



# CITY OF COSTA MESA

P.O. BOX 1200 • 77 FAIR DRIVE • CALIFORNIA 92628-1200

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

May 6, 2021

Bob Berry  
3176 Pullman Street, Suite 118  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**RE: MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT ZA-21-06 TO ALLOW FOR AN AMBULANCE SERVICES USE IN THE MP – INDUSTRIAL PARK – ZONE  
3176 PULLMAN STREET, SUITES 114 AND 118, COSTA MESA**

Dear Mr. Berry:

City staff's review of your zoning application for the above-referenced project is complete. The application, as described in the attached project description, has been approved, based on the findings and subject to the conditions of approval and code requirements (attached). The decision will become final at 5:00 p.m. on May 13, 2021, unless appealed by an affected party, including filing of the necessary application and payment of the appropriate fee, or called up for review by a member of the Planning Commission or City Council.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact the project planner, Chris Yeager, at 714.754.4883, or at [christopher.yeager@costamesaca.gov](mailto:christopher.yeager@costamesaca.gov).

Sincerely,

WILLA BOUWENS-KILLEEN, AICP  
Zoning Administrator

Attachments: Report & Approved Conceptual Plans

cc: Engineering  
Fire Marshal

Sean Sullivan  
4223 Ponderosa, Suite A  
San Diego, CA 92020

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### ***Project Site/Environs***

The subject property is a 9-acre parcel with an existing industrial development. The property is bounded by McCormick Avenue to the south, Pullman Street to the west and other industrially developed properties to the north and east. The property sits across Pullman Street from a Commercial Limited – CL – zoned and developed property; the 55 Freeway is located on the other side of Pullman Street.

The subject property is zoned Industrial Park (MP) and has a General Plan land use designation of Industrial Park. The General Plan designation is intended to apply to large districts that contain a variety of industrial and compatible office and support commercial uses.

The requested minor conditional use permit (MCUP) would allow for ambulance service use to operate 24 hours a day/ 365 days of the year in the existing development. The proposed use would operate out of two suites; Suite 114 would serve as the ambulance operations station and would host an operations area, warehouse for equipment and supplies, crew staging area, and a crew resting and break area. Suite 118 would serve as the dispatch and administration office. The business would not be open to the public. Maintenance of any type will occur at a different site than the subject property.

## **ANALYSIS**

As required by the Zoning Code, a MCUP is required to allow establishment of an ambulance service use in all commercial and industrial zones. The proposed location would be the Orange County Headquarters and would provide service for all of the greater Orange County area.

As required by State and County law, the ambulance service would be required to operate with basic ambulance services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The facility will host two ambulances. In order to comply with the requirements, the operator proposes a 24-hour staffing model providing facilities that allow for field crews to rest between calls. The rest area is proposed to be located on the upper level of Suite 114 and includes recliners, a small refrigerator, a television, and desks. The suite also proposes two semi-private cubicles which each contain a bed that is designated for napping and/or resting. No employee resides at the station nor is allowed to store personal belongs at the facility. They must leave the premises at the end of their shift.

### ***Parking/Parking Lot Design***

Industrial uses are required to maintain a parking ratio of 3 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of space. Therefor the use should be credited 10 parking spaces.

	Square Footage	Parking Required
Suite 114	2,080	6.24

Suite 118	1,248	3.74
Total Parking		10

The lease for the two suites assigns four reserved parking spaces and five unreserved spaces. The maximum number of employees on site will be five staff and one manager. In addition, any unused ambulances will be parked in the parking lot; there will be no customer traffic coming to the suites. Consequently, there should be no parking impacts because the maximum number of spaces needed for the ambulance use will be eight which is less than the lease-assigned number of spaces (nine) and the number of spaces the City parking code credits to the suites (10).

### ***Neighborhood Impacts***

As a non-emergency ambulance service, lights and sirens are generally not activated when responding to calls. To further reduce any potential noise impacts, condition of approval (COA) #2 requires that the sirens of the ambulance not be activated until necessary or until arriving at primary or major arterial road.

The use is located approximately 1,500 feet from the Baker Block Apartments (125 Baker Street) and is separated by over 600 feet and the 55 Freeway from the Park Mesa Villas (550 Paularino Avenue). Due to the separation distances and the location of the 55 Freeway between the majority of the residential uses, in conjunction with COA #2, the use should have little to no impact on residential properties.

### ***Additional Discussion***

The ambulance fleet consists of two vehicles and they are to be maintained according to factory recommend service guidelines. COAs have been added to ensure that all repair work, fueling, and full washing will take place offsite. In addition, COA 5 requires that when the ambulances are not in service, they shall be parked in a dedicated parking space reserved for the units.

### **CONFORMANCE WITH THE CITY OF COSTA MESA GENERAL PLAN**

The Costa Mesa General Plan establishes the long-range planning and policy direction that guides change and preserves the qualities that define the community. The 2015-2035 General Plan sets forth the vision for Costa Mesa for the next two decades. This vision focuses on protecting and enhancing Costa Mesa's diverse residential neighborhoods, accommodating an array of businesses that both serve local needs and attract regional and international spending, and continuing to provide cultural, educational, social, and recreational amenities that contribute to the quality of life in the community. Over the long term, General Plan implementation will ensure that development decisions and improvements to public and private infrastructure are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this Plan.

The request is consistent with several objectives and policies of the City's General Plan in that it allows for uses that do not disrupt existing residential neighborhoods, provides additional employment opportunities, and increases healthcare services.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 for the permitting and/or minor alteration of Existing Facilities. This project site contains existing buildings that will be unaffected by this request. The project is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

## **FINDINGS**

- A. The proposed project complies with Title 13, Section 13-29(e), Review Criteria, of the Municipal Code because:

**Finding:** Compatible and harmonious relationship between the proposed building and site development, and use(s), and the building and site developments, and uses that exist or have been approved for the general neighborhood.

**Facts in Support of Finding:** The proposed use is compatible and harmonious with uses both on site as well as those on surrounding properties. The project would be compatible with surrounding industrial uses because the use would have little noise impacts and no external visitors. The closest residences are across the 55 Freeway or are separated from this site by approximately 1,500 feet and, therefore, should not be affected by the use.

**Finding:** Safety and compatibility of the design of buildings, parking area, landscaping, luminaries and other site features which may include functional aspects of the site development such as automobile and pedestrian circulation.

**Facts in Support of Finding:** The safety and compatibility of the design of parking area, landscaping, luminaries and other site features which may include functional aspects of the site development such as automobile and pedestrian circulation have been considered.

**Finding:** Compliance with any performance standards as prescribed elsewhere in this Zoning Code.

**Facts in Support of Finding:** As conditioned the project is consistent with the Zoning Code. The use is allowed with a minor conditional use permit.

**Finding:** Consistency with the general plan and any applicable specific plan.

**Facts in Support of Finding:** As conditioned the project is consistent with

General Plan and the land use designation of Industrial Park. The Industrial Park designation is intended to apply to large districts that contain a variety of industrial and compatible office and support commercial uses.

**Finding:** The planning application is for a project-specific case and is not to be construed to be setting a precedent for future development.

**Facts in Support of Finding:** The zoning application is for a project-specific case and does not establish a precedent for future development. Approval will apply to this project-specific location. Conditions have been included that are specific to the proposed project.

- B. The proposed project complies with Title 13, Section 13-29(g)(2), Minor Conditional Use Permit, of the Municipal Code due to the following:

**Finding:** The proposed use, as conditioned, is substantially compatible with developments in the same general area and would not be materially detrimental to other properties within the area.

**Facts in Support of Findings:** As conditioned, the proposed use is substantially compatible with developments in the same general area and would not be materially detrimental to other properties in the area because the use will have minimal noise impacts and does not allow for external visitors. In addition, the closest residential property is separated by over 600 feet and the 55 Freeway or are separated from this site by approximately 1,500 feet from the use.

**Finding:** The proposed use and improvements will not be materially detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to property or improvements within the immediate neighborhood.

**Facts in Support of Findings:** The proposed use, as conditioned, would not generate adverse noise, traffic, or parking impacts that are unusual for industrial park zoned properties. The included conditions of approval further protect the immediate neighborhood from noise or nuisance associated with the use.

**Finding:** The proposed use, as conditioned, is consistent with the intent of the zoning code and General Plan land use designation for the property and is consistent with the following objectives and policies of the City's 2015 – 2035 General Plan:

**Policy LU-1.5:** *Maintain a land use structure that strives to balance jobs and housing with available infrastructure and public and human services.*

**Consistency:** The use, as conditioned maintains the existing land use structure while providing for additional employment opportunities. The use will increase the health services available to Costa Mesa and Orange County residents.

**Policy LU-3.1:** *Protect existing stabilized residential neighborhoods, including mobile home parks (and manufactured housing parks), from the encroachment of incompatible or potentially disruptive land uses and/or activities.*

**Consistency:** The use, as conditioned, will minimize the impacts and, therefore, preserve the residential character of the closest neighborhoods. Therefore, the project is consistent with this General Plan policy.

**Policy LU-7.1:** *Endeavor to create mixture of employment opportunities for all economic levels of residents and businesses.*

**Consistency:** The use provides for additional employment opportunities for people wishing to enter into medical or lifesaving careers.

- C. The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Guidelines Section 15301 for Existing Facilities. This project site contains existing buildings that will be unaffected by this project; no increase in total floor area for the use proposed. The use, as conditioned, is consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.
- D. The project is exempt from Chapter XII, Article 3, Transportation System Management, of Title 13 of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code.

### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

- Plng. 1. The use shall be limited to the type of operation as described in the staff report. Any change in the operational characteristics including, but not limited to, the number of ambulances on site or the resting arrangements, shall require review by the Planning Division and may require an amendment to the Minor Conditional Use Permit, subject to either Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission approval, depending on the nature of the proposed change. The applicant is reminded that Code allows the Planning Commission to modify or revoke any planning application based on findings related to public nuisance and/or noncompliance with conditions of approval [Title 13, Section 13-29(o)].
2. Business owner(s) and/or employees shall not reside on the site.
  3. The use shall be conducted, at all times, in a manner that will allow the quiet enjoyment of the surrounding neighborhood. The operator and/or business owner shall institute whatever security and operational measures are necessary to comply with this requirement, including, but not limited to prohibiting the use of emergency sirens until the ambulance reaches a major intersection, primary arterial road, or major arterial road. In addition, the ambulances shall not be permitted to idle in the parking lot.
  4. Repairs and maintenance of the ambulances shall take place off-site.
  5. Normal sanitizing of the interior of the ambulance may take place on-site; however, full exterior car washes shall take place off-site.
  6. A maximum of two ambulances may be parked outside in the approved and striped parking spaces. Ambulances shall not be parked on the street.
  7. The operator shall maintain free of litter all areas of the premises under which applicant has control.
  8. If parking shortages or other parking-related problems arise, the operator shall institute appropriate operational measures necessary to minimize or eliminate the problem, including, but not limited to, modify the hours of operation or modifying the number of ambulances.
  9. A copy of the conditions of approval shall be kept on the premises and presented to any authorized City Official upon request. New business/property owners shall be notified of conditions of approval upon Transfer of business or ownership of land.
  10. The applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the City, its elected and appointed officials, agents, officers and employees from any lawsuit, claim, action, or proceeding (collectively referred to as "proceeding") brought against the City, its elected and appointed officials, agents, officers or employees arising out of, or which are in any way related to, the applicant's project, or any approvals granted by City related to the applicant's project. The indemnification shall include, but not be

limited to, damages, fees and/or costs awarded against the City, if any, and cost of suit, attorney's fees, and other costs, liabilities and expenses incurred in connection with such proceeding whether incurred by the applicant, the City and/or the parties initiating or bringing such proceeding. This indemnity provision shall include the applicant's obligation to indemnify the City for all the City's costs, fees, and damages that the City incurs in enforcing the indemnification provisions set forth in this section. City shall have the right to choose its own legal counsel to represent the City's interests, and applicant shall indemnify City for all such costs incurred by City.

11. The use is subject to compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

### **CODE REQUIREMENTS**

The following non-exhaustive list of federal, state and local laws applicable to the project has been compiled by staff for the applicant's reference. Any reference to "City" pertains to the City of Costa Mesa.

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| Plng. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All contractors and subcontractors must have valid business licenses to do business in the City of Costa Mesa. Final inspections, final occupancy and utility releases will not be granted until all such licenses have been obtained.</li><li>2. Approval of the planning/zoning application is valid for two years from the effective date of this approval and will expire at the end of that period unless the use is established and a Public Entertainment Permit has been issued. A time extension can be requested no less than 30 days or more than 60 days before the expiration date of the permit and submitted with the appropriate fee for review to the Planning Division. Only one request for an extension of 180 days may be approved by the Director.</li><li>3. Permits shall be obtained for all signs according to the provisions of the Costa Mesa Sign Ordinance.</li><li>4. Hours of construction shall comply with Section 13-279, Title 13, of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code.</li><li>5. Vehicle standing, loading and unloading shall be conducted so as not to interfere with normal use of streets, sidewalks, driveways and on-site parking.</li><li>6. Comply with the CMMC requirements within Title 9, Chapter II, Article 5. Ambulance Businesses.</li></ol> |
| Bldg. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. Comply with the requirements of the following adopted codes Code, 2019 California Building Code, 2019 California Electrical code, 2019 California Mechanical code , 2019 California Plumbing code , 2019 California Green Building Standards Code and 2019 California Energy Code (or the applicable adopted, California Building code California Electrical code, California Mechanical code California Plumbing Code, California Green Building Standards and California Energy Code at the time of plan submittal or permit issuance ) and California Code of</li></ol>  |



Regulations also known as the California Building Standards Code, as amended by the City of Costa Mesa. Requirements for accessibility to sites ,facilities, buildings and elements by individuals with disability shall comply with chapter 11B of the 2019 California Building Code.

- Fire 8. Comply with the requirements of the 2019 California Fire Code and referenced standards as amended by the City of Costa Mesa.



City of Costa Mesa  
Planning & Development Services Department  
77 Fair Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

March 15, 2021

RE: Letter of Explanation for a Minor Conditional Use Permit for the use of 3176 Pullman Street, Suite 114 and 118, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 for LIFEwest Southern California ambulance operations.

To whom it may concern:

On behalf of LIFEwest Southern California, I am pleased to present this letter of explanation for the accompanying Minor Conditional Use Permit application.

LIFEwest Southern California is a high-quality non-emergency ambulance service company with offices in San Diego County. With an eye towards growth, we are expanding our services into Orange County and have selected the City of Costa Mesa as our Orange County headquarters.

As a resident of Orange County and having provided quality ambulance services to this community in the past, I believe Costa Mesa is a premier location and has an excellent business environment. Centrally located, with exceptional freeway access, we entered a leasing agreement with Olen Properties to lease two (2) suites in their Newport Business Complex on Pullman Street.

The addresses are 3176 Pullman Street, Suite 114, which will serve as the ambulance operations station, and 3176 Pullman Street, Suite 118, which will serve as our dispatch and admin office.

There is no direct access required by the public for us to operate our business out of these facilities. Our use of these facilities is essentially as a hub of operations. We respond to hospitals and skilled nursing facilities to facilitate the transport of the sick and injured. Our use is for the staging of resources and equipment to enable us to respond to these requests in a timely manner.

We are applying for a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) for the following purpose and reasons:

- 1. Ambulance Service Use in the Industrial Park MP Zone:** Our site is within the MP (Industrial Park) zone, which requires approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit prior to the establishment of our proposed use.

There are very few if any authorized areas for ambulance operations in most municipal zoning plans. As a result, the MCUP process is needed to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area as it pertains to our operations. We need your approval to proceed.

- 2. The State of California and the County of Orange EMS Agency Regulations:** The State EMSA and OC EMS Agency regulate ambulance services and require ambulance operations to be operated on a 24-hour a day basis, as such we request the MCUP provide for our ability to operate 24/7/365 from this location.
- 3. Reasonable Operational Assurances:** We are good neighbors and make every effort to not negatively impact any surrounding businesses or residents. We commit to the following operating restrictions and covenants.

#### **Staffing and Employee Count**

Operationally, we will begin operations with two (2) ambulances. One will work a 24-hour shift and one will be a ten (10) shift that is staffed predominantly during the day when peak demand is present. We will also have a dispatcher on duty 24/7 in Suite 118. Together there will be (5) regularly scheduled employees and a manager operating out of these facilities daily. This is well within the occupancy capacity of either Suite.

#### **Parking Mitigation**

Between our two facilities we have (5) dedicated and (4) non-dedicated parking spaces on site. There is also ample street parking on Pullman Street should the need arise.

None of the services we offer allow for or require the public to access our facility to conduct business, so no general parking for the public is required. We have ample space to handle our projected parking needs without infringing on our neighbors.

Lastly, the Newport Business Complex has strict rules and regulations regarding the creation of a parking nuisance.

**Noise Mitigation**

As a non-emergency ambulance service, we do not generally respond to calls with lights and sirens. To address possible noise concerns in the unlikely event that we do have an emergency call, no lights/sirens would be activated until the ambulance is on a major thoroughfare.

**Public Expectations**

To prevent any misconceptions that we provide emergency care at these locations, we will place signage in both suites that is visible to the public that states, "This is not a healthcare location" "If you have an Emergency, Dial 911". This is an OCEMS Policy as well.

**Property Rules**

The property management company (Olen) has detailed rules and regulations in the lease that ensures parking compliance, noise abatement, and the blocking of driveways or other access points. We have obtained written approval from Olen to operate 24/7/365 and are committed to operate within the confines of our lease agreements.

**Storm Drainage / Water Runoff**

We maintain and clean our vehicles everyday in accordance with OCEMS regulations. To meet this requirement, we maintain the cleanliness of our ambulances by using spray bottles and cloths to continuously wipe down the exterior of the ambulance throughout the day. There are no accessible hose bibs in the common area of our facility, so we will use a commercial car wash facility in the event a more detailed cleaning is necessary.

**Fleet Maintenance and Fueling**

Our ambulances are maintained according to factory recommended service guidelines. As such, all major recommended services and repair work is done off site at a certified maintenance facility. The only maintenance activity that will be conducted at on site will be the addition of DEF fluid that the vehicles utilize. No heavy vehicle maintenance will be conducted on premises.

Our ambulances are equipped with fuel cards that allow the crews to access fuel at any major brand gas station. We do not conduct any storage or refueling activity at our facility.

#### **4. Facility Utilization Plan**

A floor plan detailing both Suites 114 and 118 has been submitted as part of our application. The floor plans identify the office layout and the proposed use for each space.

#### **Overall Operational Design and Layout**

The operation of an ambulance service is fairly straight forward and can be broken down into several key functions.

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Admin / HR / Training | 4. Fleet               |
| 2. Communications        | 5. I.T.                |
| 3. Operations            | 6. Billing and Finance |

#### **1. Proposed use of the space(s):**

##### **3176 Pullman - Suite 118**

Suite 118 consists of 1248 square feet of office space split equally into an upper and lower level, each measuring 624 square feet.

##### **Admin/HR/Training and Communications**

Suite 118 will host the Admin/HR/Training, and Communications functions. The lower level will house the Communications Center, lobby and reception area, break room, and restroom. The Communications Center serves as a call center where requests for service are taken and the appropriate resource is sent via radio dispatch to respond. It is staffed with a minimum of one dispatcher.

The upper level is a large great room that serves as the Training Room and Conference Room areas.

##### **3176 Pullman - Suite 114**

Suite 114 consists of 2080 square feet of office and warehouse space. The lower level is split between open office area and the warehouse area. The warehouse is approximately 800 square feet, and the office area is 640 square feet. The upper level is also 640 square feet.

## **Operations and Crew Areas**

Suite 114 will host the Operations Area, Warehouse for Equipment and Supplies, Crew Staging Area, Crew Resting / Break Area, and Kitchen Area.

The lower level will house the Warehouse, restroom, Kitchen Area and Crew Ready Room. Here crews report to duty, pick up their radios and equipment and begin their daily unit checkout. Once ready, they are dispatched to coverage areas in our service area.

The upper level is a large great room that serves as the Crew Resting Area and TV Room. When crews are standing by or on call, they use this area to rest and prepare for the next call.

## **Fleet, IT, Billing and Finance**

The fleet of ambulances is professionally maintained at an authorized Mercedes dealership.

**Our Billing and IT support are handled at our corporate headquarters.**

Once again, on behalf of our team, we are extremely excited to bring our services to the City of Costa Mesa. We would ask and would appreciate that this review be handled as expeditiously as possible. We are willing to meet and confer with the City to discuss any conditions of approval or other regulations which may be reasonably implemented.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss further or to obtain additional information.

*Robert Barry*

Bob Barry

Managing Director

LIFWest Southern California

4202 Ponderosa, Suite A

San Diego, CA 92020

714-713-1708

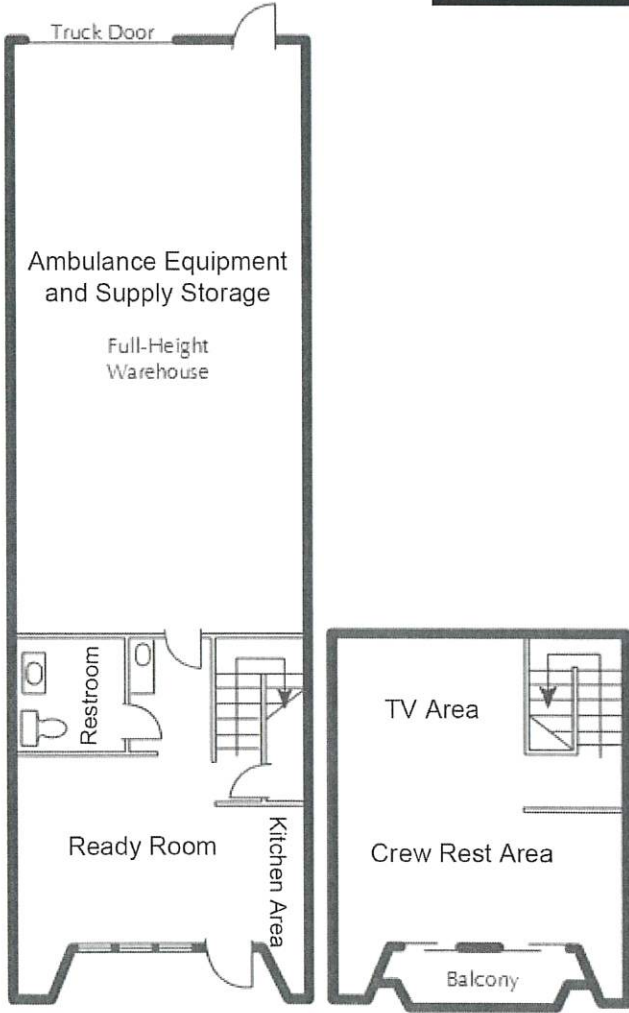
bob@lifewestambulance.com

# LIFEwest

3176 Pullman St  
Suites 114 and 118  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

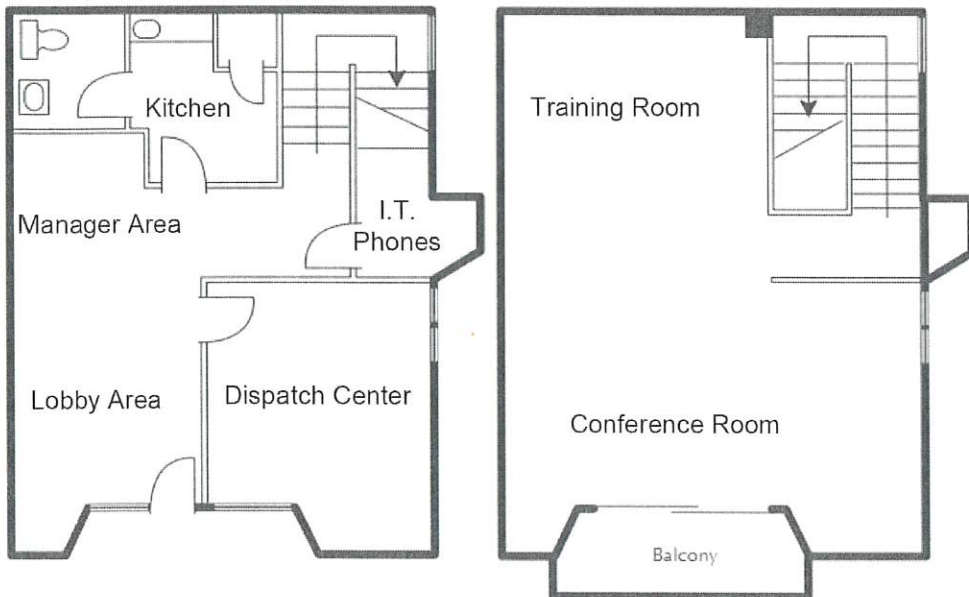
Bob Barry 714-713-1708

MCUP



3176 Pullman Street, Suite 114  
Costa Mesa, CA

2,080 Square Feet



3176 Pullman Street, Suite 118  
Costa Mesa, CA

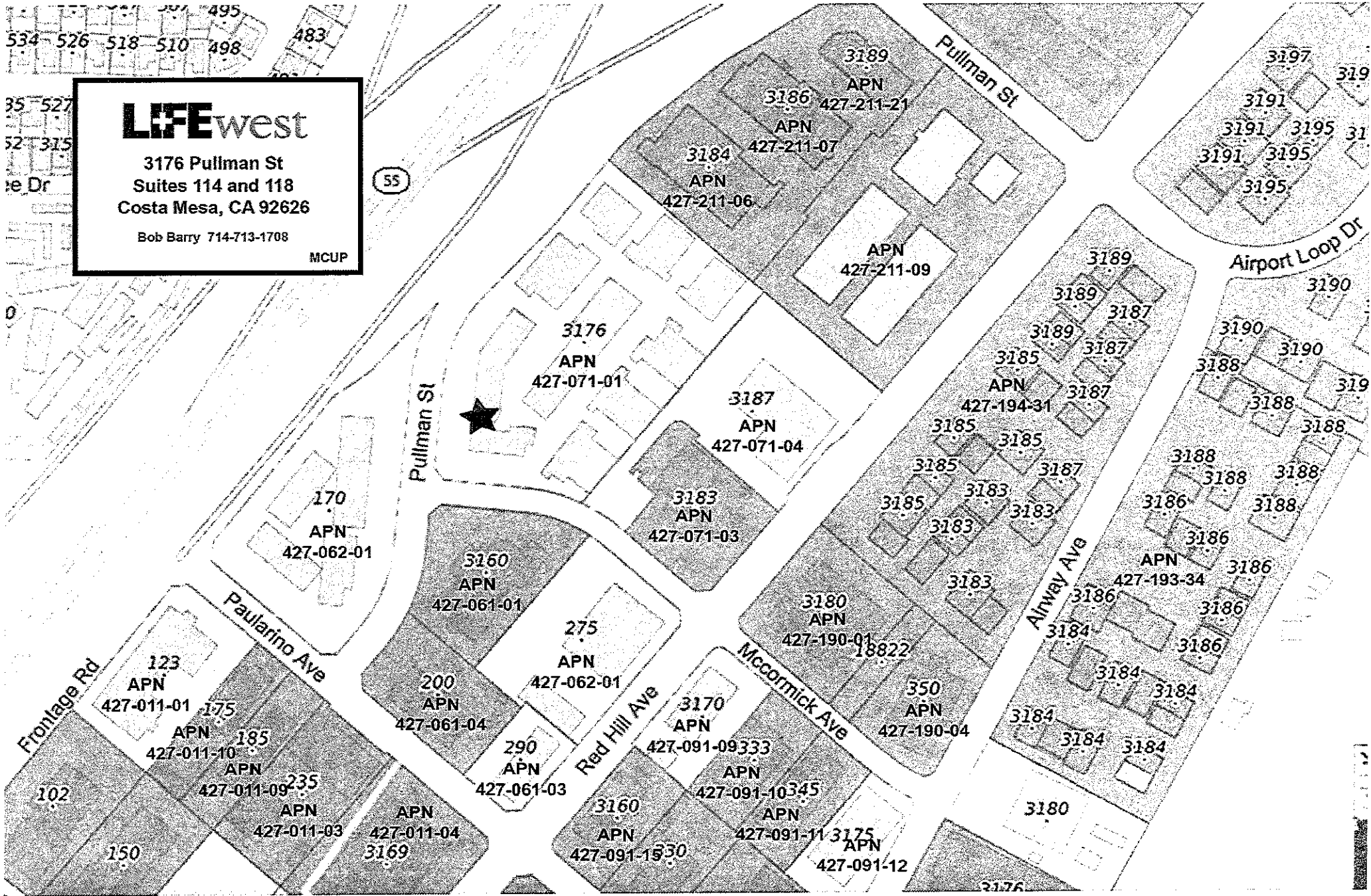
1,228 Square Feet

**LIFEWEST**

3176 Pullman St  
Suites 114 and 118  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Bob Barry 714-713-1708

MCUP





An aerial photograph of a commercial building complex. The building is a large, multi-story structure with a complex, somewhat U-shaped layout. Two specific units are highlighted with black boxes and labeled: Suite 114 and Suite 118. The building is surrounded by a large parking lot with many spaces. In the background, other commercial buildings and streets are visible. The image is in black and white.

**LIFE**west

3176 Pullman St  
Suites 114 and 118  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Bob Barry 714-713-1708

MCUP

Suite 114

Suite 118

Pullman St

McCormick Ave

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**LIFE**west

3176 Pullman St  
Suites 114 and 118  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Bob Barry 714-713-1708

MCLIP

Suite 114

Suite 118