

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ANA APPROVING VARIANCE NO. 2024-01 AS CONDITIONED TO ALLOW A REDUCED FRONT-YARD LANDSCAPE AREA OF TEN FEET FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1601 AND 1607 NORTH BRISTOL STREET (APN: 405-252-21 AND 405-252-22)

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ANA AS FOLLOWS:

**Section 1.** The Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana hereby finds, determines, and declares as follows:

- A. Bristol Center Properties, LLC (“Applicant” and “Property Owner”), representing Better Buzz Coffee Roasters (“Tenant”), is requesting approval of Variance No. 2024-01 to allow a reduced front-yard landscaped area of ten feet for the property located at located at 1601 and 1607 North Bristol Street.
- B. Section 41-427 and 41-372(a) of the Santa Ana Municipal Code (“SAMC”) requires that a landscaped area not less than fifteen feet wide be maintained along any property line that abuts a street. The Applicant is requesting approval of Variance No. 2024-01 to allow a ten-foot wide landscaped area along Bristol Street.
- C. Pursuant to SAMC Section 41-638, the Planning Commission is authorized to review and approve the variance for this project as set forth by the Santa Ana Municipal Code.
- D. On April 8, 2024, the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana held a duly-noticed public hearing and voted unanimously to find Abandonment No. 2023-02 to be consistent with the General Plan.
- E. On July 16, 2024, the City Council of the City of Santa Ana adopted a resolution to summarily vacate portion of Bristol Street and a resolution declaring the property as exempt surplus.
- F. On October 15, 2024, the City Council of the City of Santa Ana approved the sale of the 392 sq. ft. land to the Applicant to accommodate for the new proposed eating establishment.
- G. On October 28, 2024, the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana held a duly-noticed public hearing on Variance No. 2024-01.
- H. The Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana has considered the information and determines that the following findings, which must be established in order to grant Variance No. 2024-01, for reduced front-yard

landscaped area, have been established as required by SAMC Section 41-638:

1. That because of special circumstances applicable to the subject property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of the zoning ordinance is found to deprive the subject property of privileges not otherwise at variance with the intent and purpose of the provisions of this Chapter.

Special considerations arise due to the property's size, necessary enhancements for trash pick-up, and managing traffic flow efficiently. The proposed project involves merging two lots and acquiring a section of the public right-of-way to achieve a total square footage of 18,814. The site's size constraints have led to the adjustment of the landscaped area in the front yard to ensure an adequate turning radius for trash trucks. Reducing the front-yard landscaping also serves the purpose of maintaining a minimum drive-through vehicle queuing distance of 80 feet, measured from the entry point to the ordering window. This strategic arrangement prevents traffic congestion on Bristol Street, ensuring a smooth flow of vehicles. Furthermore, requiring a fifteen-foot width for the front-yard landscape would necessitate relocating the drive-through speakers closer to the residences east of the project site. Enforcing strict adherence to the front-yard setback would result in the site remaining vacant. Thus, the proposed modifications strike a balance between functional requirements and neighborhood considerations, aiming to optimize the site's potential while minimizing any adverse impact on the surrounding community.

2. That the granting of a variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of one (1) or more substantial property rights.

In order for the applicant to provide the same level of drive through service, without disrupting parking and the surrounding community, approval of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights. Reduction for the front-yard landscaped setback enables the project to be designed to ensure safe circulation for all types of vehicles and to meet the City's off-street parking requirements and site circulation standards. Without the reduction, the project would need to be substantially redesigned, resulting in reduction of building square footage and negative impacts to the feasibility of the site's development. Additional impacts would include a reduction in drive-aisle lane widths, creation of onsite circulation hazards, and/or relocation of the drive-through

lane, bringing the speakers closer to the neighboring residences. Moreover, these adjustments would result in a reduction of parking spaces, affecting the overall functionality and viability of the site and resulting in community parking impacts.

3. That the granting of a variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to surrounding property.

The granting of this variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to surrounding property. The proposed project brings new development to an otherwise vacant site, contributing to the enhancement of the area. Additionally, the project boasts modern architecture and offers services that stand to enrich the surrounding community. The neighboring fast-food restaurant will not be affected by the reduced front-yard landscaped area. The project aligns with the existing landscape to the south and narrows to ten feet as it gets further from the existing landscaped area, ensuring compatibility with the surrounding commercial establishments. The proposed project is meticulously designed to provide the safest trash pick-up route, ample space for drive-through lane queuing, and devise a site plan that minimizes disruptions for the neighboring residential properties to the east of the subject site. Moreover, to achieve the desired 18,814 sq. ft. site size, the project entails the consolidation of properties at 1601 South Bristol Street and 1607 South Bristol Street, along with the incorporation of a portion of the public right-of-way. However, the unique circumstances associated with the subject site, particularly its size and proximity to residential properties on the east side, present challenges to the overall site design. Granting this variance is a positive step towards fostering community growth and enhancing the overall appeal of the area

4. That the granting of a variance will not adversely affect the General Plan of the city.

The approval of the proposed project will be consistent with the General Plan land use designation of General Commercial (GC), which allows for the development of highly visible and accessible shopping opportunities along arterial corridors. Additionally, this designation supports the development and continued operation of recreational, cultural, and entertainment opportunities near established residential neighborhoods. The project would provide an added amenity and would promote a land use that enhances the City's economic fiscal viability and mitigates any potential impacts to the surrounding community.

Furthermore, approval of this application would be consistent with several goals and policies of the General Plan, specifically Goals 2, 3, and 4 of the Land Use (“LU”) Element and Goals 1, 2, and 3 of the Economic Prosperity (“EP”) Element as discussed below.

- Goal LU-2: Land Use Needs – Provide a balance of land uses that meet Santa Ana’s diverse needs
  - Policy 2.7 Business Incubator – Support land use decisions that encourage the creation, development, and retention of business in Santa Ana

The project is consistent with Goal LU-2 and Policy 2.7 as it actively contributes to fostering land use decisions that promote the establishment, growth, and sustainability of business in Santa Ana. The construction of a new café along a major corridor, near residential, and Santa Ana College, will continue to encourage a wide range of commercial uses that benefit the existing neighborhood and the surrounding community. The placement of the proposed café not only enhances the immediate neighborhood but also positively impacts the broader community.

- Goal LU-3: Compatibility of Uses – Preserve and improve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods and districts.
  - Policy 3.1 Community Benefits – Support new development which provides a net community benefit and contributes to neighborhood character and identity.

The proposed project is consistent with Goal 3 and Policy 3.1 as it is designed to revitalize the currently vacant site, presenting a tangible improvement that will greatly benefit the neighboring community. Moreover, the inclusion of a drive-through window service will enhance the long-term sustainability of both the lot itself and Better Buzz Coffee Roasters. This feature not only increase accessibility and convenience for patrons but also strengthen the commercial viability and enduring success of the establishment.

- Goal LU-4: Complete Communities – Support a sustainable Santa Ana through improvements to the built environment and culture of collaboration.
  - Policy 4.1 Complementary Uses – Promote complete neighborhoods by encouraging a mix

of complementary uses, community services, and people places within a walkable area.

The proposed project is consistent with Goal 4 and Policy 4.1 as it will contribute to the existing built environment in the surrounding neighborhood. The development of the proposed café holds the potential to foster a cohesive neighborhood, catering to both the residential community in its vicinity and the commercial corridor along Bristol Street. The project not only adheres to planning objectives but also actively contributes to the creation of a comprehensive and vibrant community landscape.

- Goal EP-1: Job Creation and Retention – Foster a dynamic local economy that provides and create employment opportunities for all residents in the City.
  - Policy 1.2 Attract Business – Promote new and retain existing job-producing businesses that provide living-wage employment opportunities.

The project is consistent with Goal EP-1 and Policy 1.2, as the proposed improvements would help generate additional economic growth and stability in the City by further activating underutilized parcels and helping generate property and sales tax revenue. Furthermore, the proposed project would help create a job-producing establishment thereby providing employment opportunities to Santa Ana residents.

- Goal EP-2: Diverse Economic Base – Maintain and enhance the diversity and regional significance of the city's economic base.
  - Policy 2.2 Deliberate Investment – Pursue business attraction and retention prospects in sectors which broaden and strengthen the local economy

The project is consistent with Goal EP-2 and Policy 2.2 as it actively contributes to the attraction and cultivation of a new business within the City of Santa Ana. By introducing a new café, this initiative is set to not only enhance the local business landscape but also strengthen the overall economy. The proposed café is anticipated to improve economic growth by generating significant property and sales tax revenue. This infusion of revenue solidifies the financial health of the business itself and contributes to the broader economic sustainability of Santa Ana.

- Goal EP-3: Business Friendly Environment – Promote a business friendly environment where businesses thrive and build on Santa Ana’s strengths and opportunities.
  - Policy 3.7 Facilitating Investment – Promote a solution-based customer focus in order to facilitate additional development and investment in the community.
  - Policy 3.8 Comprehensive Analysis of Land Use – Pursue a balance of fiscal and qualitative community benefits when making land use decisions.

The project would be consistent with Goal EP-3 and Policies 3.7 and 3.8, as it provides for redevelopment of existing underutilized vacant properties and promotes a new cafe that would provide services to the community. Moreover, the project would help create a friendly business environment and help the overall commercial strip along Bristol Street to enhance their business offerings and compete with nearby commercial businesses. Lastly, by working on an improved site design with the applicant, staff ensured that that project provided a high level of community investment for residents, workers, and visitors in the area.

**Section 2.** In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, the project is categorically exempt from further review per Section 15303 (Class 3 – New construction or conversion of small structures) of the CEQA Guidelines and does not trigger any of the exceptions enumerated by Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines. Class 3 exemption applies to the construction of new small structures or conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The project proposes to allow the operation of a drive-through window service at an existing developed site. As such, a Notice of Exemption, Environmental Review No. 2022-119, will be filed for this project.

**Section 3.** The Applicant shall indemnify, protect, defend and hold the City and/or any of its officials, officers, employees, agents, departments, agencies, authorized volunteers, and instrumentalities thereof, harmless from any and all claims, demands, lawsuits, writs of mandamus, referendum, and other proceedings (whether legal, equitable, declaratory, administrative or adjudicatory in nature), and alternative dispute resolution procedures (including, but not limited to arbitrations, mediations, and such other procedures), judgments, orders, and decisions (collectively “Actions”), brought against the City and/or any of its officials, officers, employees, agents, departments, agencies, and instrumentalities thereof, that challenge, attack, or seek to modify, set aside, void, or annul, any action of, or any permit or approval issued by the City and/or any of its officials, officers, employees, agents, departments, agencies, and instrumentalities thereof (including actions approved by the voters of the City) for or

concerning the project, whether such Actions are brought under the Ralph M. Brown Act, California Environmental Quality Act, the Planning and Zoning Law, the Subdivision Map Act, Code of Civil Procedure sections 1085 or 1094.5, or any other federal, state or local constitution, statute, law, ordinance, charter, rule, regulation, or any decision of a court of competent jurisdiction. It is expressly agreed that the City shall have the right to approve the legal counsel providing the City's defense, and that Applicant shall reimburse the City for any costs and expenses directly and necessarily incurred by the City in the course of the defense. City shall promptly notify the Applicant of any Action brought and City shall cooperate with Applicant in the defense of the Action.


**Section 4.** The Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana, after conducting the public hearing, hereby approves Variance No. 2024-01, as conditioned in Exhibit A, attached hereto and incorporated herein, for the reduced ten-foot wide front-yard landscaped area at 1601 and 1607 North Bristol Street, based on the findings contained in Section 1. This decision is based upon the evidence submitted at the above-referenced hearing, including but not limited to: The Request for Planning Commission Action dated October 28, 2024, and exhibits attached thereto; and the public testimony, written and oral, all of which are incorporated herein by this reference.

ADOPTED this 28<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2024.

AYES: Commissioners: Carl Benninger, Christopher Leo, Jennifer Oliva, Bao Pham, Isuri Ramos, Alan Woo (6)  
NOES: Commissioners:  
ABSENT: Commissioners: Manuel J. Escamilla (1)  
ABSTENTIONS: Commissioners:

  
Jennifer Oliva  
Chairperson

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
Sonia R. Carvalho, City Attorney

By:   
Melissa M. Crosthwaite  
Senior Assistant City Attorney

CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTATION AND ORIGINALITY

I, NUVIA OCAMPO, Recording Secretary, do hereby attest to and certify the attached Resolution No. 2024-25 to be the original resolution adopted by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Ana on October 28, 2024.

Date: 10/28/2024

*Nuvia Ocampo*  
Nuvia Ocampo  
Recording Secretary  
City of Santa Ana



## EXHIBIT A

### **Conditions of Approval for Variance No. 2024-01**

Variance No. 2024-01 is approved subject to compliance, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Planning Manager, with applicable sections of the Santa Ana Municipal Code, the California Administrative Code, the California Building Standards Code, and all other applicable regulations. In addition, they shall meet the following conditions of approval.

The Applicant must comply with each and every condition listed below in order to exercise the rights conferred by this variance.

The Applicant must remain in compliance with all conditions listed below throughout the life of the conditional use permit. Failure to comply with each and every condition may result in the revocation of the variance.

1. All proposed site improvements must conform to the Development Project Review (DP No. 2022-39) and the staff report exhibits.
2. Any amendment to this variance must be submitted to the Planning Division for review. At that time, staff will determine if administrative relief is available or if the variance must be amended.
3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall submit a full landscape and irrigation plan to the Planning Division for review and approval. The landscape plan shall conform to the commercial landscape standards, the Citywide Design Guidelines, and the City's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, and shall note that all landscape planted along the east property line shall be mature and sufficiently tall to buffer any potential noise; all landscape along Bristol Street shall be enhanced to screen the drive-through vehicle queue; and decorative pavers or an alternative concrete design deemed appropriate by Planning Division staff, shall be required to be installed at the proposed driveway.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall submit the recorded Lot Line Adjustment ensuring that the 392 square feet previously designated as public right-of-way is included as part of the property at 1601-1607 N. Bristol Street.
5. All landscaping shall be installed per the approved landscape and irrigation plan. In addition, all landscaping along the east property line and in parking lot planters shall be evergreen, be required to be maintained throughout the lifetime of the CUP, and shall be required to be maintained in a healthy manner. Moreover, any unhealthy or dead landscaping shall be required to be removed and replaced in-kind.
6. Site illumination levels must remain in compliance with Section 8-211 (Special Commercial Building Provisions) of the Santa Ana Municipal Code at all times.
7. All on-site trees proposed to be used shall be selected from the *City of Santa Ana Designated Tree Species Guide* ("Guide") recommended tree list and will be verified

as part of the Landscape plan that will be reviewed by Planning Staff. **Added by the Planning Commission on October 28, 2024.**

8. Along the east property line abutting the single-family residences, install 26 to 29 Pacific Wax Myrtle (*Myrica Californica*) screen shrubs 5 to 6 feet apart optimize privacy along the east property line. The shrubs shall be 24-inch box at time of installation.
9. The business owner shall maintain and adhere to a “Good Neighbor Policy,” implementing measures to ensure patrons comply with applicable noise, parking, and outdoor smoking regulations, and removing litter and preventing loitering in the areas in the immediate vicinity of the business.
10. The applicant shall maintain the site as necessary, including but not limited to: the repair and upkeep of the property; cleanup of trash and debris; repair and upkeep of any damaged and/or weathered components of the building; repair and upkeep of exterior paint; parking striping, lighting and irrigation fixtures; landscaping and related landscape, furnishing, and hardscape improvements.
11. Violations of the Variance as contained in Section 41-647.5 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code will be grounds for permit suspension and/or revocation as described in Section 41-651 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code.
12. The business shall post in a conspicuous location at the entry to the building the contact information for the responsible onsite manager, including full name, phone number, and emergency or backup phone number, in case of noise and related operational complaints.
13. Prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, a Property Maintenance Agreement must be recorded against the property. The agreement will be subject to review and applicability by the Planning and Building Agency, the Community Development Agency, the Public Works Agency, and the City Attorney to ensure that the property and all improvements located thereupon are properly maintained. Developer/Applicant (and the owner of the property upon which the authorized use and/or authorized improvements are located if different from the Applicant) shall execute a Maintenance Agreement with the City of Santa Ana which shall be recorded against the property and which shall be in a form reasonably satisfactory to the City Attorney. The Maintenance Agreement shall contain covenants, conditions and restrictions relating to the following:
  - a. Compliance with operational conditions applicable during any period(s) of construction or major repair (e.g., proper screening and securing of the construction site; implementation of proper erosion control, dust control and noise mitigation; adherence to approved project phasing etc.), if applicable;
  - b. Compliance with ongoing operational conditions, requirements and restrictions, as applicable (including but not limited to hours of operation, security requirements, the proper storage and disposal of trash and debris,

enforcement of the parking management plan, and/or restrictions on certain uses) if applicable;

- c. Ongoing compliance with approved design and construction parameters, signage parameters and restrictions as well as landscape designs, as applicable;
- d. Ongoing maintenance, repair and upkeep of the property and all improvements located thereupon (including but not limited to controls on the proliferation of trash and debris about and immediately adjacent to the property; the proper and timely removal of graffiti; the timely maintenance, repair and upkeep of damaged, vandalized and/or weathered buildings, structures and/or improvements; the timely maintenance, repair and upkeep of exterior paint, parking striping, lighting and irrigation fixtures, walls and fencing, publicly accessible bathrooms and bathroom fixtures, landscaping and related landscape improvements and the like, as applicable;
- e. If Developer/Applicant and the owner of the property are different (e.g., if the Applicant is a tenant or licensee of the property or any portion thereof), both the Applicant and the owner of the property shall be signatories to the Maintenance Agreement and both shall be jointly and severally liable for compliance with its terms;
- f. The Maintenance Agreement shall further provide that any party responsible for complying with its terms shall not assign its ownership interest in the property or any interest in any lease, sublease, license or sublicense, unless the prospective assignee agrees in writing to assume all of the duties, obligations and responsibilities set forth under the Maintenance Agreement;
- g. The Maintenance Agreement shall contain provisions relating to the enforcement of its conditions by the City and shall also contain provisions authorizing the City to recover costs and expenses which the City may incur arising out of any enforcement and/or remediation efforts which the City may undertake in order to cure any deficiency in maintenance, repair or upkeep or to enforce any restrictions or conditions upon the use of the property. The maintenance agreement shall further provide that any unreimbursed costs and/or expenses incurred by the City to cure a deficiency in maintenance or to enforce use restrictions shall become a lien upon the property in an amount equivalent to the actual costs and/or expense incurred by the City.