

GPA24-0001/CZ24-0002

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL

JUNE 25, 2025

Project Request

Project Request: Statewide Services (Applicant) applying for General Plan Amendment (GPA) 24-0001 / Change of Zone (CZ) 24-0002 to facilitate the conversion of a former church into a medical building for consistency with the adjacent medical office complex.

The GPA would amend the General Plan land use designation from Small Town Neighborhood (STN) to Neighborhood Center (NC) and the CZ would change the zoning designation from Planned Residential (PR) to Office Professional (OP). Neither STN or PR allow medical or professional offices, however, NC and OP do allow these uses.

Vicinity Map

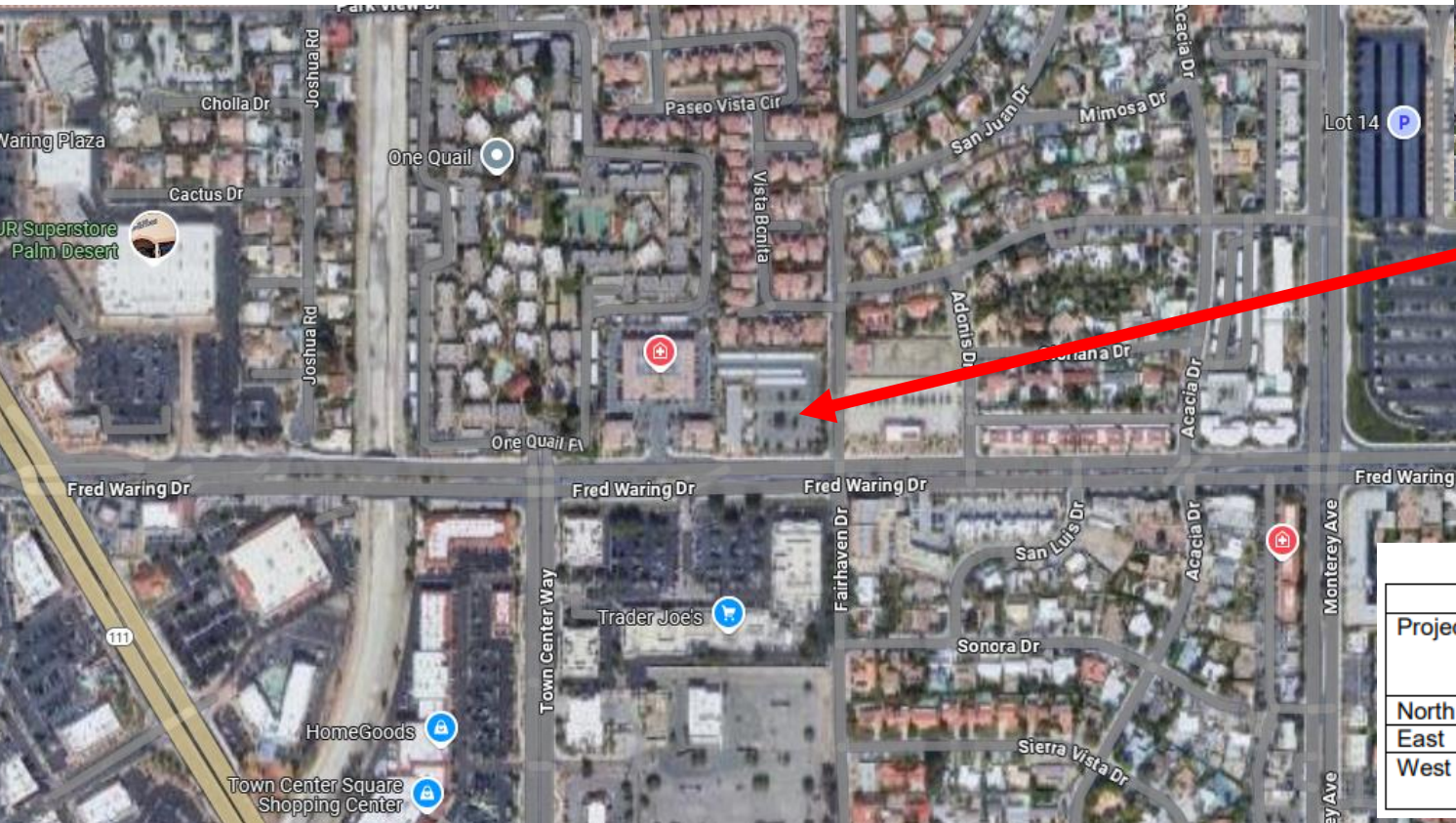


Table 1 – Adjacent Land Use and Designations

	Existing Uses	General Plan	Zoning
Project Site	Vacant (former Church)	Small Town Neighborhood (Existing), Neighborhood Center (Proposed)	Planned Residential (PR)-7 (Existing), Office Professional (Proposed)
North	Existing Residential	Small Town Neighborhood	PR-7
East	Existing Residential	Small Town Neighborhood	R-2
West	Existing Medical Offices	Town Center Neighborhood (TC)	Office Professional



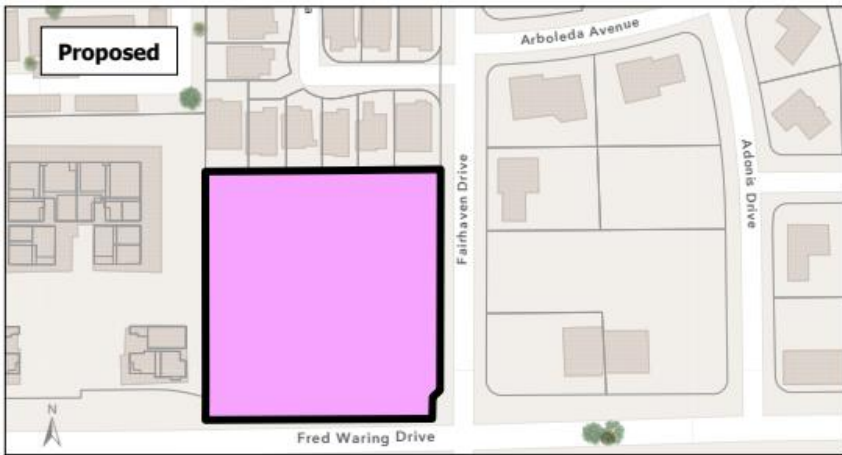


 *Statewide*
SERVICES INC.


DESIGN



Project Request



Proposed Zone Change for APN: 640-040-016

From Planned Residential 7 Units per acre to Office Professional

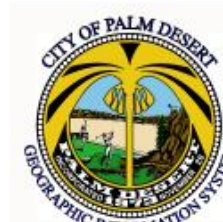
P.R. - Planned Residential
 O.P. - Office Professional



Proposed General Plan Land Use Change for APN: 640-040-016

From Small Town Neighborhood to Neighborhood Center

Small Town Neighborhood
 Neighborhood Center



Background

The 2.21-acre Project Site has a vacant church building that is approximated to have been built in 1968 and has not changed uses since original construction and operation.

On January 13, 2000, the Palm Desert City Council approved the following for the property directly north:

- General Plan Amendment and Change of Zone to add a Senior Overlay
- Precise Plan to construct a 250-unit retirement community

On January 11 ,2001, the Council approved the following for the property directly west:

- Change of Zone from Planned Residential – 7 to Office Professional
- General Plan Amendment from Medium Density Residential to Office Professional
- Construction of a 64,521 square foot, two-story office complex, including shared access to the Project Site

General Plan Amendment

The change in land use would provide consistency and cohesion with the adjacent medical office complex. The current General Plan land use designation is intended *“To provide moderate intensity neighborhood development that features a variety of housing choices and mixed uses, while preserving or enhancing the existing inventory of 1950’s Desert homes.”* This definition and the accompanying allowed land uses offer limited options and are inconsistent with how the Project Site has been used since City incorporation, as a non-residential use. The change to a Neighborhood Center land use designation, is intended *“To provide a concentration of commercial businesses and civic amenities within walking and biking distances of neighborhoods.”* This change in land use would not remove the ability to construct housing.

Change of Zone

The proposed CZ from PR to OP facilitates the use of the building for medical purposes. PR is mostly focused on facilitating residential developments meanwhile the OP designation “is intended for various levels of intensities for business, office, administrative, research and development, and/or professional land use”. Residential and religious land uses would still be permitted in the OP zone, with approval of a conditional use permit, and both zoning designations have the same maximum height of 40 feet.



	OP
Lot Dimensions	
Lot size, min	15,000 sf
Lot size, max	None
Lot width, min	70'
Lot depth, min	140'
Setbacks²	
Front yard, min	12' min, 15' avg
Side yard, min (interior/exterior)	0'/20' ^{3,4,7}
Street side yard, min	12' min, 15' avg
Rear yard, min	0'/20' ^{3,4}
Coverage	
Floor area ratio	0.75
Residential density range (mixed-use)	10.0
Building Measurements	
Height, max (single-use)	40', 3 stories
Height, max (mixed-use)	40
No. of stories (mixed-use)	3
Building size, max ⁸	-
Landscaping	
Required landscaping, min percentage of lot area	15%
Depth of landscaping in street setback area, min	10'

Analysis

There is a substantial public benefit to be derived from such amendment and the proposed amendment furthers the goals of the General Plan. The General Plan Amendment (GPA) is in the public's interest as it will maintain the character of Fred Waring Drive by creating consistency in General Plan land use designation on the north side of Fred Waring, west of Fairhaven Drive.

Public review

Public noticing was conducted for this public hearing, including the requirements of Section 65854 recently updated pursuant to Assembly Bill 2904. A public hearing notice was published a minimum of 20 days before the hearing date in The Desert Sun newspaper on June 6, 2025. Notices were mailed to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site. City staff has not received comments for this Council hearing.

On May 20, 2025, the Planning Commission adopted Planning Commission Resolution 2891, recommending the City Council approve the proposed General Plan Amendment and Change of Zone. Public comments were received for this meeting in support and opposition of the project

CEQA

The Planning Commission finds that the Project is exempt from CEQA per Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines as the Project is a Class 1 Exemption for “Existing Facilities” development. Class 1 applies to projects involving the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The proposed project change of land use would impact existing facilities and allow for their operation with additional uses. Additionally, the Project does not qualify for any of the exceptions pursuant to Article 19 of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 for “Exceptions.”

Recommendation

1. Hold a public hearing and introduce an Ordinance entitled, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FROM SMALL TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD TO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER FOR A 2.21 ACRE PROPERTY ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF FRED WARING DRIVE AND FAIRHAVEN AVENUE AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CEQA. (ASSESSOR’S PARCEL NUMBER 640-040-016).”
2. Adopt a Resolution entitled, “A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A CHANGE OF ZONE FROM PLANNED RESIDENTIAL TO OFFICE PROFESSIONAL FOR A 2.21 ACRE PROPERTY ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF FRED WARING DRIVE AND FAIRHAVEN AVENUE AND MAKING A FINDING OF EXEMPTION UNDER CEQA. (ASSESSOR’S PARCEL NUMBER 640-040-016).”