



**4901 South Arizona Avenue, Suite 7
Chandler, AZ 85248
Use Permit Project Narrative**



July 8, 2022

Gammage & Burnham is pleased to submit this Use Permit project narrative on behalf of Dogtopia of South Chandler. Dogtopia is located in Suite 7 of the Chandler Crossing shopping center at the northeast corner of Arizona Avenue and Chandler Heights Road. The portion of the shopping center where Dogtopia is located is known as Maricopa County Parcel number 303-55-988, and the approximate boundaries of Suite 7 are shown below, outlined in red.



The existing property is located just west of the Southshore Village residential subdivision, south of Downtown Chandler. Suite 7 of the Chandler Crossing shopping center is approximately 5,900 square feet of an indoor animal boarding and play area, with an approximately 1,000 square foot outdoor play area.

EXISTING LAND USE DESIGNATIONS, ZONING AND USES

	General Plan Designation	Zoning District	Existing Use
North	Employment	PAD	Basis Charter School
South	Employment	PAD	Residential- Avilla Chandler Heights
East	Neighborhoods	PAD	Residential- Southshore Village
West	Neighborhoods	PAD	Fulton Ranch Marketplace
Project Site	Employment	PAD	Chandler Crossing Shopping Center

The Site is zoned PAD and allows uses shown in the Community Commercial (C-2) zoning district table of uses in Section 35-2100 of the City of Chandler Zoning Code. Permitted C-2 uses include indoor animal daycare and overnight boarding. Animal daycare with outdoor play areas require approval of a Use Permit.

The original Use Permit for the outdoor play area was approved in 2019. On August 12, 2021, a one-year Use Permit Extension (Case No. PLH20-0070) was granted by the Chandler City Council. The approved +/- 1,000 square foot outdoor dog play area has been constructed and is utilized today consistent with the conditions of approval attached to the original Use Permit and the Use Permit Extension.

The existing outdoor dog play area is located at the rear of the Dogtopia suite. It consists of an artificial turf area enclosed by an 8-foot-high opaque privacy fence. The dog play space is accessed directly from the interior of the tenant space and an exterior swing gate is provided for emergency access. The dog play area contains dog play equipment and a sunshade to not only provide relief from the elements, but for sound mitigation as well.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND REQUEST

This application requests approval of a Use Permit Extension for four (4) years to allow for the continued operation of the outdoor dog play area, as well as minor relief from prior use restrictions as shown in red on the next page:

Dogtopia employs approximately 23 staff members. Since operation of the outdoor dog play area began in August of 2020, Dogtopia has complied with the applicable Use Permit conditions of approval, including sound mitigation, cleanliness measures, and limiting capacity and hours of use. Further, Dogtopia has operated as a good neighbor and has responded to any neighbor concerns in a timely manner and in good faith.

Operational Characteristics		
	Approved	Proposed with Use Permit Extension
Size of Outdoor Animal Play Area	1,000 square feet	1,000 square feet (no change)
Days/Hours of Operation (indoor)	M-F 7am to 7pm Saturday: 10am to 5pm Sunday 10am to 5pm	M-F 7am to 7pm Saturday: 10am to 5pm Sunday 10am to 5pm (no change)
Days/Hours of Operation (Outdoor Animal Play Area)	M-F: 9am to 11am and 3pm to 5pm Saturday: 10am to 12pm Sunday: None	M-F: 8am to 11am and 3pm to 6pm Saturday: 10am to 12pm Sunday: None
Proposed Occupancy (Outdoor Animal Play Area)	39 small breed dogs; 30 Large breed dogs	40 dogs (regardless of breed)
Ratio of Staff Trainers to Dogs	1 Staff Member per every 20 Dogs	1 staff member per every 40 dogs

The modest request for an additional one-hour of outdoor playtime in the morning and afternoon, respectively, are extremely meaningful to the dog owners that use Dogtopia's services. This slight increase in playtime allows for the animals to exercise upon arrival to the facility and just prior to going home. These improved transitions create a more relaxed and rested dog that behaves better both at the facility and at home.

The restrictions on the number and type of dog in the play area has proven to be cumbersome to Dogtopia. First, there is no definition of "small" or "large" dogs, and no mention at all of "medium" sized dogs. Each employee is left to make an arbitrary determination of a dog's size prior to allowing them in the play area. Additionally, there is no correlation between the size of a dog and the pitch of its bark. In fact, sometimes the smaller dogs have a louder or more annoying bark than a larger dog. For this reason, the occupancy based on size should be eliminated.

Finally, the number of staff members in the play area does not necessarily decrease volume. Quite the opposite—sometimes the addition of a staff member in the play area creates confusion in the play area as each dog tries to establish a new order for the “pack”, that includes the two staff members. This confusion among the dogs leads to increased volume.

EVALUATION OF USE PERMIT CRITERIA

Section 35-305.1.b requires a review of the following factors when considering a Use Permit:

1. Consistency with the General Plan.

Response: As previously noted in this narrative, the land use designation for this property is “Employment”. For properties that lie within Arizona Avenue and the Union Pacific Railroad, and from Willis Road on the north to the City’s southern boundary, the designation is defined as “Transitional Employment.” This area is unique in the Employment designation because it is characterized by a mix of land uses including industrial, commercial, institutional, recreation, neighborhoods, and a range of residential densities. Dogtopia is consistent with the transitional Employment Area in that it provides a valuable commercial service to the residents that may live or work in this area.

2. Ingress and egress to the property and proposed structures, pedestrian and vehicular circulation with particular reference to fire protection.

Response: The main access to Dogtopia is provided at the front of the Chandler Crossing Shopping Center. While there is emergency egress at the back of the shopping center, the pickups and drop-offs of the dogs takes place at the front of the facility. Fire suppression equipment is provided within the shopping center as required by the Chandler City Code.

3. Off-street parking and loading.

Response: Similar to #2 above, the parking for the facility is at the front of the shopping center and is shared with the other tenants within the center and managed by the property management company. Fire lanes are clearly

marked, and there is abundant parking for all of the uses in the immediate vicinity.

4. General compatibility of use with adjacent property and property in the district.

Response: Dogtopia is compatible with the uses of the neighboring properties. Chandler Crossing Shopping Center is home to many uses, including a Basis Charter School with over 1,100 students, a movie theater, and Mexican Restaurant. Combined, these uses provide educational, commercial shopping and service opportunities to the nearby residents, and do so in a manner that has been designed with sensitivity to those properties. Many of the neighbors in the vicinity are customers of Dogtopia and have provided letters of support for the Use Permits that have previously been approved.

5. Impact on public services, including schools, recreation and utilities.

Response: There is no impact to public services by this dog boarding facility.

6. Screening and buffering of uses.

Response: Since the approval of the original Use Permit in 2019, Dogtopia has made extraordinary efforts to screen and buffer the facility from the closest adjacent residential neighborhood. In addition to a generous landscape buffer and screen wall at the rear of the shopping center, there is an additional wall enclosing the outdoor play area. Dogtopia has installed sound-mitigating panels, and a shade structure that provides not only shade but sound buffering as well. Shown below is a view from the closest residential neighborhood. It is worth noting that the Dogtopia outdoor play area is barely visible from the closest residence, which is approximately 150-feet away from the facility.



7. Signage.

Response: Signage for Dogtopia is shown in the photo on the next page and was designed in compliance with the Chapter 39 of the Chandler Municipal Code: Sign Code.



8. Exterior lighting with reference to adjacent properties.

Response: Other than safety lights at the rear of the shopping center, there is no site lighting specific to Dogtopia. Lighting for the shopping center was developed in compliance with the City of Chandler Zoning Code and Building Safety requirements.

9. Stormwater retention and landscaping.

Response: There is no specific requirement for Dogtopia to manage stormwater retention, and the landscaping at Chandler Crossing Shopping Center is maintained by the Property Owner's Association. Nevertheless, Dogtopia ensures that the landscaping at the front entrance is clean and free of debris at all times.

10. Site and building design for conformance with the General Plan and policies and City standards.

Response: As previously discussed, the General Plan land use designation for this property is "Transitional Employment". This designation is characterized by a mix of land uses including industrial, commercial, institutional, recreation, neighborhoods, and a range of residential densities. Chandler Crossing Shopping Center has been designed as an attractive shopping center with a unique mix of tenants, and Dogtopia is consistent with the transitional Employment Area in that it provides a valuable commercial service to the residents that may live or work in this area.

Additionally, Sec 35-305.1.c provides that Use Permits may be granted by the City Council upon finding that the request:

1. Is in conformance with the comprehensive plan and its policies;
2. Will not be detrimental to persons residing or working in the vicinity, to adjacent property, to the neighborhood or to the public welfare in general, and that the use will be in full conformity with the conditions, requirements or standards prescribed by this Code or higher as may be deemed necessary by City Council in any one (1) situation.

Response: The use that is subject to this Use Permit extension request has twice been found to be in conformance with the above criteria as evidenced by the original approval by the City Council in December 2019, and the extension granted in 2021. The use continues to be in full compliance with the above provisions and is not detrimental to persons residing in the vicinity, to the neighborhood or to the public welfare in general as documented within this narrative.

CONCLUSION

Dogtopia of South Chandler has proven to be a unique and successful business in the City of Chandler. It has operated in an orderly fashion and is a popular pet daycare and boarding destination that is appropriate to the character of the neighborhood. The outdoor play area has been designed to allow Dogtopia to offer additional services to Chandler pet owners in a manner that is compatible with surrounding structures and uses. Dogtopia has demonstrated that it is a well-run business and has been responsive to neighbor concerns. For these reasons, it is appropriate to approve a four (4) year Use Permit for Dogtopia of South Chandler.