



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

DATE: May 2, 2019

TO: Planning Commission

APPLICANT: Paul Pfeifle
BDR, Inc.
27489 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

CASE NO.: PCI-01616-2019

LOCATION: 27509 Agoura Road

REQUEST: Request for the Planning Commission's interpretation of Zoning Ordinance Section 9312.2 (Commercial Use Table), regarding a proposed travel agency's (American Travel Solutions, LLC) request to locate their business in the Business Park-Office Retail (BP-OR) zoning district, east of Palo Comado Canyon Road, at 27509 Agoura Road.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission interpret, by minute order, the Zoning Ordinance to allow online travel agencies as a permitted use in the Business Park-Office Retail (BP-OR) zoning district, east of Palo Comado Canyon Road.

I. DESCRIPTION

Paul Pfeifle, representing property owner APB Properties LLC, is requesting the Planning Commission's interpretation of Zoning Ordinance Section 9312.2 (Commercial Use Table), regarding whether American Travel Solutions, LLC (dba "AmTrav") may locate their travel agency business at 27509 Agoura Road, in the Business Park-Office Retail ("BP-OR") zoning district. The subject property is within an office park located on the northwest corner of the Agoura Road/Liberty Canyon Road intersection, east of Palo Comado Canyon Road.

Zoning Ordinance Section 9312.2.T.15 allows for travel agency uses to be located within the BP-OR zoning district, but only west of Palo Comado Canyon Road. Several retail-related uses, including travel agencies, ticket agencies, coffee shops, pharmacies, for example, are allowed in the BP-OR zoning district elsewhere in the City, but are otherwise

precluded from being located west of Palo Comado Canyon Road, in order to reduce potential impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods, and to ensure greater compatibility between business office park and residential uses. A “travel agency” use is not defined in the zoning ordinance. As such, the applicant is requesting the Planning Commission interpret AmTrav’s use to be similar to allowable office uses on the subject property, including business or professional, insurance, advertising, or accountant office uses. Zoning Ordinance Section 9807 establishes the Planning Commission’s authority to decide any questions involving the interpretation or application of any provision of the Zoning.

I. STAFF ANALYSIS

A common definition of a “travel agency” is “an agency that makes the necessary arrangements for travelers, especially the booking of airline tickets and hotel rooms.” To staff’s knowledge, the City’s permitted and prohibited locations for travel agencies hasn’t changed since the Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1985. Since that time, walk-in service for travel agencies in general has declined, and more of their services are conducted by telephone and online.

AmTrav makes this distinction regarding their business description that is attached to this report. AmTrav states they are a travel management company that provides corporate travel management services to primarily small and mid-size companies. Their customers may access to their online booking tool which they can use to book air, car, or hotel reservations; manage bookings; set travel policy; run reports; and locate their travelers in real-time.

According to the applicant, AmTrav specializes in corporate and business travel, utilizing proprietary technologies that differentiate them from traditional travel services. AmTrav will have no walk-in customers and all business will be conducted via telephone an online. They wish to occupy 5,400 square feet of tenant space, with approximately 30 employees operating on staggered shifts. AmTrav’s proposed office hours are Monday through Friday, 5:00 a.m.to 9:00 p.m.; and Saturday and Sunday, 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All employee parking would be provided on-site.

Based on the business descriptions provided by the applicant and AmTrav, staff supports an interpretation of AmTrav’s business being more similar to a permitted office use than a traditional travel agency. The business would be operated without walk-in customers and with no additional parking demand beyond those required and provided for the employees. The business would be conducted indoors with no foreseeable impacts to the adjacent residential neighborhood beyond what a traditional indoor office may generate.

If the Planning Commission interprets the proposed use as being similar to an office use, and therefore allowed at the proposed location, the interpretation would apply to online travel services and no amendments to the Zoning Ordinance would apply or be required. Staff would ensure AmTrav's required City business license application include confirmation that their proposed use is for an online travel agency, while still allowing for traditional office-related visits. If online travel agencies are allowed as an office use, the required on-site parking provision would be that related to business and professional office uses, which is one (1) parking space for each 300 square feet of gross floor area. If the Planning Commission interprets the proposed use as being similar to a traditional travel agency, AmTrav would be precluded from locating their business in the BP-OR zoning district, east of Palo Comado Canyon Road.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission interpret, by minute order, the Zoning Ordinance to allow online travel agencies as a permitted use in the Business Park-Office Retail (BP-OR) zoning district, east of Palo Comado Canyon Road.

IV. ATTACHMENT

- AmTrav Business Description

Case Planner: Doug Hooper, Planning Director

April 10, 2019

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to provide information about American Travel Solutions, LLC, dba AmTrav.

We are a travel management company that provides corporate travel management services to primarily small and mid-size companies. Customers of ours get access to our proprietary online booking tool which they can use to book air, car, or hotel reservations; manage bookings; set travel policy; run reports; and locate their travelers in real-time. We also have a team of travel experts available 24x7 for those needing assistance.

In addition to our corporate travel business, we also own a consumer online travel agency, www.CheapAir.com.

Feel free to reach out if you have questions or need additional info.

Sincerely,



Jeff Klee
CEO

jeffK@AmTrav.com