

To: Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Jennifer M. Rauch, AICP, Planning Director

Date: March 18, 2021

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Re: Code Modification for Specialty Hospitals

Update

Planning presented draft language for specialty hospitals as an informal discussion at the February 18, 2021 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. The Commission reviewed the proposed language and raised several concerns related to the definition of specialty hospitals and provided alternative language to consider. The Commission suggested that staff review various types of facilities that would be included in the category of specialty hospitals and identify the specific needs that are commonly associated with the uses. This includes facilities that incorporate smaller building footprints, may require lower parking standards due to lower traffic patterns, private outdoor space, and minimum location requirements from residential neighborhoods. Planning has incorporated these comments in the proposing Code language, which include a revised definition of specialty hospitals and use-specific standards.

Summary

Planning has been asked to address a new use classification for the City of Dublin Zoning Code that pertain to defining specialty hospitals, potential use specific standards for the classification and guidance on where such facilities should be located. This request is based on growing trends in the medical industry that are expanding in uses that specialize in specific medical needs, as well as the growing needs within communities to provide this specialized care. These facilities could include long-term physical care facilities, mental health care facilities, substance abuse and rehabilitation facilities and other specialized medical centers. The intent is to differentiate these facilities from general hospitals and provide standards that help integrate the facilities appropriately within our community.

Specialty Hospitals

As the medical industry continues to specialize and the needs of certain physical and mental conditions continue to grow, the City of Dublin is seeing the need for these care facilities within our community. The Planning and Zoning Commission was introduced to this topic and informally discussed specialty hospitals on October 1, 2020. The Commission requested staff provide definitions for specific types of specialty hospitals to determine where these uses should be permitted based on their needs.

Planning and the Law Director's office developed the draft code modification and recommended the specialty hospital definition based on common attributes and operational needs of the facilities, as opposed to the type of medical care provided by each facility. Planning has reviewed a number of resources to compile a definition for specialty hospitals to develop the proposed language.

Currently, the City of Dublin Zoning Code categorizes all of these uses uniformly under a "Hospital" use that is a general land use zoning classification that address a range of general medical needs. Hospitals are a permitted use in Suburban Office and Institutional District, which allows this use to be permitted in office complexes that may not be suitable for the needs of a specialty hospital facility. Hospital use is also permitted in the Bridge Street District Zoning Districts and the Exceptional Use District, which are specialized zoning districts within the City. The Bridge Street District Zoning Districts are a denser zoning district in the City and may also have challenges addressing the needs of a specialty hospital. The Exceptional Use Zoning District is a zoning district that is primarily used for land uses that are not otherwise permitted in other zoning districts.

Planning recommends specialty hospitals be limited to the Suburban Office and Institutional District and potentially the Bridge Street District but not in the Exceptional Use District based on its limited use as a land use classification. Planning requests feedback from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding where specialty hospitals should be permitted.

Recommendation

Planning is requesting informal feedback on the revised language associated with specialty hospitals. Based on the feedback of the Planning and Zoning Commission, a final draft will be provided at a future meeting for recommendation to City Council.