



**City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Planning Commission Staff Report
April 14, 2025**

Topic: Conditional Use Permit Nos. 2025-05 and 2025-06 – Little Pan On-Sale Beer and Wine License and After-Hours Operations (2 E. Hutton Center Drive, Unit 202)

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Adopt a resolution approving Conditional Use Permit No. 2025-05 for on-sale beer and wine license as conditioned; and
2. Adopt a resolution approving Conditional Use Permit No. 2025-06 for after-hours operation as conditioned

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jiayi Liu with Food Trace Management, LLC dba Little Pan (Applicant), on behalf of KRB Investments Management, LLC (Property Owner), is requesting approval of Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Nos. 2025-05 and 2025-06 to allow the sale of beer and wine for on-premises consumption, through a Type-41 license from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), and to allow after-hours operation, respectively, at an existing eating establishment located at 2 E. Hutton Center Drive, Unit 202. Pursuant to Section 41-196 of the Santa Ana Municipal Code (SAMC) and Section 5 of Specific Development No. 76 (SD-76), establishments wishing to sell alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption require approval of a CUP. Additionally, pursuant to Section 5 of SD-76, uses open between the hours of 12:00 a.m. midnight and 5:00 a.m. require approval of a CUP. Staff is recommending approval of the applicant's request due to the site being located away from sensitive uses and because applicable operational standards will ensure that the sale of beer and wine for on-premises consumption will not negatively affect the surrounding community.

DISCUSSION

Project Description

Little Pan occupies a 1,706-square-foot tenant space within a 13,508-square-foot multi-tenant commercial building, located at a commercial center known as the MacArthur Plaza, at the southeast intersection of MacArthur Place and MacArthur Boulevard. The eating establishment accommodates up to 45 patrons and currently operates from 9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. daily.

The applicant is requesting approval to sell beer and wine for on-premises consumption and to extended their business hours to 2:00 a.m. daily. The request also includes the sale of alcoholic beverages until 2:00 a.m. All alcoholic beverages would be stored in a dedicated storage area within the establishment's kitchen, which will be approximately 25 square feet. The alcohol storage and display area will make up less than five percent of the total restaurant floor area as required by the SAMC. Live entertainment is not being requested at this time. Should the applicant seek live entertainment, an entertainment permit would be required for on-site entertainment pursuant to Section 11-6 of the SAMC.

Table 1: Project and Location Information

Item	Information	
Project Address and Council Ward	2 E. Hutton Center Drive, Unit 202 – Ward 4	
Nearest Intersection	MacArthur Boulevard and MacArthur Place	
General Plan Designation	District Center – Low (DC-1)	
Zoning Designation	Specific Development No. 76 (SD-76)	
Surrounding Land Uses	North	Professional Office
	East	Costa Mesa (SR-55) Freeway
	South	Professional Office/Multi-family Residential
	West	Hotel (Courtyard by Marriott)
Property Size	1.5-acres (65,340 square feet)	
Existing Site Development	The subject site contains a multi-tenant commercial building. The unit is an existing full-service restaurant, with a kitchen, dining area, and two restrooms.	
Tenant Size	1,706 square feet	
Use Permissions	Allowed with a conditional use permit (CUP)	
Zoning Code Sections Affected	Uses	Section 5 of SD-76 and Section 41-196(a) of the SAMC
	Operational Standards	Section 41-196(g) of the SAMC
Census Tract and ABC License Information	Census Tract No.	740.03
	No. of Allowed and Existing Licenses (on-sale)	5 Allowed & 31 Existing (5 Type 41 and 12 Type 47)

Table 2: Operational Standards

Standards	Permissible by SAMC	Provided
Eating Establishment Type	Bona-Fide	Bona-Fide
Hours of Operation for ABC Sales	7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. (midnight), unless extended by a separate after-hours CUP	Monday through Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. (after-hours CUP requested)
Window Display	25% of Window Coverage	Complies
Alcohol Storage and Display	5% of G.F.A.	1.5% of G.F.A.

Project Background

MacArthur Plaza was developed in 1984, with a multi-tenant commercial building (nine tenant spaces), 42 parking stalls, and onsite improvements (e.g., landscape planters, lighting, trash enclosure, etc.). The subject tenant space has been occupied by eating establishments since 2001. Togo's Eateries, LLC occupied the tenant space from 2001 through 2019. From 2019 through 2022, Yang's Braised Chicken Rice occupied the tenant space. On June 1, 2022, Little Pan received a Certificate of Occupancy to occupy the space and has been in operation since. The applicant submitted the requested CUPs on February 18, 2025.

Project Analysis

CUP requests are governed by Section 41-638 of the SAMC. CUPs may be granted when it can be shown that the proposed project will not adversely impact the community. If these findings can be made, then it is appropriate to grant the CUP. Conversely, the inability to make these findings would result in a denial. The purpose of regulating establishments that sell alcoholic beverages, and establishments that operate between 12:00 a.m. (midnight) and 5:00 a.m., is to set forth operating practices and procedures and to minimize impacts to surrounding areas. Staff has reviewed the applicant's request and has determined the proposed CUPs will not be detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Additional analysis for each CUP request is provided below.

Conditional Use Permit No. 2025-05 (Alcohol Sales)

An evaluation of Little Pan's calls for service indicates that since its opening in 2022, the City has not received any complaints or issued any notice of violations to the operator. Furthermore, the subject site is not located within immediate proximity to parks, playgrounds, schools, or religious institutions. In addition, the building is located approximately 200 feet away from the nearest multi-family residences to the south (Essex Skyline at MacArthur Place Apartments) and approximately 1,200 feet (0.20 miles) from the nearest single-family residences to the west. The close proximity of the eating establishment to the multi-family residential uses to the south is consistent with the objectives and policies of SD-76, to provide a mixture of office, residential, retail and restaurants within the Hutton Center Mixed Use Specific Development. Given that the site is master-planned, the orientation and close proximity of the commercial and residential buildings was designed to foster a dynamic, mixed-use village that promotes full services on a single "campus" while minimizing impacts onto surrounding, existing communities. As a result, the granting of the CUP will not negatively impact any sensitive land uses that may be nearby. Moreover, the operational standards applicable to an ABC license will mitigate any potential impacts created by the use and will ensure that the use will not negatively affect the surrounding community.

Little Pan provides a unique dining experience and the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premise consumption will allow the eating establishment to be competitive with similar full-service establishments and will allow it to be economically viable. Similar full-service establishments include 949 Grill and Pot Lounge and Gokumi Ramen & Yakitori, within the same MacArthur Plaza and which all have an ABC Type 41 license for on-sale beer and wine. In addition, the sale of beer and wine for on-premises consumption is intended to provide a service ancillary to the primary eating establishment use.

Conditional Use Permit No. 2025-06 (After-Hours Operation)

A CUP is required for after-hours operations in order to ensure preservation of the surrounding community's characteristics and minimize any potential negative impacts. The existing site design and conditions are such that the after-hours operations would not result in negative impacts to the surrounding areas during extended hours. Specifically, the proposed hours of operation are not anticipated to create any nuisances related to noise and/or lighting due to the site's physical distance away from sensitive land uses. The subject site is adjacent to commercial office uses to the north and south, across MacArthur Boulevard and Hutton Centre Drive. In addition, the site is adjacent to a Courtyard by Marriott, located to the west of the site across MacArthur Place. The nearest multi-family residences are located approximately 200 feet south of the site in an existing high-rise building. Moreover, the nearest single-family residences are located 0.20 miles to the west. The proximity to the multi-family residences is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Hutton Center Mixed Use Specific Development, which encourages a mixture of land uses, including office, residential, retail and restaurants. In addition, the residential uses are not located on the ground floor of the high-rise structure, but rather above a ground floor parking structure. Therefore, the proposed after-hours operations would have minimal to no impacts to the residential units on the upper floors.

The proposed after-hours operations will provide a convenient eating option to patrons who work late night shifts, or who are looking for additional late-night dining options. In addition, the after-hours promotes a balance of land uses that assist in enhancing the City's economic and fiscal viability. The enhanced commercial offerings will allow Little Pan to compete in the local marketplace. Furthermore, the continued investment in the site will help activate and enhance the area and will generate property and sales tax revenue for the City. To minimize any potential nuisance impacts to the surrounding uses, staff is recommending conditions of approval that include recordation of a Property Maintenance Agreement, which will help improve the safety and quality of the overall site.

General Plan Consistency

The approval of the requested CUPs is consistent with the General Plan land use designation of District Center – Low (DC-1), as commercial uses are a supported land use. This general plan designation provides for distinctly urban retail, residential mixed-use, and employment centers that are well connected to public transportation.

Additionally, the proposed project would also be consistent with several goals and policies of the General Plan. Specifically, the project aligns with Land Use Element (LU) Goal LU-2 and Policies LU-2.2 and LU-2.6, which aim to provide a balance mix of land uses that meet the City's diverse needs, capture local spending, offer a range of employment opportunities, and promote rehabilitation. The proposed project would provide for a continued dining opportunity in the local area that would include an additional service to Santa Ana residents and visitors, which would promote local spending and offer employment opportunities. The extended hours of operation would also assist with capturing local spending. Furthermore, the applicant's investment to continue operating with additional services would further encourage business patronizing in the surrounding area, providing further economic benefits not just to the applicant.

The project would also be consistent with the Economic Prosperity Element (EP) Goal EP-1 and Policy EP-1.2, which seek to foster a dynamic local economy that provides and creates employment opportunities and expand the City's efforts in achieving its full employment potential. The proposed request would allow the applicant to continue operating the existing eating establishment and expand on the offerings, resulting in fostering a dynamic local economy with the potential for new employment opportunities. This would in turn promote the fiscal stability and growth of the sales tax of the City as a whole. This would also be consistent with Policy EP-1.8, which promotes fiscal stability and growth of sales tax. Lastly, the granting of the CUPs will provide an additional service to Santa Ana residents and visitors, thereby positively contributing to the economic viability of the area by promoting local spending, offering employment opportunities, and providing a safe workplace. In addition, the eating establishment is located within an existing mixed-use area and its operations will be compatible with the surrounding uses.

Police Department Analysis

The Police Department has reviewed this request and has no concerns, as the operational standards applicable to on-premises ABC license and the proposed conditions of approval for after-hours operations will mitigate any potential impacts to the surrounding community. The Police Department reviews such applications for the sale and service of alcoholic beverages in order to ensure that the potential crime and nuisance behaviors associated with alcohol consumption are mitigated to the greatest extent possible. For on-premises licenses, the Police Department analyzes the crime rate in the area using the standards and definitions contained in the Business and Professions Code Section 23948.4(c)(2), which are also utilized by ABC. This section defines "reported crimes" as criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, and motor vehicle theft, combined with all arrests for other crimes, both felonies and misdemeanors, except traffic citations.

The Police Department then compares the number of such crimes in the reporting district as compared to the number of crimes in other reporting districts. In keeping with the standard used by ABC and Business and Professions Code, should the Police

Department determine that the reporting district has a 20 percent greater number of reported crimes than the average number found in all reporting districts, the Police Department will consider this information in making its recommendation.

As part of the application process, the Police Department has reviewed the applicant's request for sale of beer and wine for on-premises consumption and after-hours operations and has no prejudicial concerns, as the operational standards applicable to the ABC license and proposed conditions of approval will mitigate the potential impacts to the surrounding community. Based on its review, the Police Department is satisfied with applicable operational standards and proposed conditions and does not object to the granting of the CUP.

Table 3: Police Department Analysis and Criteria for Recommendation

Police Department Analysis and Criteria for Recommendation	
Police Grid No. and Rank	Police Grid No. 191; ranked 48 out of 102 Police Reporting Grids (47th Percentile).
Threshold for High Crime	This reporting district is below the 20 percent threshold established by the State for high crime.
Police Department Recommendation	As part of the review approval process, this application has been analyzed by the Santa Ana Police Department. Based on our most recent Citywide Incident Ranking Report, the Police Department has no concerns regarding activity in the area, as no significant events have occurred. Therefore, the police department does not oppose the granting of a CUP.

Public Notification and Community Outreach

Project notifications were posted, published, and mailed in accordance with City and State regulations. Copies of the public notice, including a 1,000-foot notification radius map, and the site posting are provided in Exhibit 8. The site is not located within the boundaries of any neighborhood associations, but is adjacent to the Sandpointe neighborhood. As a courtesy, the Sandpointe neighborhood association and representatives were contacted to identify any areas of concern due to the proposed application request. At the time this report was printed, no issues of concern were raised regarding the proposed CUPs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines, the project is categorically exempt from further review per Section 15301 (Class 1 – Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines. Class 1 exemption applies to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The project proposes to allow the sale of beer and wine for on-premises consumption and after-hours operations at an existing eating establishment. As such, a Notice of Exemption, Environmental Review No. 2025-18, will be filed for this project.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

EXHIBITS

1. Resolution for CUP No. 2025-05
2. Resolution for CUP No. 2025-06
3. Vicinity Zoning and Aerial View
4. Site Photos
5. Architectural Plans
6. Map of ABC Licenses in Project Vicinity
7. List of ABC Licenses in Census Tract 740.03
8. Copy of Public Notices

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