



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2025 ITEM NUMBER: PH-1

SUBJECT: CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT PCUP-25-0011 TO OPERATE A CAT LOUNGE WITH 15 ADOPTABLE CATS AND ANCILLARY RETAIL ("PURRS IN PARADISE") AT 2981 BRISTOL STREET, SUITE B3

**FROM: ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
DEPARTMENT/PLANNING DIVISION**

PRESENTATION BY: JEFFREY RIMANDO, ASSISTANT PLANNER

**FOR FURTHER JEFFREY RIMANDO
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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution to:

1. Find that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1) Existing Facilities; and
2. Approve Conditional Use Permit PCUP-25-0011 based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:

The applicant and authorized agent is Michelle Lioe representing the property owner, Bristol Square Partners, LLC.

PLANNING APPLICATION SUMMARY

Location:	2981 Bristol Street Unit B3	Application Number:	PCUP-25-0011
Request:	To operate a cat lounge with 15 adoptable cats and ancillary retail within an existing 1,222-square-foot commercial tenant space.		

SUBJECT PROPERTY:

SURROUNDING PROPERTY:

Zone:	C1 (Local Business District)	North:	C1 (Local Business District)
General Plan:	General Commercial	South:	C1 (Local Business District)
Lot Dimensions:	Irregularly Shaped	East (across Bristol St):	C1 (Local Business District)
Lot Area:	27,191 SF	West:	C1 (Local Business District)
Existing Development:	One single tenant commercial building and one multi-tenant commercial building with surface parking.		

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS COMPARISON

Development Standard		Required	Existing/Proposed
Building Height			
		2 Stories / 30 FT	1 Story / 17 FT (no change)
Setbacks:			
Front		20 FT	57 FT (no change)
Side (left/right)		15 FT / 0 FT	203 FT 8 IN left (no change) 15 FT right (no change)
Rear		0 FT	0 FT (no change)
Floor Area Ratio			
		0.30	0.27 (no change)
Parking			
		N/A*	28 spaces** (no change)
CEQA Review	Exempt per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities)		
Final Action	Planning Commission		
* Subject property is subject to Assembly Bill (AB) 2097, since it is located within one-half mile of two major transit stops. Pursuant to AB 2097, the City is barred from imposing a minimum parking requirement on the project.			
** Per ZA-03-49, a Minor Conditional Use Permit was approved by the Zoning Administrator to allow for a shared driveway access between 2937 Bristol Street and 2981 Bristol Street.			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purrs in Paradise is requesting Planning Commission approval to operate a cat lounge with up to 15 adoptable cats and ancillary retail serving prepackaged desserts and cat themed merchandise within a 1,222 square-foot commercial tenant space. Staff supports the request in that the proposed use is consistent with applicable goals, objectives, and policies of the General Plan, complies with applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance and respective findings, and is not proposed to operate in a way that would be incompatible with nearby uses. The use also provides a necessary community service. Therefore, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and approve the application based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

SETTING

The subject 27,191-square-foot property is located at 2981 Bristol Street and contains one detached 1,810-square-foot single-tenant commercial building and one detached 7,503-square-foot five-tenant commercial building developed in 1919. The subject property is located on the west side of Bristol Street, mid-block between Baker Street and Sobeca Way (see Figure 1). The proposed cat lounge would occupy the 1,222-square foot Suite B3, which previously was occupied by a retail use.

Figure 1 Project Location



The site is designated General Commercial by the City's Land Use Element of the General Plan and is zoned C1 (Local Business District). The General Commercial designation is intended for a wide range of commercial uses that serve both local and regional needs such as retail stores, theaters, restaurants and service establishments. The C1 zone allows for a wide range of goods and services in a variety of locations throughout the city.

The subject property is adjacent to C1-zoned properties from all sides. To the west and south is the multi-tenant retail center called "The Camp." Immediately across Bristol Street are variety of commercial uses (El Pollo Loco, Baker Bristol Pet Hospital and TK Burgers) and adjacent to the north is a Chevron gas station.

BACKGROUND

On September 2003, Minor Conditional Use Permit ZA-03-49 was approved by the Zoning Administrator to allow shared driveway access between 2937 Bristol Street (The Camp) and 2981 Bristol Street.

The subject tenant space (suite B3) was previously occupied by a retail store called "Bohemian Mama." The applicant requests to occupy the existing tenant space and propose interior improvements to convert the suite into a cat lounge and retail store.

REQUEST

Cat lounges are not a use listed within Table 13-30 under the Costa Mesa Municipal Code (CMMC) Section 13-30 (Land Use Matrix); however, pursuant to CMMC Section 13-30(d), the Code allows uses that are not listed to be approved through a Conditional Use Permit. As such, Conditional Use Permit PCUP-25-0011 is a request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate a cat lounge with up to 15 adoptable cats and ancillary retail in the C1 zone.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

To approve a CUP application under CMMC Section 13-29(g)(2)(a-c), the Planning Commission must find that the proposed use must meet specific criteria. The project must be compatible with surrounding developments and should not be detrimental to nearby properties. Additionally, granting the permit must not harm public health, safety, or welfare, nor permit a use, density, or intensity that is inconsistent with the general plan or applicable specific plans. Each application is project-specific and evaluated on its unique merits to ensure it aligns with the City's development standards and the zoning code.

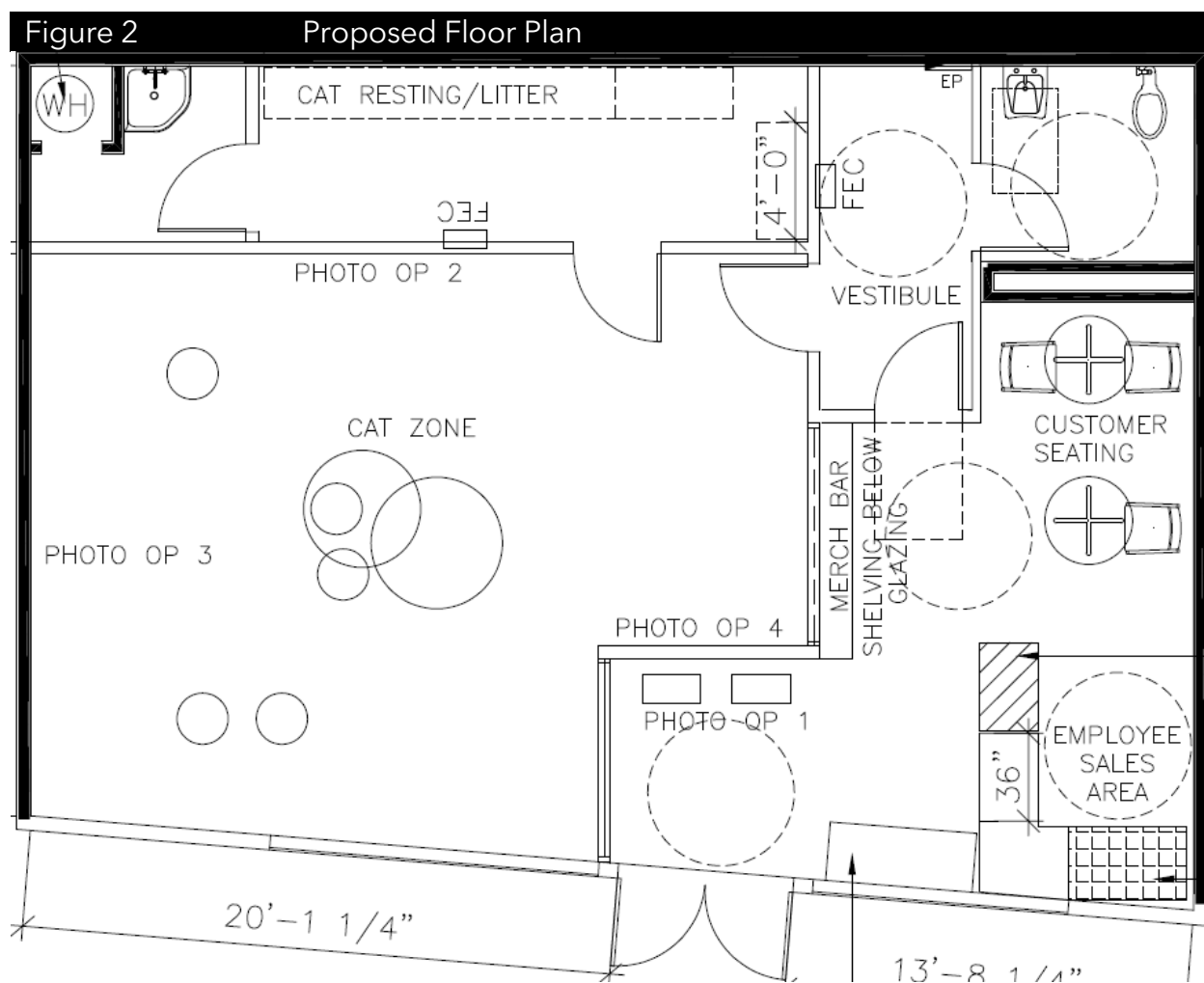
As necessary, proposed conditional uses may have conditions of approval applied to the development or their operations to ensure that the required findings can be met. An

assessment of the project's relationship to the findings and General Plan is provided later in this report.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Use and Operations

Purrs in Paradise proposes to utilize the space primarily as a cat lounge with an ancillary retail component. The business would operate daily from 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. As shown on the proposed floor plan (Figure 2), the cat lounge and retail area would be fully separated by a wall containing a large glass viewing window to allow visibility between spaces while maintaining enclosure. Access to the cat lounge would be provided through a designated double-door vestibule system designed to control entry and maintain separation between the retail and cat lounge areas.



The retail area would involve sale of cat themed merchandise and prepackaged desserts including ice cream treats, cookies and macarons. The cat lounge experience is reservation based with the option of walk-ins when capacity allows. The experience requires a time-limited (30-minute and 60-minute bookings) entry fee in which guests may spend time in the enclosed cat lounge with up to 15 adoptable cats designed for entertainment and therapeutic engagement. The lounge would host no more than 12 guests at a time.

Purrs in Paradise is partnering with a local animal rescue organization called “*Friends of Normie*” that will handle all aspects of the adoption process. If a guest were interested in adopting a cat in the lounge, the applicants would be pre-screened and approved in advance by the rescue partner and the adoption pickup would be coordinated at the business during business hours.

At closing, cats would remain onsite overnight in individual kennels located within the dedicated cat resting and litter room. Although no overnight staffing would be provided, the cat lounge and kennel area would be monitored by a security system with video, audio, motion and sound detection handled primarily by the business owners with assistance from staff and their designated rescue partner.

Parking

The subject property consists of 28 parking spaces to be shared amongst the six tenants on site. The proposed use would occupy Suite B3, which was previously occupied by a retail use. Based on the CMMC, four parking spaces are required for each 1,000 square feet of retail use and the use would require 5 parking spaces similar to the prior use. However, the project sites are subject to Assembly Bill (AB) 2097, and thus, the City is barred from imposing a minimum parking requirement on the project and no additional parking is required.

ANALYSIS

The proposed cat lounge involves the handling of animals which may cause potential noise and odor impacts from cats. However, cats, unlike dogs or other animals, are not typically a significant noise source. Their vocalizations are low volume and are anticipated to not generate noise levels that would exceed thresholds defined in the CMMC for commercial zones or disrupt adjacent businesses.

The business would utilize HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) air purifiers in both the cat lounge and litter room to eliminate potential odor generated from the cats. The cat litter boxes would also be maintained and cleaned throughout the day to ensure odor control.

The City's Police Department Animal Services Unit has reviewed the request and indicated that it has no concerns regarding the cat lounge service and overnight kenneling of the cats. However, the department requested each cat shall have their Rabies vaccination certificate readily available on site. Staff has included Condition No. 13 to address the department's request.

Staff supports the proposal as the use would be compatible with the nearby commercial uses because all activity would occur indoors. The business is adjacent to a restaurant use ("The Taco Stand") and a tattoo shop ("Outer Limits") in which the businesses generate noise comparable to a general service use such as a cat lounge and retail.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The following analysis further evaluates the proposed project's consistency with specific policies and objectives of the 2015-2035 General Plan.

1. **Policy LU-1.1:** "Provide for the development of a mix and balance of housing opportunities, commercial goods and services and employment opportunities in consideration of the need of the business and residential segments of the community."

Consistency: Approval of the proposed cat lounge use would provide a new unique business in Costa Mesa that would add to the variety of commercial services and goods in the neighborhood by providing a new customer experience to meet the needs of businesses and residents of the community.

2. **Policy LU-6.1:** "Encourage a mix of land uses that maintain and improve the City's long-term fiscal health."

Consistency: Costa Mesa has a diverse mix of land uses and, more specifically, uses of a retail and service oriented commercial nature. The proposed cat lounge would further diversify our land use mix in an area that is appropriate for such activity.

3. **Policy LU-6.7:** "Encourage new and retain existing businesses that provide local shopping and services."

Consistency: The proposed cat lounge be a new, unique business that provides entertainment opportunities for local businesses and residents. Furthermore, unique land uses like a cat lounge contribute to retaining existing and attracting new businesses since unique and creative businesses tend to locate near each other.

FINDINGS

Pursuant to Title 13, Section 13-29(g), Findings, of the CMMC, to approve the project, the Planning Commission must find that the evidence presented in the administrative record substantially meets the following applicable required Conditional Use Permit findings:

- a) The proposed development or use is substantially compatible with developments in the same general area and would not be materially detrimental to other properties within the area.

Consistent. The existing commercial tenant was previously occupied by a retail store and is proposed to be converted into a cat lounge with ancillary retail. The proposal would not generate adverse noise, odor, traffic or parking impacts that are unusual for commercially zoned properties. The business would provide a cat lounge experience in which cats are in general are low volume in comparison to other animals such as dogs. Odor will also be mitigated with the use of HEPA air purifiers between the cat lounge and litter room.

- b) Granting the conditional use permit will not be materially detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to property or improvements within the immediate neighborhood.

Consistent. Granting the approval of the cat lounge use would not be detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to property or improvements within the immediate neighborhood. All business activities would be conducted within the building (underroof), and, prior to operations, the proposed tenant improvements would be reviewed by the City's Building and Fire Departments to ensure safety, suitable occupancy and the necessary occupant ingress and egress.

- c) Granting the conditional use permit will not allow a use, density or intensity which is not in accordance with the General Plan designation and any applicable specific plan for the property.

Consistent. The General Plan designation is "General Commercial," which allows for a wide range of commercial uses that serve both local and regional needs. The proposed use is an appropriate retail and service use for the General Commercial land use designation. The proposal would not increase the size of the existing commercial tenant and would not increase traffic volume to the site beyond that is typical for a commercial use. Furthermore, the proposed project is consistent with General Plan Land Use Policies LU-1.11, LU-6.1 and LU-6.7 as indicated previously.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Permitting and/or Minor Alteration of Existing Facilities. The site is located in an urbanized area that is fully developed and does not contain any sensitive species or habitat including nearby water bodies. This project site contains existing buildings, and the application does not include any new construction that would adversely affect native plants or species. The project would result in limited interior improvements to adequately address operation and safety concerns. The project is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations. Furthermore, none of the exceptions that bar the application of a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. Specifically, the project would not result in a cumulative environmental impact; would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances; would not result in damage to scenic resources; is not located on a hazardous site or location; and would not impact any historic resources.

ALTERNATIVES

As an alternative to the recommended action, the Planning Commission may:

Approve the project with modifications. The Planning Commission may suggest specific changes that are necessary to alleviate concerns. If any of the additional requested changes are substantial, the item should be continued to a future meeting to allow a redesign or additional analysis. In the event of significant modifications to the proposal, staff will return with a revised Resolution incorporating new findings and/or conditions.

Deny the project. If the Planning Commission believes that there are insufficient facts to support the findings for approval, the Planning Commission must deny the application, provide facts in support of denial, and direct staff to incorporate the findings into a Resolution for denial. If the project is denied, the applicant could not submit substantially the same type of application for six months.

LEGAL REVIEW

The draft Resolution and this report has been approved as to form by the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to CMMC Section 13-29(d) three types of public notification have been completed no less than 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing:

1. **Mailed notice.** A public notice was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 500-foot radius of the project site October 29, 2025. The required notice radius is measured from the external boundaries of the property.
2. **On-site posting.** A public notice was posted on each street frontage of the project site on October 31, 2025.
3. **Newspaper publication.** A public notice was published once in the Daily Pilot newspaper on October 31, 2025.

As of the completion date of this report, no written public comments have been received. Any public comments received prior to the November 10, 2025, Planning Commission meeting will be provided separately.

CONCLUSION

Approval of the project would allow for the use of a cat lounge within an existing tenant space with ancillary retail. The proposed use is in conformance with the General Plan, Zoning Code, Planning Application Review Criteria, and the required CUP findings can be made. The proposed use, as conditioned, would be compatible with the surrounding residents and commercial businesses and would not be materially detrimental to other properties within the area. Therefore, staff recommends approval of the proposed project, subject to the conditions of approval contained in the attached resolution.