



March 27, 2023

To: Humboldt County Planning Department  
Attn: John Ford, Director  
3015 H Street  
Eureka, CA 95501-4484

RE: Application for a Zone Reclassification Petition to Board of Supervisors  
3200 Walford Ave, Eureka, CA 95503, Humboldt County, California  
APNs: 017-015-034 and 017-041-008

Mr. Ford,

The purpose of this letter is to provide project details and findings to support a petition to the Humboldt County (County) Board of Supervisors (BOS) to initiate the process of a Zone Reclassification of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 017-015-034 and 017-041-008, comprising one legal parcel.

The application is being submitted by Dr. Deepak Stokes. The Zone Reclassification is seeking to remove the Qualified Combining Zone from this property.

## PROJECT LOCATION

The subject parcels are located off of Harris Street in Eureka, outside of the City of Eureka city boundary and within the unincorporated area of Humboldt County. To access the site, take Walford Avenue off of Harris Street across from Safeway. The parcels are located at the end of Walford Ave (Attachment 1 – Sheet C0).

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing conditions are as follows (Attachment 1):

- One legal parcel, totaling 10.32 acres, comprised of two (2) APNs:
  - **APN 017-015-034:**
    - Assessed lot size: 1.87 acres
    - Developed with existing medical offices and associated parking
  - **APN 017-041-008:**
    - Assessed lot size: 8.46 acres
    - Undeveloped and comprised of forested land
- **Zoning:** Qualified Apartment Professional (R-4\*-Q)
  - **Principal Zone:** Apartment Professional (R-4)
  - **Qualified Combining Zone:** Qualified Combining Zone under Ordinance 2078 (Q)
- **General Plan Land Use Designation:** Residential Medium Density (RM)
- **Site:** The site is currently developed with existing medical facilities and associated offices on APN 017-015-034.
- **Coastal Zone Jurisdiction:** Outside of Coastal Zone



- **County Housing Opportunity Zones:** Within designated Eureka South District General Plan Housing Element Housing Opportunity Zone

## PROPOSED PROJECT

The petitioner is proposing to develop a multi-family residential and medical project on the subject property. The Qualified Combining Zone (Q-zone) on the property currently restricts the parcel development uses to only those associated with medical, dental, and other health-related offices and facilities. **This Zone Reclassification Petition seeks to change the zoning from Qualified Apartment Professional (R-4\*-Q) to Apartment Professional (R-4) by removing the Qualified Combining Zone.** This would allow for development of a residential project to move forward on the site.

The Qualified Combining Zone (Q-zone), adopted in June of 1995 with the approval of Ordinance 2078, does not allow non-medical uses, even with a Use Permit (Figure 1).

**PARAGRAPH 2.5 SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS (AREA 2).** For Area 2, as shown on Exhibit B and as described in paragraph 2.1, principal permitted uses and conditionally permitted uses otherwise allowed under the R-4 (Apartment Professional) Zone regulations of Humboldt County Code Section 314-31 (a) and (b) shall not be allowed on the property described in paragraph 2.1 except as provided below:

**(a) Principal Permitted Uses**

- (1) Medical, dental and other health related offices and facilities.

**(b) Uses Permitted with a Use Permit**

- (1) None.

*Figure 1: Excerpt from Ordinance 2078, Adopting the Qualified Combining Zone for the Subject Property (Attachment 2)*

Existing medical facilities and associated medical offices are located on APN 017-015-034. These medical offices, which have changed leases over the years, have been operating for decades. The existing medical facilities would not be eliminated as a result of the proposed project or this Zoning Reclassification petition, however the facilities may be upgraded in the future. The R-4 Zone allows for administrative, business, and professional offices, including medical, and the General Plan Land Use Designation of Residential Medium Density (RM) allows for office and professional land use types, meaning that removal of the Q-Zone would not impact the operation or land use conformance of the existing medical offices onsite.

The proposed project components are as follows:

- **Proposed Zone:** Apartment Professional (R-4). This is the existing Principal Zoning; no change to the Principal Zoning is proposed. The only proposed change is the removal of the Qualified Combining Zone. The R-4 zone allows for development of two-family dwellings, multiple dwellings, and professional and business offices as principally permitted uses, and additional residential, commercial, and recreational uses with a Use Permit. The RM zone allows for multi-family residential development with the maximum density specified by the General Plan Land Use Designation.
- **Existing/Proposed Land Use:** Residential/Medium Density (RM). This is the existing General Plan Land Use Designation; no change is proposed. The RM Land Use Designation is used in urban areas with nearby services, where residential units, including apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and apartments, are common. The RM land use allows for single-family residential, multi-family residential,



group residential, and office and professional use types. The density range for this land use is 7 to 30 dwelling units per acre.

## REQUIRED FINDINGS AND CRITERIA

A petition for an amendment shall include information concerning the need and reason for the amendment. Per Humboldt County Code, Chapter 2 §50.3, the applicant must demonstrate that (1) the change will be in the public interest, (2) the change is consistent with the Humboldt County General Plan, (3) the appropriate Local Coastal Plan Amendment is in conformity with the Coastal Act, and (4) the change will not reduce the residential density of the parcel.

### 1. Public Interest

The property owner is exploring a residential project on the subject property. Currently, any residential development on the property is prohibited. It is well known that the County is in the midst of a severe housing shortage. According to a North Coast Journal article dated April 14, 2022<sup>1</sup>, *“local rental vacancy rates range between 0 and 3 percent – extreme, even in California, which has a roughly 4-percent vacancy rate Statewide. Buying a home in Humboldt is also cost-prohibitive for most people, with the median price for a single-family home coming in at \$451,000, according to statistics published by the California Association of Realtors. Homes for sale in Humboldt also only stay on the market for an average of 12 days before they are snapped up, another indication of a significant housing shortage.”*

In addition, the Humboldt County Regional Housing Needs Assessment Plan<sup>2</sup>, adopted by the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) in March of 2019 and developed in coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), determined that Humboldt County has a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of at least 3,390 additional housing units by 2027. According to Plan, approximately 1,413 of those units are allocated to be developed in the unincorporated area of Humboldt County.

The subject property is suitably located for a project with a multi-family residential component. It is situated in Eureka, just outside the Eureka City Limits, and has an existing connection to water and sewer through the Humboldt Community Services District. A residential project in this location is compatible with the Primary Zone and the underlying General Plan Land Use Designation, and residences of various types are located in the immediate proximity of the property. The site is an ideal location to support housing for those working in the area, including those working in the medical field.

Approval of the Zone Reclassification Petition would allow a project with a residential component to move forward, helping to alleviate the burden of the housing shortage and increase inventory for workforce and medical professional housing. In addition, this project would not eliminate the existing onsite medical facilities, which are vital to the community. Therefore, the proposed change to zoning would be in the public interest.

### 2. Consistency with General Plan

No change to the current property General Plan Land Use Designation of Residential Medium Density (RM) is proposed. A multi-family housing land use is consistent with the RM Land Use, per Table 4-B of the Humboldt County General Plan, as are single family residential, group residential, neighborhood commercial, and office and professional land uses (Figure 2). The proposed project would be designed to be compatible with the density range of 7 to 30 dwelling units per acre and would follow all provisions of the Principal Zone of Apartment

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.northcoastjournal.com/humboldt/parallel-crises/Content?oid=23284329>

<sup>2</sup> <https://humboldt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/78290/71119-PC-version-Attachment-F---2019-Final-PDF?bidId=>



Professional (R-4).

**Table 4-B Residential Land Use Designations**

Allowable Use Types	RM	RL	RE	RA
<b>Residential</b>				
Single Family Residential	X	X	X	X
Accessory Dwelling Unit	X	X	X	X
Multi-Family Residential	X	X		
Manufactured Home Parks	X	X		
Guest House		X	X	X
Group Residential	X			
Planned Developments	X	X	X	X
Emergency Shelter	X			
Transitional Housing	X			
Residential Accessory Uses <sup>1</sup>	X	X	X	X
<b>Other</b>				
Cottage Industry	X	X	X	X
Bed & Breakfast Inns	X	X	X	X
Community Assembly	X	X	X	X
Neighborhood Commercial	X	X	X	X
Non-Commercial Recreation	X	X	X	X
Office and Professional	X			
Private Institution	X	X	X	
General Agriculture			X	X
Intensive Agriculture			X	X
Stables & Kennels			X	X
Timber Production			X	X
Fish & Wildlife Management	X	X	X	X
Essential Services	X	X	X	X
Similar Compatible Uses	X	X	X	X
<b>Development Standards</b>				
Density Range	7 to 30 units per acre, as specified on map	1-8 units per acre, as specified on map	1 to 5 acres per unit, as specified on map	5 to 160 acres per unit, as specified on map
Max. Floor Area Ratio	1.00	0.40	0.20	0.10
Additional Provisions	per zoning	per zoning	per zoning	per zoning

1. Residential Accessory Uses include Community Care Facilities, Family Day Care Center, and Family Day Care Home.

2. Coastal:

- The coastal RE & RL designations allow neighborhood commercial, private institution, private recreation
- The coastal RM designation allows duplexes, guest houses, hotels & motels, private institution

*Figure 2: Residential Land Use Designations, Humboldt County General Plan*

Additionally, the property is located in an identified Housing Opportunity Zone in the General Plan, indicating that the area is suitable for residential use where urban services are available.

Additionally, the Zone Reclassification is consistent with Goals and Policies of the 2019 Housing Element, including the following:

- *Policy H-P4: Maintenance of an Adequate Supply of Residential Land.* This Policy suggests that the County shall maintain residentially zoned land to accommodate projected housing needs. The subject property is currently residentially zoned, however is unable to be used for residential uses due to the Q-zone.
- *Policy H-P17: Promote Infill, Reuse, and Redevelopment.* This Policy encourages the County to promote development of under-developed land within a Housing Opportunity Zone (HOZ). The subject property is located within the South Eureka HOZ.
- *Policy H-P18: Housing Opportunity Zones.* This Policy encourages the County to stimulate residential and infrastructure development within HOZs.

Therefore, the proposed Zone Reclassification is consistent with the Humboldt County General Plan.



### 3. Conformity with the Coastal Act

The parcel is not located within the Coastal Zone. No Local Coastal Plan Amendment is required.

### 4. Reduction in Residential Density

The property is not currently zoned for residential uses, due to the restrictive Q-zone. The Zoning Reclassification Petition would allow for residential uses on the property. A reduction in existing residential density is not proposed.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings above, it is requested that the BOS grant the petition to initiate the planning process to process a Zone Reclassification, from Qualified Apartment Professional (R-4\*-Q) to Apartment Professional (R-4). If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (707) 798-6438.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Annje Dodd", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Annje Dodd, PhD, PE  
Principal Engineer

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Site Plans
- Attachment 2: Qualified Combining Zone



## ATTACHMENT 1 – SITE PLANS



## ATTACHMENT 2 – QUALIFIED COMBINING ZONE

