prevent the proliferation of individual isolated offices. The project site has a land use designation of General Office (2.0 FAR), as defined in the City's General Plan. The current zoning designation for the project site is Hospital Professional (H-P), which is considered a commercial zoning designation for interim development of medical or office use. Surrounding zoning and land use designations include H-P and Office to the north, Light-Multiple Residential (R-2-12) and Office to the east, R-2-12 and Urban II (U2) to the south, and Residential Planned Development (PD-R-12) and U2 to the west.



By processing a Planned Development, the project would convert the underutilized medical office building to a 21-unit multi-family residential building, which results in a density of approximately 30 units per acre. The proposed one- and two-bedroom units would range in size from 439 sf to 832 sf. The site would operate as a market-rate rental property offering a lower cost and stable long-term living situation (six-months or longer). This would allow for a greater variety of housing availability for the community. The proposed project will not offer social or transitional support services. However, the proposed physical improvements will result in an enhanced environment for tenants and have a positive influence on the surrounding community.

The Project would include interior and exterior site improvements, including, but not limited to, the delineation of living and bedroom space in each unit, installation of kitchens and bathrooms in each unit, shared laundry facility, and tenant storage space, creation of outdoor common areas, and upgrades to the parking lot and outdoor landscaping. Open space and common areas are also proposed to enhance the living experience of tenants. The project would include approximately 2,800 sf of common area.

There are currently a total of 61 parking spaces on site. According to EMC Article 39 Off-Street Parking, 1.5 spaces are required for 1-bedroom units, while 2 spaces are required for 2-bedroom units. In addition, 1 parking space per 4 units is required for guest parking. Therefore, the proposed 21-unit residential project would require 38 parking spaces.

We appreciate the opportunity to present this request for authorization to proceed with the application process.

Sincerely,


Sally Schiffman
Project Manager