



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH ZONING ADMINISTRATOR STAFF REPORT

September 25, 2025
Agenda Item No. 3

SUBJECT: Cue Zone (PA2025-0134)
• Minor Use Permit
• Staff Approval

SITE LOCATION: 4229 Birch Street, Suite 175 and 180

APPLICANT: Amirhessam Samadaghaei

OWNERS: AZK Investment LLC

PLANNER: Cameron Younger, Planning Technician
949-644-3228 or cyounger@newportbeachca.gov

LAND USE AND ZONING

- **General Plan:** AO (Airport Office and Supporting Uses)
- **Zoning District:** OA (Office-Airport)

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Applicant requests a minor use permit to allow an indoor cue sports club (Large Health/Fitness Facility – Over 2,000 square feet) within an existing 5,200-square-foot commercial tenant space. The club is membership-based and focuses on the coaching and development of various indoor cue sports. The applicant is proposing minor modifications to the interior of space. No late hours (after 11:00 p.m.) or alcohol service are proposed. Additionally, the Applicant requests a staff approval to reduce the off-site parking requirement by 14% in order to accommodate the use with the existing parking supply on-site.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Conduct a public hearing;
- 2) Find this project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 under Class 1 (Existing Facilities) because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment; and
- 3) Adopt Draft Zoning Administrator Resolution No. _ approving Minor Use Permit and Staff Approval No. PA2025-0134 (Attachment No. ZA 1).

DISCUSSION

Land Use and Development Standards

- The proposed project is located within an existing commercial building formerly occupied by a pharmaceutical laboratory and retail pharmacy. The property includes a 37-space parking lot on-site and is accessed from Birch Street (Figure 1, below).



Figure 1: Oblique Aerial Image of Project Site

- The project is located in the OA (Office-Airport) Zoning District, which is intended to provide for the development of properties adjacent to the John Wayne Airport for uses that support or benefit from airport operations including professional offices, retail, and service uses. Table 2-4 (Allowed Uses and Permit Requirements) of Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC) Section 20.20.020 (Commercial Zoning District Land Uses and Permit Requirements) lists Health/Fitness Facilities over 2,000 square-feet as an allowed use, subject to a minor use permit.
- The surrounding uses adjacent to the property are predominantly commercial and visitor accommodating uses also located in the vicinity. The Hyatt Regency Hotel is located approximately 400 feet northeast to the property as well as several rental car facilities located within a 300 feet vicinity of the property. The property is not adjacent to any residences as the nearest residential zone is approximately 3,000 feet southwest of the property.

Proposed Project and Use Characteristics

- The project will provide a host facility for patrons focused on the training and practice on various cue sports. The facility caters to athletes and provides professional training. The layout includes a lobby and reception area, a waiting area, restrooms, and 15 cue tables for the use of patrons.
- The health and fitness facility is membership-based and has been conditioned so that it will not operate as a pool hall or bar. The hours of operation are limited between 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. (Condition of Approval No. 5 in Exhibit “A” of the Draft Resolution – Attachment No. ZA 1). Alcohol sales or consumption, as well as live entertainment, are not permitted (Conditions of Approval No. 6 and 7).
- Project implementation will consist of a tenant improvement to the existing tenant space, in compliance with Building and Fire Code safety and accessibility requirements. The design of the tenant improvements will comply with all Building, Public Works, and Fire Codes.

Reduction in Required Parking

- With the proposed use, the required parking for the site is 43 spaces, where there are 37 on-site spaces provided. The applicant is requesting a waiver of 14% (six spaces) of the required parking spaces for off-street parking.

The applicant has provided a parking study prepared by Adler Consulting dated August 8, 2025, documenting that the property’s existing shared parking lot sufficiently accommodates the proposed project and other existing uses within the Property (Attachment No. ZA 4). The existing commercial building includes an 1,850-square-foot vacant tenant space which previously was used as a retail pharmacy, a 4,674-square-foot vacant tenant space which was previously used as a pharmaceutical laboratory, and the 5,200-square-foot tenant space where the project is located. The parking study surveyed two other similar indoor cue sports facilities in other cities to evaluate their peak parking rates and demand. The study concludes that the surveyed peak demand is 1.1 vehicles per table. Since the Project includes 15 tables, the peak demand is 17 spaces, which is nine less than the 26 parking spaces required by the Zoning Code. Therefore, the reduction of six parking spaces is appropriate.

- The applicant is also proposing one off-street parking space designated with proper signage for the use of rideshare. It is located to the north corner of the Property directly adjacent to the entrance of the suite and is in a convenient area for pick-up and drop-off. The rideshare space is located on private property in the center and intends to serve patrons for the various uses on-site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 under Class 1 (Existing Facilities), because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.

Class 1 exempts 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

In this case, the project is a minor use permit to allow a 5,200-square-foot indoor cue sports club operating as a large health/fitness facility in an existing tenant space and improvements are limited to minor tenant improvements within the existing building. Therefore, the proposed project qualifies for the Class 1 exemption.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this public hearing was published in the Daily Pilot, mailed to all owners of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the site (excluding intervening rights-of-way and waterways), including the applicant, and posted on the subject property at least 10 days before the scheduled hearing, consistent with the provisions of the NBMCA. Additionally, the item appeared on the agenda for this meeting, which was posted at City Hall and on the City website.

APPEAL PERIOD:

An appeal of this action may be filed with the Director of Community Development within 14 days following the date of action. For additional information on filing an appeal, contact the Planning Division at 949-644-3200.

Prepared by:


Cameron Younger, Planning Technician

DL/cy

Attachments:	ZA 1	Draft Resolution
	ZA 2	Vicinity Map
	ZA 3	Project Description
	ZA 4	Parking Study & Plans

Attachment No. ZA 1

Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ZA2025-###

A RESOLUTION OF THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING A MINOR USE PERMIT AND STAFF APPROVAL FOR AN INDOOR CUE SPORTS CLUB (LARGE HEALTH/FITNESS FACILITY), LOCATED AT 4229 BIRCH STREET, SUITE 175 & 180 (PA2025-0134)

THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. STATEMENT OF FACTS.

1. An application was filed by Amirhessam Samadaghaei (Applicant) with respect to property located at 4229 Birch Street, Suite 175 & 180 and legally described as the Parcel 2 of Tract 5169 (Property), seeking approval of a minor use permit.
2. The Applicant requests a minor use permit to allow an indoor cue sports club (Large Health/Fitness Facility – Over 2,000 square feet) within an existing 5,200-square-foot commercial tenant space. The club is membership-based and focuses on the coaching and development of various indoor cue sports. The applicant is proposing minor modifications to the interior of space. No late hours (after 11:00 p.m.) or alcohol service are proposed. Additionally, the Applicant requests a staff approval to reduce the off-site parking requirement by 14% in order to accommodate the use with the existing parking supply on-site (Project).
3. The Property is categorized Airport Office and Supporting Uses (AO) by the General Plan Land Use Element and is within the Office-Airport (OA) Zoning District.
4. The Property is not located in the coastal zone.
5. A public hearing was held on September 25, 2025, online via Zoom. A notice of time, place, and purpose of the hearing was given in accordance with the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC). Evidence, both written and oral, was presented to, and considered by the Zoning Administrator at this hearing.

SECTION 2. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT DETERMINATION.

1. This Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 under Class 1 (Existing Facilities) because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.
2. Class 1 exempts 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

3. The Project involves the establishment of a membership-based professional cue sports club within an existing tenant space in the OA (Office-Airport) zone and improvements are limited to minor tenant improvements within the existing building. The Project therefore qualifies for the Class 1 categorical exemption.

SECTION 3. REQUIRED FINDINGS.

In accordance with Section 20.52.020 (Conditional Use Permits and Minor Use Permits) of the NBMC, the following findings and facts in support of such findings are set forth:

Finding:

- A. *The use is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan;*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The AO (Airport Office and Supporting Uses) land use designation of the General Plan Land Use Plan is intended to provide for the development of properties adjoining the John Wayne Airport for uses that support or benefit from airport operations including professional offices, retail, and service uses. The Project is consistent with the land use designation as identified in the General Plan.
2. The Property is not located within a specific plan area.

Finding:

- B. *The use is allowed within the applicable zoning district and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code and the Municipal Code.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The OA (Office-Airport) Zoning District is intended to provide for the development of properties adjacent to the John Wayne Airport for uses that support or benefit from airport operations including professional offices, retail, and service uses. Large Health/Fitness Facilities (over 2,000 square feet) are specified as an allowed use within the OA zoning district, subject to a minor use permit.
2. The Project will provide a membership-based indoor cue-sports facility to train athletes focused on a variety of cue-sport disciplines. The Project does not include late hours (after 11:00 p.m.) and does not include alcohol service. The Project layout includes a lobby and reception area, a waiting area, restrooms, and 15 cue tables for the use of patrons.
3. The operational conditions of approval will promote compatibility with the surrounding land uses, which are predominately industrial uses. The proposed use will comply with all other applicable provisions of the NBMC.

4. The Project includes a staff approval per NBMC Section 20.40.110 (D) (Reduction of Required Off-Street Parking by Director) for the reduction in required parking. Facts in support of Findings F through H are hereby incorporated by reference.

Finding:

- C. *The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the use are compatible with the allowed uses in the vicinity.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Project is located within an existing commercial building formerly occupied by a pharmaceutical laboratory and retail pharmacy. The property includes a 37-space parking lot on-site and is accessed from Birch Street. The design, size, location, and operating characteristics of the use are compatible with the surrounding existing land uses.
2. Project implementation will consist of a tenant improvement to the existing tenant space, in compliance with Building and Fire Code safety and accessibility requirements. The design of the tenant improvements will comply with all Building, Public Works, and Fire Codes.
3. Per the requirements of NBMC Section 20.40.040 (Off-Street Parking Spaces Required), the Project creates a deficiency in required parking. 37 spaces are provided on-site, where 43 spaces are required. Facts in support of Findings F through H, below, are hereby incorporated.

Finding:

- D. *The site is physically suitable in terms of design, location, shape, size, operating characteristics, and the provision of public and emergency vehicle (e.g., fire and medical) access and public services and utilities.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. All proposed tenant improvements, with the exception of signage, are limited to the inside of the existing building and will not affect pedestrian circulation, parking spaces, or access to existing tenants. Adequate public and emergency vehicle access is taken from Birch Street. Public services and utilities are adequately provided on-site.
2. The design of the improvements will comply with all Building, Public Works, and Fire Codes, and plans will be reviewed prior to the issuance of building permits.

Finding:

- E. *Operation of the use at the location proposed would not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City, nor endanger, jeopardize, or otherwise*

constitute a hazard to the public convenience, health, interest, safety, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use.

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Project includes conditions of approval to ensure that potential conflicts with the surrounding land uses and City as a whole are minimized to the greatest extent possible. The operator is required to take reasonable steps to discourage and correct objectionable conditions that constitute a nuisance within the facility, adjacent properties, or surrounding public areas, sidewalks, or parking lots, during business hours, if directly related to the patrons of the business.
2. The proposed business will be located within an existing tenant space in a multi-tenant commercial building and the (OA) Office-Airport zone allows the proposed use, subject to a minor use permit. The space has not proven unsuitable for this type of use.
3. The proposal has been reviewed by the Building Division, Public Works, and Fire Departments, and recommended conditions of approval have been included to limit any detriment to the City or general welfare of persons visiting or working in the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff Approval

Pursuant to Section 20.40.110(D) (Reduction of Required Off-Street Parking by Director) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC), the Community Development Director may authorize a reduction of off-street parking by a maximum of 20% using a combination of the following:

Finding:

- F. The applicant has provided sufficient data, including a parking study if required by the Director, to indicate that parking demand will be less than the required number of spaces or that other parking is available.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Applicant has provided a parking study prepared by Adler Consulting dated August 8, 2025, documenting that the Property's existing shared parking lot sufficiently accommodates the Project and other existing uses within the Property. The existing commercial building includes an 1,850-square-foot vacant tenant space which previously was used as a retail pharmacy, a 4,674-square-foot vacant tenant space, which was previously used as a pharmaceutical laboratory, and the 5,200-square-foot tenant space where the Project is located. The parking study surveyed two other similar indoor cue sports facilities in other cities to evaluate their peak parking rates and demand. The study concludes that the surveyed peak demand is 1.1 vehicles per table. Since the Project includes 15 tables, the peak demand is 17 spaces, which is less than the 26 parking spaces required by the Zoning Code.

2. Since there are 37 onsite parking spaces on the Property and 43 spaces are required on site to accommodate the Project, the Applicant is requesting a reduction of six required parking spaces. The parking study supports this requested reduction, as the peak demand is 17 spaces, which is nine spaces less than the required parking for the Project.

Finding:

- G. *On-Site Bicycle Facilities. Required nonresidential off-street parking may be reduced where there is a demonstrated use of bicycles as a mode of transportation. The Director may reduce the number of required parking spaces by one space for every three bicycle parking spaces provided on the same site they serve, up to five percent of the total requirement in compliance with the following conditions:*
 - i. *The applicant has provided sufficient evidence to substantiate that there exists a demand for bicycle parking; and*
 - ii. *The bicycle parking spaces are located completely within the private property they serve.*
 - iii. *An additional five percent reduction may be allowed when enhanced end-of-trip facilities are provided on the same site they serve, including, but not limited to, showers and locker facilities.*

Facts in Support of Finding:

1. The Applicant is not proposing to add bicycle parking to the property, but instead will include a single ride-share space. The Applicant has also provided a parking study to justify the requested 14% reduction of parking requirements.

Finding:

- H. *Space for Shared Mobility. Required nonresidential off-street parking may be reduced by up to ten percent in compliance with the following conditions:*
 - i. *Exclusive of curb space needed for emergency access purposes (e.g., a fire lane), the development includes at least twenty linear and contiguous feet of on-site dedicated curb-space located entirely on private property; or*
 - ii. *There is one off-street parking space designated and with proper signage for the use of shared-mobility vehicles and/or pick-up/drop-off located on private property and on the same site it is intended to serve.*

Fact in Support of Finding:

1. The Applicant is proposing one off-street parking space designated with proper signage for the use of rideshare. It is located to the north corner of the Property directly adjacent to the entrance of the suite and is in a convenient area for pick-up and drop-off. The rideshare space is located on private property in the center and intends to serve patrons for the various uses on the Property.

SECTION 4. DECISION.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Zoning Administrator of the City of Newport Beach hereby finds this Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15301 under Class 1 (Existing Facilities), because it has no potential to have a significant effect on the environment.
2. The Zoning Administrator of the City of Newport Beach hereby approves Minor Use Permit and Staff Approval No. PA2025-0134 subject to the conditions set forth in Exhibit "A," which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
3. This action shall become final and effective 14 days following the date this Resolution was adopted unless within such time an appeal or call for review is filed with the Community Development Director in accordance with the provisions of Title 20 (Planning and Zoning) of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS 25th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2025.

Liz Westmoreland, AICP, Zoning Administrator

EXHIBIT “A”**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL****Planning Division**

1. The Project shall be in substantial conformance with the approved floor plans stamped and dated with the date of this approval (except as modified by applicable conditions of approval).
2. The Project is subject to all applicable City ordinances, policies, and standards, unless specifically waived or modified by the conditions of approval.
3. The Applicant shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Material violation of any of those laws in connection with the use may be cause for revocation of this Use Permit.
4. The Applicant is required to obtain all applicable permits from the City’s Building Division and Fire Department.
5. *The allowed hours of operation for this establishment shall be limited to the hours of 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., daily.*
6. *The sale, service, or consumption of alcohol shall not be permitted.*
7. *Live entertainment shall not be permitted.*
8. All proposed signs shall be in conformance with provisions of Chapter 20.42 (Sign Standards) of the NBMC and any future approved Comprehensive Sign Program.
9. The screening of roof-mounted and ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be required in all zoning districts at the time of new installation or replacement in conformance with NBMC Section 20.30.020 (Buffering and Screening).
10. All noise generated by the proposed use shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 10.26 (Community Noise Control), under Sections 10.26.025 (Exterior Noise Standards) and 10.26.030 (Interior Noise Standards), and other applicable noise control requirements of the NBMC.
11. Should the Property be sold or otherwise come under different ownership, any future owners or assignees shall be notified of the conditions of this approval by either the current business owner, property owner or leasing agent.
12. This Minor Use Permit and Staff Approval shall expire unless exercised within 24 months from the date of approval as specified in the NBMC Section 20.54.060 (Time Limits and Exceptions), unless an extension is otherwise granted.

13. This Minor Use Permit and Staff Approval may be modified or revoked by the Zoning Administrator if determined that the proposed uses or conditions under which it is being operated or maintained is detrimental to the public health, welfare or materially injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity or if the property is operated or maintained so as to constitute a public nuisance.
14. Any change in operational characteristics, expansion in area, or other modification to the approved plans, may require an amendment to this Use Permit or the processing of a new Use Permit.
15. *A minimum of thirty-seven (37) onsite parking spaces shall be maintained on the Property.*
16. Trash dumpsters and stored items blocking parking spaces shall be relocated to render all parking spaces available for the parking of vehicles.
17. A copy of the Resolution, including conditions of approval Exhibit "A" shall be incorporated into the Building Division and field sets of plans prior to issuance of the building permits.
18. Should the property be sold or otherwise come under different ownership, any future owners or assignees shall be notified of the conditions of this approval by either the current business owner, property owner or the leasing agent.
19. Trash receptacles for patrons shall be conveniently located both inside and outside of the establishment, however, not located on or within any public property or right-of-way.
20. The exterior of the business shall always be maintained free of litter and graffiti. The owner or operator shall provide for daily removal of trash, litter debris and graffiti from the premises and on all abutting sidewalks within 20 feet of the premises.
21. The Applicant shall ensure that the trash dumpsters and/or receptacles are maintained to control odors. This may include the provision of either fully self-contained dumpsters or periodic steam cleaning of the dumpsters, if deemed necessary by the Planning Division. Cleaning and maintenance of trash dumpsters shall be done in compliance with the provisions of Title 14, including all future amendments (including Water Quality related requirements).
22. Storage outside of the building in the front or at the rear of the property shall be prohibited, except for the required trash container enclosure.
23. A Special Events Permit is required for any event or promotional activity outside the normal operational characteristics of the approved use, as conditioned, or that would attract large crowds, involve the sale of alcoholic beverages, include any form of on-site media broadcast, or any other activities as specified in the NBMC to require such permits.

24. This approval shall expire and become void unless exercised within 24 months from the actual date of review authority approval, except where an extension of time is approved in compliance with the provisions of Title 20 (Planning and Zoning) of the NBMC.
25. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Applicant shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the City, its City Council, its boards and commissions, officials, officers, employees, and agents from and against any and all claims, demands, obligations, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, losses, judgments, fines, penalties, liabilities, costs, and expenses (including without limitation, attorney's fees, disbursements and court costs) of every kind and nature whatsoever which may arise from or in any manner relate (directly or indirectly) to City's approval of **Cue Zone including, but not limited to, Minor Use Permit and Staff Approval No. (PA2025-0134)**. This indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, damages awarded against the City, if any, costs of suit, attorneys' fees, and other expenses incurred in connection with such claim, action, causes of action, suit or proceeding whether incurred by Applicant, City, and/or the parties initiating or bringing such proceeding. The Applicant shall indemnify the City for all of City's costs, attorneys' fees, and damages which the City incurs in enforcing the indemnification provisions set forth in this condition. The Applicant shall pay to the City upon demand any amount owed to the City pursuant to the indemnification requirements prescribed in this condition.

Building Division

26. The Applicant is required to obtain all applicable permits from the City's Building Division and Fire Department. The construction plans must comply with the most recent, City-adopted version of the California Building Code. The construction plans must meet all applicable State Disabilities Access requirements.

Fire Department

27. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall provide occupancy analysis for the proposed tenant use complying with the 2022 California Fire Code. Any occupant load greater than 49 people shall require a second exist.
28. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the Applicant shall provide exit analysis and identify the required second floor exit on the floor or egress plan.

Public Works Department

29. The parking layout shall comply with City Standard 805.
30. Employees shall not park in the public right-of-way.

Attachment No. ZA 2

Vicinity Map

VICINITY MAP



Minor Use Permit No. PA2025-0134
4229 Birch Street
Suite 175 & 180

Attachment No. ZA 3

Project Description

PROJECT DESCRIPTION & JUSTIFICATION

Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to provide clear project description and justification for requested MUP in response to the City of Newport Beach Planning Department's preliminary determinations regarding the proposed use for our professional Snooker and Chinese Pool Club at 4229 Birch Street, Ste 175 & 180, located in the Office Airport (OA) zone.

Basic Information:

Project Address: 4229 Birch Street, Ste 175 and 180, Newport Beach, CA

Total Project Area: 5,200 sq ft

Total Building Area: 11,674 sq ft

Parcel #: 427-121-18

Parking: 35 standard + 2 ADA

What is Snooker?

Snooker is a professional indoor sport with a rich history and a deeply established global presence. It is governed internationally by the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) and organized through the World Snooker Tour (WST), which oversees more than 25 professional ranking events annually. The sport has structured global rankings, televised tournaments, and elite coaching certification programs.

There are thousands of professional and semi-professional snooker players and coaches worldwide. In countries such as the UK, China, and India, snooker is a mainstream sport with hundreds of accredited academies and training centers. In China alone, there are over 30,000 registered Snooker clubs. The UK hosts prestigious academies such as the Ding Junhui Academy and the South West Snooker Academy, which train future champions from around the world.

In the United States, snooker is growing rapidly. The United States Snooker Association (USSA) has been organizing national championships since 1991 and continues to support the development of regional training centers, youth programs, and coaching infrastructure. The U.S. now has dozens of certified coaches, multiple national-level

tournaments, and at least 20 known training facilities or clubs that support competitive snooker development.

Snooker players often make the sport their full-time profession — working as international competitors, coaches, or club managers. Top players like Ronnie O’Sullivan and Judd Trump have become global sports icons. Prize money from just one world championship event exceeds \$2.5 million, with the winner earning over \$600,000.

Most importantly, snooker is not a casual pastime — it is a high-performance precision sport that demands hours of daily training, focus, and athletic discipline.

Video: <https://youtu.be/QpJJ0n7kD-M>

What is Chinese Pool?

Chinese Pool, also known as Chinese 8-Ball, is one of the fastest-growing cue sports globally, blending the technical demands of Snooker with the pace of American 8-ball. Governed by the Chinese Billiards & Snooker Association (CBSA), the sport has experienced explosive expansion in the past decade, particularly in Asia and Europe, and is now gaining a strong foothold in the United States.

Chinese Pool currently supports an ecosystem of over 5,000 full-time professional players, coaches, and referees worldwide. In China, there are more than 50,000 Chinese Pool tables in circulation, and hundreds of full-time academies dedicated to this specific format. These academies offer structured programs and coaching certifications, much like professional training facilities for tennis or golf.

Major tournaments such as the CBSA World Chinese 8-Ball Masters award prize pools over \$500,000 USD, with top players earning sponsorships, endorsements, and global recognition. International stars from the U.S., UK, South Africa, and Poland regularly participate in these events, many of them transitioning from Snooker or 9-ball backgrounds to pursue full-time careers in Chinese Pool.

In the United States, Chinese Pool has grown significantly in the last 5 years. There are now over a dozen clubs and academies importing Chinese Pool tables and organizing structured training and leagues. The number of registered players participating in tournaments and training programs is steadily rising, driven by online viewership, international exposure, and demand for high-quality indoor sports facilities.

Chinese Pool, like Snooker, is a skill-based, professional sport, not a recreational or entertainment activity. It requires specific equipment, professional coaching, and dedicated space for tournament-level play. Many players, including ourselves, pursue this as a primary profession, either as athletes, coaches, or operators of competitive clubs.

Video: <https://youtu.be/lcW2239zzjE>

Club Activities

Our facility will operate as a **professional, membership-based cue sports club** focused on the disciplines of Snooker and Chinese Pool. We are not a casual billiards or entertainment venue — we are building a serious, structured club that supports **regular practice, athlete development, and community engagement** within these growing international sports.

1. Practice Facilities

- One of the major barriers to the growth of Snooker and Chinese Pool in Southern California is **lack of access to proper equipment**. Our club will house **full-size professional Snooker and Chinese Pool tables**, which are extremely rare in the region.
- Currently, the nearest professional-quality Snooker table is over **45 minutes away** from Newport Beach, and most available tables are not regulation standard or maintained for serious play.
- Our club will provide a **consistent, tournament-ready environment** for players to practice regularly — which is critical for improvement in these precision-based sports.

2. Training and Coaching

- While primarily a practice and competition-focused club, we will also offer structured training programs for members who wish to improve their skills.
- Both founders (myself and my partner, Nima) are **experienced players**, and we will offer coaching directly, along with guest coaches from the U.S. and overseas.

- Training options will include one-on-one coaching, group workshops, and curriculum-based progression for youth and adult players alike.

3. Tournaments and Leagues

- We will organize internal club leagues as well as open tournaments that attract both amateur and professional-level players.
- These events will follow the **official rules** of the United States Snooker Association (USSA) and the Chinese Billiards & Snooker Association (CBSA) when applicable.
- Our tournaments will promote community involvement while elevating the profile of cue sports in Orange County.

4. Professional Showcases and Guest Players

- A key element of our vision is to **bring in high-level players** for exhibitions, masterclasses, and training events.
- We plan to collaborate with U.S. and international federations to host visiting professionals, providing rare opportunities for local players to learn from the best.

5. Membership Model and Club Culture

- Access to the club will be primarily membership-based, creating a tight-knit, respectful, and goal-oriented community of players.
- Members will benefit from scheduled practice hours, priority tournament registration, discounted training sessions, and exclusive events.
- The club atmosphere will be quiet, disciplined, and focused — very different from a recreational pool hall.

6. Community Engagement

- We are committed to growing awareness of Snooker and Chinese Pool by partnering with local schools, youth programs, and community organizations.
 - Our club will offer workshops and demonstrations to introduce these sports to a wider audience and foster long-term interest and participation.
-

Operations and Layout

Our Snooker and Chinese Pool Club will operate as a professional, membership-based indoor sports facility with a structured, respectful environment. The total space is approximately **5,200 square feet**, thoughtfully designed to accommodate high-level practice, training, and tournaments while ensuring comfort, safety, and efficient flow throughout the club.

Operating Hours

- Open **7 days a week**, typically from **11:00 AM to 11PM**.
- The environment will remain quiet and professional — **no alcohol, no gambling, no loud music**

Staffing

- Staff will be on-site at all times to manage check-ins, maintain tables, supervise training, and assist members
- Coaches and tournament managers will be present during structured events or training sessions
- Cleanliness and safety are top priorities; staff will enforce club policies consistently

Club Layout (Approx. 5,200 sq ft)

The layout has been carefully planned to create distinct zones for each discipline while maximizing space for movement, training, and event hosting:

- **Snooker Zone** (Front or separated area for minimal distraction)

- **4 full-size professional Snooker tables** (12 ft each)
- 5+ ft clearance around each table for optimal play
- Tournament-level lighting, flooring, and noise control
- **Chinese Pool Zone**
 - **8 Chinese Pool tables** (approx. 9 ft, CBSA regulation standard)
 - Positioned with spacing that supports both individual and group use
 - This area will be the most active for regular member play and training
- **American Pool Zone**
 - **2 American 8-Ball tables**
 - These are primarily for players transitioning from traditional pool into Snooker/Chinese Pool disciplines, or for beginners
- **Reception & Lounge Area**
 - Front desk for check-in and club information
 - Quiet seating area for guests and players waiting for practice slots
- **Coaching & Analysis Corner**
 - Equipped with whiteboard, monitors, and video replay tools
 - Used for small group classes, demonstrations, and post-match reviews
- **Storage & Equipment Room**
 - Secure area for cues, cleaning equipment, and tournament materials
- **Restrooms**

- Clean, modern restrooms (at least two, unisex or separated)
-

Land Use:

I. Why Our Club Should Be Categorized as a Health/Fitness Facility (Large)

Definition from Newport Beach Municipal Code – Chapters 20.70 and 21.70:

“Health/Fitness Club (Land Use):

1. Small. An indoor facility of two thousand (2,000) square feet or less in size where passive or active exercises and related activities are performed using minimal muscle-building equipment or apparatus for the purpose of physical fitness, improved circulation or flexibility, and/or weight control. Examples of uses include Pilates, personal training, and yoga studios.
 2. Large. A full-service fitness center, gymnasium, or health and athletic club that is over two thousand (2,000) square feet in size and may include the following: aerobic classes and other indoor sports activities; indoor handball, racquetball, or tennis courts; locker rooms and showers; sauna, spa, or hot tub facilities; swimming pools, weight rooms; etc.”
-

Matching Our Use with the Definition:

We respectfully submit that our club clearly aligns with the definition of a **Health/Fitness Facility (Large)** based on three key qualifying elements in the definition:

1. **Indoor sports activities**
2. **Purpose of physical fitness and health**

3. Facility size and professional structure

Let's break these down:

1. Indoor Sports Activities (Explicitly Included in the Definition):

The code lists *aerobic classes and other indoor sports activities* as valid components of a large health/fitness club. This phrase alone opens the door to a **broad spectrum of recognized indoor sports**, such as table tennis, fencing, martial arts — and most certainly **Snooker and Chinese Pool**.

It is a well-established legal interpretation in land use law that when a code uses “*may include*” and lists examples, those examples are **illustrative, not exhaustive**. The term “other indoor sports activities” is intentionally open-ended to account for the wide variety of regulated, skill-based sports that may be practiced indoors but not specifically named. The list is **not exclusive**, and the omission of any particular sport does not imply its exclusion — particularly when it meets the function and purpose outlined.

Supporting Legal Principle:

Ejusdem generis, a principle of statutory interpretation, holds that when general words follow a list of specific examples, the general words should be interpreted to include items **of the same type** as those listed.

Here, Snooker and Chinese Pool are comparable in structure and purpose to handball or racquetball: they are skill-based, indoor sports with established federations, rules, and competitive structures.

2. Physical Fitness & Health Purpose:

Although Snooker and Chinese Pool are not cardio-intensive like spin classes, their health benefits are well documented. These sports require **mental focus, hand-eye coordination, precise movement, concentration**, and **stamina**. Much like archery or golf, they are recognized by the **World Health Organization and numerous studies** as contributors to improved mental and neurological health, stress reduction, and physical control.

- A 2018 report by the **British Heart Foundation** stated that cue sports like Snooker offer notable mental health benefits and promote long-term cognitive resilience.
- A study published in the *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* found that cue sports promote **neuro-muscular coordination, reflex development**, and **mental discipline** — all of which align with the fitness-based

objectives listed in the Newport Beach Code.

- **Over 60 countries** recognize Snooker as a formal sport, many offering training licenses, youth academies, and physical education integration.

3. Facility Size and Structure:

Our club is **5,200 sq ft**, qualifying it squarely as a "large" facility under the city's own definition. It is **not recreational or casual in nature**. We offer structured **training programs, practice schedules, tournament play, and international athlete hosting**, just like any other regulated sports facility.

II. Why Our Club Should Not Be Categorized as an Assembly/Meeting Facility

Definition from Newport Beach Municipal Code – Chapter 21.70:

“Assembly/meeting facilities, public or private (land use) means a facility for public or private assembly and meetings. May include incidental food and beverage service. Illustrative examples of these uses include:

1. Banquet rooms
2. Civic and private auditoriums
3. Community centers
4. Conference/convention facilities
5. Meeting halls for clubs and other membership organizations
6. Places of worship, including limited associated accessory uses
7. Sports stadiums and arenas
8. Yacht clubs

Also includes functionally related internal facilities (i.e., kitchens, multi-purpose rooms, storage, etc.).

Does **not** include conference and meeting rooms that are accessory and incidental to another principal use.

Does **not** include sports or other commercial entertainment facilities (see “Commercial recreation and entertainment”).”

Why Our Use Does Not Fit This Definition:

1. Function is Athletic, Not Assemblage:

Our club does not host **assemblies or meetings**. Members are present **for individual or small group practice**, training, or tournament participation — not for passive gathering, lectures, religious observance, or social ceremonies. There is no central stage, auditorium seating, podium, or communal speaking component.

2. Not Comparable to Examples Listed:

All the examples in the code — such as *banquet rooms*, *community centers*, and *places of worship* — serve a **public congregation function** centered around social, ceremonial, or religious gathering. These facilities are designed to host a seated audience for collective engagement. That is not the case in our facility.

We do not serve food, host large public events, or operate a multi-purpose room. Each player or coach is engaged in individual sport-related activity on a dedicated table. No lectures, performances, or group “assembly” occurs.

3. Club Does Not Qualify Under “Meeting Hall”

While our business has a membership model, this is a **sports membership**, not a social or civic organization that meets for discussion. We do not offer a “hall” or space where members gather for dialogue, planning, or ceremonies. Our facility functions much like a **tennis club**, **boxing gym**, or **karate dojo** — not a Kiwanis Club, church group, or civic auditorium.

4. Explicit Exclusions in the Code

The city’s code explicitly states that this classification “**does not include sports or other commercial entertainment facilities**.” Our facility is clearly a **sports facility**, operated commercially and focused on structured athletic development.

This exclusion further supports the argument that our proposed use is **not properly classified as an Assembly/Meeting Facility**. Forcing us into this category creates unnecessary regulatory burdens (such as a CUP), misrepresents our purpose, and inaccurately frames a sports operation as a social congregation venue.

Final Note On Land Use:

We are not asking for a special exception — we are simply asking for a **correct and fair classification** based on the **intent and structure** of the code. Cue sports like Snooker and Chinese Pool deserve to be acknowledged under the indoor sports umbrella, especially when operated in a highly structured, health-conscious, professional manner — as we are proposing.

Parking Demand Justification:

As part of our application, we hired professional engineer Adler, Neal license number 84772 and his team who conducted a comprehensive parking study provided in a separate document. This study evaluated actual parking demand for our proposed Snooker and Chinese Pool Club, taking into account similar facilities in the region, our anticipated operating hours, and the specific nature of our use.

The study demonstrates that even during peak operational hours (primarily after 5:00 PM and on weekends), our actual parking demand remains significantly lower than the total parking capacity required under the Newport Beach Municipal Code for a Health/Fitness Facility of this size. Based on observed trends from comparable businesses, our estimated peak parking usage does not exceed 17 vehicles, which fits entirely within the available parking spaces, while leaving enough capacity for potential future tenants for other vacant units.

To further support responsible transportation practices and reduce on-site parking demand, we have designated one of our existing parking spaces as a Rideshare Pickup/Drop-off Zone, which will accommodate members arriving by carpool, Uber, Lyft, or other rideshare services. This measure aligns with the City's transportation demand management goals and demonstrates our proactive approach to minimizing vehicular traffic impacts.

These efforts confirm that our project will not create an undue burden on the site's parking supply, nor will it negatively impact adjacent tenants now or in the future. The Parking Study supports the finding that the proposed use is consistent with the public interest and meets the intent of the City's parking and zoning requirements.

Why this should be approved:

We respectfully request the City's approval of this Minor Use Permit (MUP) as our project aligns fully with the purpose and intent of the Newport Beach Municipal Code.

The proposed Cue Zone – Chinese Pool and Snooker Club – is not only compliant with the allowed uses under the Health/Fitness Facility (Large) classification but also represents a unique and positive addition to the City's offerings.

Snooker and Chinese Pool are growing international sports with passionate, underserved fan bases in the United States. Southern California, and Newport Beach in particular, have lacked a professional, structured environment for athletes, youth, and enthusiasts to practice, train, compete, and enjoy these sports. This facility fills that gap in a manner that is safe, quiet, and community-focused.

By approving this project, the City of Newport Beach has the opportunity to:

- Support the development of a healthy, skill-based indoor sport that promotes mental focus, discipline, and athleticism.
- Activate a long-vacant space and revitalize an underutilized property with a business that operates responsibly and creates local jobs.
- Encourage youth development and community engagement through outreach, clinics, and accessible activities.
- Contribute to the City's economic growth through increased business activity, local sponsorship opportunities, and future partnerships.

We are deeply honored to work alongside the City of Newport Beach and be a part of its vibrant business community. We are committed not only to compliance with all City codes but also to becoming an asset to the City's growth, culture, and reputation as a forward-thinking community. We envision future collaborations with the City for public events, youth initiatives, and potential sponsorship of community activities that will further integrate this exciting sport into the local culture.

Finally, we sincerely thank the Planning staff and City leadership for your support, guidance, and partnership throughout this process. Your openness and professionalism have made it clear that Newport Beach values thoughtful, community-driven projects.

We look forward to working closely with you to launch this facility and hope for your continued support as we grow this sport and bring it to a broader audience.

Respectfully,

Amir Aghaei & Nima Alizadeh

USA Snooker Masters LLC (DBA Cue Zone)

Attachment No. ZA 4

Parking Study & Plans

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 08/08/2025

To: City of Newport Beach | Planning Department

From: ADLER, NEAL, PE

Prepared For: USA Snooker Masters LLC (DBA Cue Zone)

Prepared By: ADLER, NEAL, PE

Project Address: 4229 Birch Street, Newport Beach, CA

Subject: Parking Study for Cue Zone – 4229 Birch Street, Newport Beach, CA

Project Overview

This parking study has been prepared to support a Minor Use Permit (MUP) for the proposed Cue Zone – Chinese Pool and Snooker Club, located within a multi-tenant commercial property in the Office Airport (OA) zoning district. This study evaluates the anticipated parking demand generated by Cue Zone against the available on-site parking and determines compliance with applicable parking standards as defined by the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC).

Cue Zone is primarily a membership-based facility focused on structured practice play, training, and small-scale tournaments for Chinese pool and Snooker. The nature of operations results in consistent, predictable parking demand concentrated after normal business hours. The site also includes a dedicated drop-off area for rideshare use, as requested by City staff.

Site Description and Tenant Allocation

- **APN:** 427-121-18
- **Property Owner:** AZK Investment LLC
- **Total Building Area:** 11,674 sq ft
- **Cue Zone Area (Ste 175 & 180):** 5,200 sq ft



Existing Parking Info

- **Total On-Site Parking Supply:** 37 stalls (35 standard + 2 ADA)
- **Rideshare Assignment:** 1 of the 22 rear stalls is designated for rideshare, with signage to facilitate short-term pick-up and drop-off
- **Other units in the building are currently vacant.**



Initial Parking Calculations By City

Suite	Area (sf)	Historical Use	Parking Rate	Stalls Required
175 & 180	5,200	Cue Zone	1 per 200 sq ft	26
100	1,850	Pharmacy	1 per 250 sq ft	7.4
130	1,974	Laboratory	1 per 500 sq ft	3.9
150	2,650	Laboratory	1 per 500 sq ft	5.3
Total	11,674			43

Parking Demand Analysis

Per NBMC §20.40.040, the required parking for Cue Zone is calculated to be 26 stalls based on its square footage and use classification. **However, actual parking demand is substantially lower based on collected surveys from similar businesses with similar number of tables or higher.**

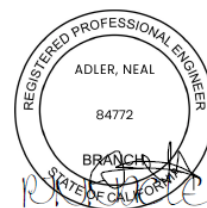
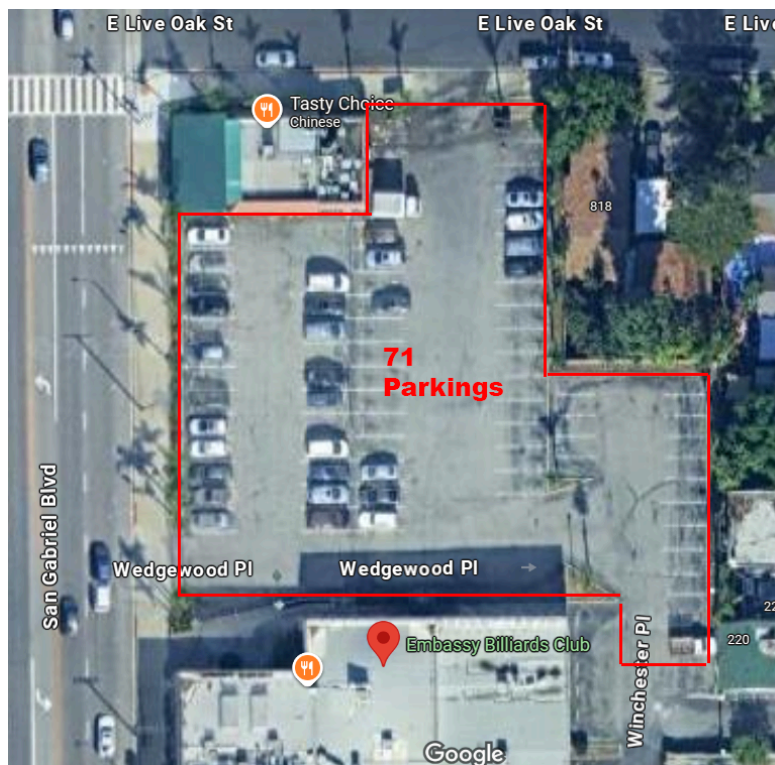
Survey Site 1:

- **Tenant:** Embassy Billiards
- **Address:** 220 S San Gabriel Blvd, San Gabriel, CA 91776
- **Size:** Approximately 5,000 square feet
- **Peak Demand Observed:** 17 vehicles (Saturday 7:00 PM)
- **Peak Parking Rate:** 1 parking space per table for peak hours
- **Hours of Operation:** Mon-Fri 2:00PM to 2:00AM Sat-Sun 1:00PM to 2:00AM, daily
- **Total Number of Tables:** 17
- **Total Shopping Center Parking Spots:** 71
- **Methodology:** Parking occupancy and patron destination data were collected through an in-house **patron intercept survey**, in which trained staff discreetly observed and recorded where arriving patrons parked and which business they subsequently entered.



□ **Notes:** Parking lot is shared between Embassy Billiards and 2 popular restaurants (The Bund 8 外滩8号 and Tasty Choice).

Embassy Billiards operates as a large, table-based club offering Chinese pool, billiards, snooker, and small tournament events. The facility maintains a strong evening-focused clientele and provides member access alongside open play. Parking demand remained concentrated between 6:00 PM and 9:00 PM and never exceeded on-site supply during observed periods. The parking occupancy stays consistent with the surveyed data for other days of week.



Survey Site 2:

- **Tenant:** iCue Billiards
- **Address:** 18888 Labin Ct b208, Rowland Heights, CA 91748
- **Size:** Approximately 4,800 square feet
- **Peak Demand Observed:** 15 vehicles (Saturday 7:15 PM)
- **Peak Parking Rate:** 1.1 parking space per table for peak hours
- **Hours of Operation:** Mon-Fri 2:00PM to 2:00AM Sat-Sun 1:00PM to 2:00AM, daily
- **Total Number of Tables:** 14

□ **Total Shopping Center Parking Spots:** 309

□ **Methodology:** Parking occupancy and patron destination data were collected through an in-house **patron intercept survey**, in which trained staff discreetly observed and recorded where arriving patrons parked and which business they subsequently entered.

□ **Notes:** Parking lot is shared between iCue Billiards and many other businesses (mostly restaurants) including Lobster Bay, 罗兰岗餐厅, 玩player麻将馆, Lao Ma Tou Hot Pot, Mountain House, Hide Out Café, LELECHA and Wonder Bakery, Ishi Sushi, Stew House, Gui BBQ, Wink&Polish Nails, Pearl Plaza

iCue Billiards functions as a facility with a focus on Chinese pool and Snooker play. It features 14 tables and a similar primarily member-based schedule as Cue Zone. Parking was surveyed on a random Wednesday and Saturday, with observed demand staying between 10 and 15 vehicles during peak evening hours. The parking occupancy stays consistent with the surveyed data for other days of week.



To quantify expected demand, surveys were conducted using comparable facilities (Embassy Billiards in San Gabriel and iCue Billiards in Rowland Heights). Parking utilization was charted across 12 hourly intervals from 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM for both a weekday (Wednesday) and a weekend (Saturday). Weather was typical, no special events/tournaments occurred and Wednesday July 2nd was not affected by holiday traffic. Full survey charts are included in **Appendix A**.

The surveyed data demonstrates:

- **Peak demand on Saturday:** 17 vehicles (7:00 PM)
- **Peak demand on Wednesday:** 13 vehicles (7:00 PM)



These results confirm that parking demand from Cue Zone is well below the required 26 stalls. Even during weekend peak periods, actual usage remains within the 22 stalls located in the rear lot.

With the maximum parking rate of 1.1 vehicles per table, the proposed project with 14 tables will have a total of ~16 vehicles at its peak.

Operational and Temporal Compatibility

Cue Zone's daily operations begin at 11:00 AM and conclude by 11:00 PM. However, peak usage occurs consistently between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM, which does **not conflict with historical tenant activity**. All other tenants and most probably future tenants in this zone — including the former pharmacy and labs — operated primarily between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

This temporal offset ensures shared-use compatibility across the site. Furthermore, the controlled, primarily membership-based model ensures no unexpected surges or turnover that would impact available supply.

Site Circulation and Rideshare Stall

The 22 rear stalls provide convenient direct access to the Cue Zone entrance. One of these stalls has been designated as a **rideshare drop-off/pick-up stall**, as requested by City staff. This stall will be marked with permanent signage and positioned closest to the facility entrance to encourage use and reduce dwell time.

Circulation within the site complies with engineering access requirements. The site plan (see **Appendix B**) illustrates striping, drive aisles, ADA access, and vehicular flow.

Conclusion

Cue Zone's operations will not adversely affect site parking adequacy. Based on:

- A surveyed **maximum demand of 17 vehicles**
- An available on-site remaining supply of **20 stalls assigned to Cue Zone**, including a dedicated rideshare space

This study confirms that the facility is adequately served. There is **no risk of off-site parking overflow**, and approval of the Minor Use Permit is supported by both technical justification and operational design. With the maximum parking rate of 1.1 vehicles per table, the proposed project with 14 tables will have a total of ~16 vehicles at its peak.

Per the observed parking studies and proposed Shared Mobility parking space, we are requesting a waiver of 6 spaces.

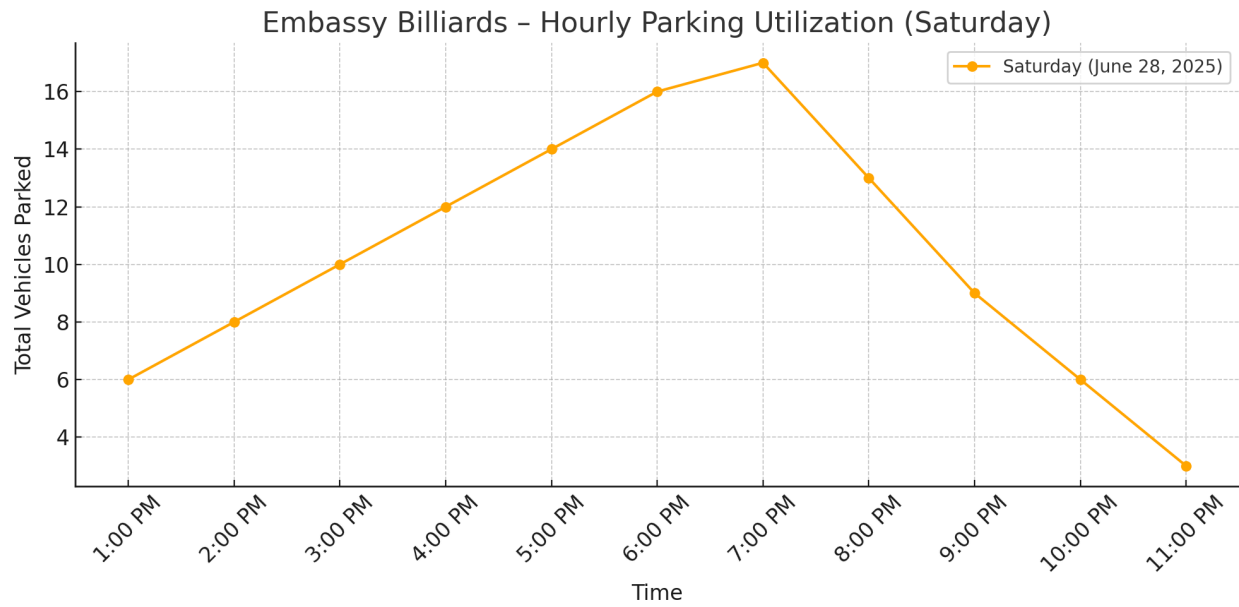
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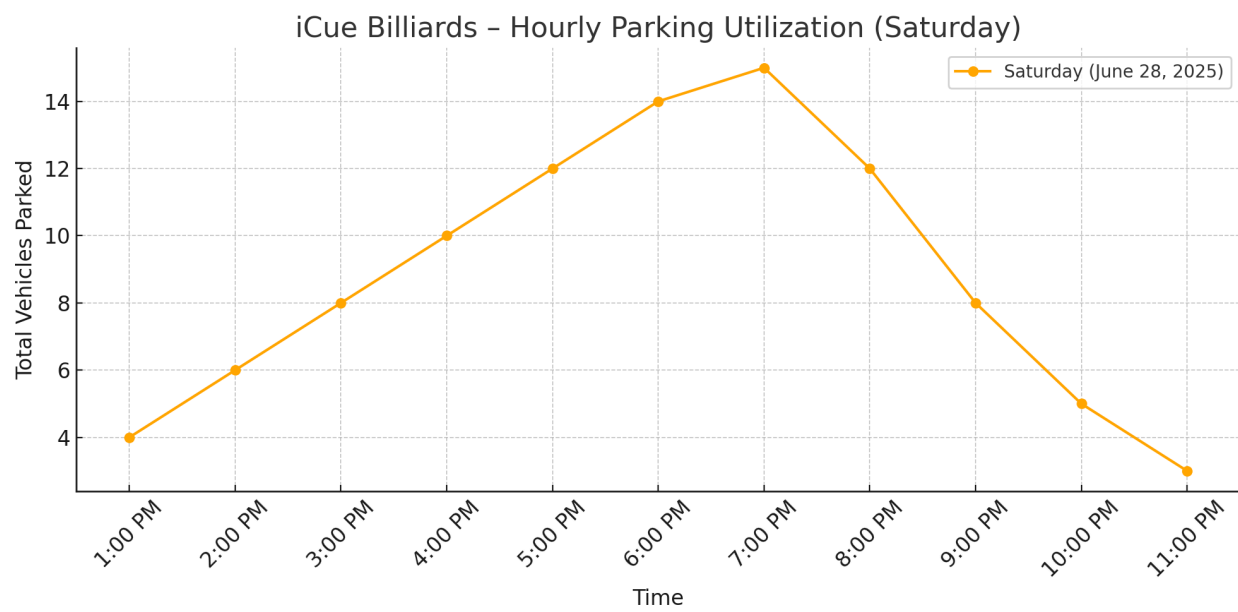
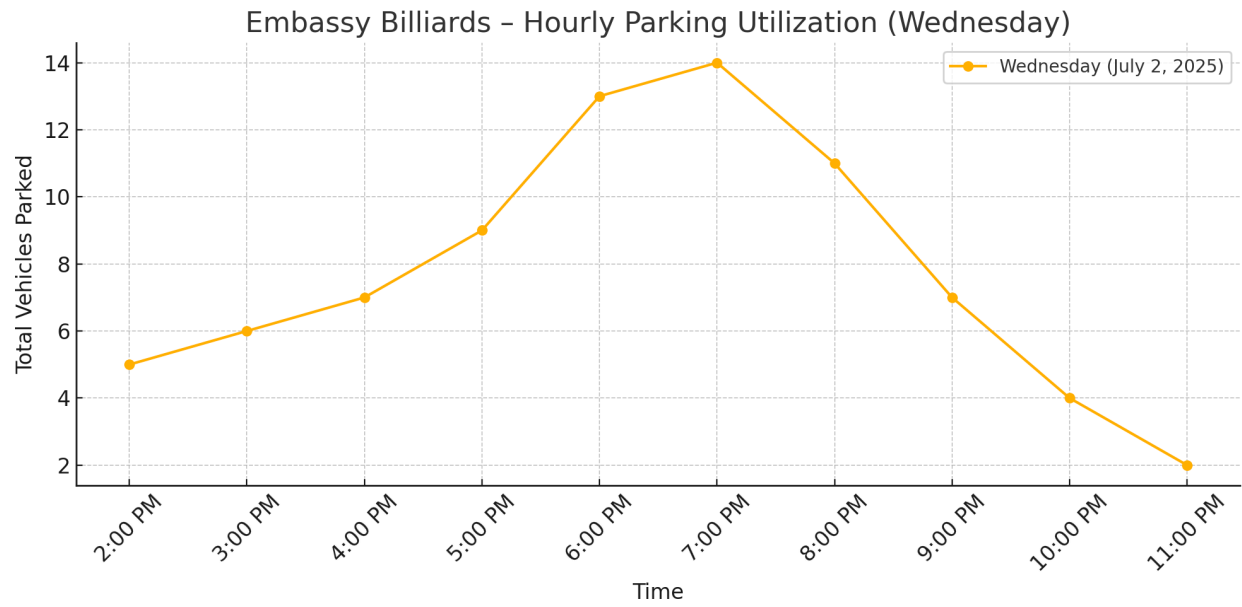
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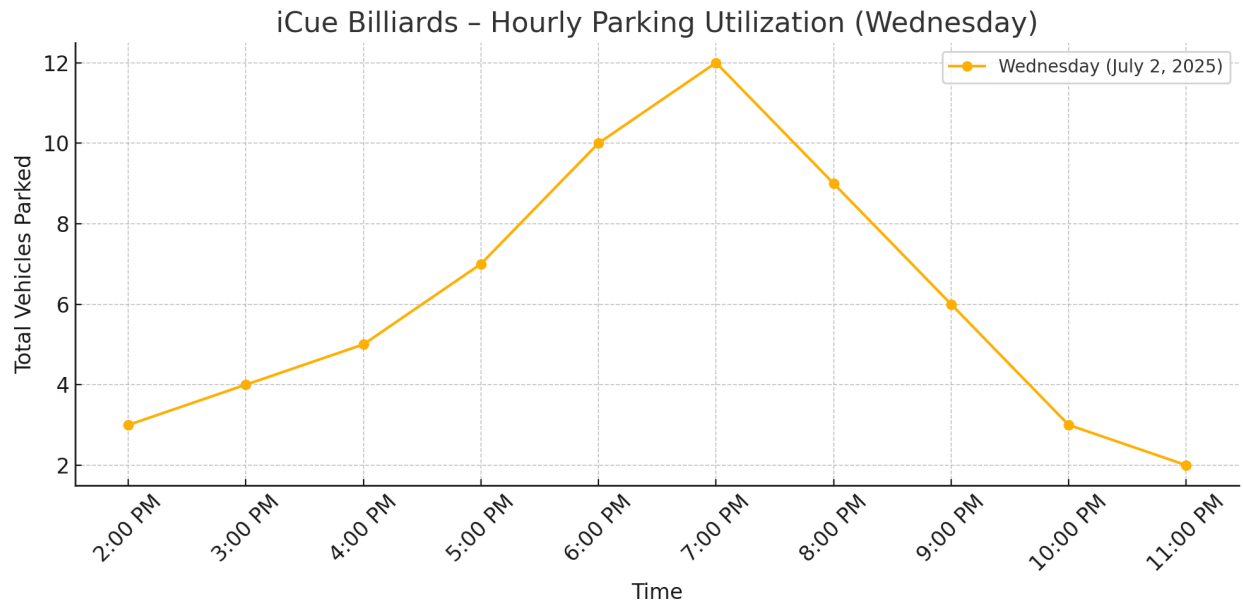


Attachments

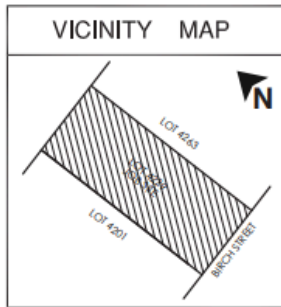
Appendix A – Parking Survey Data For Embassy Billiards and iCue Billiards



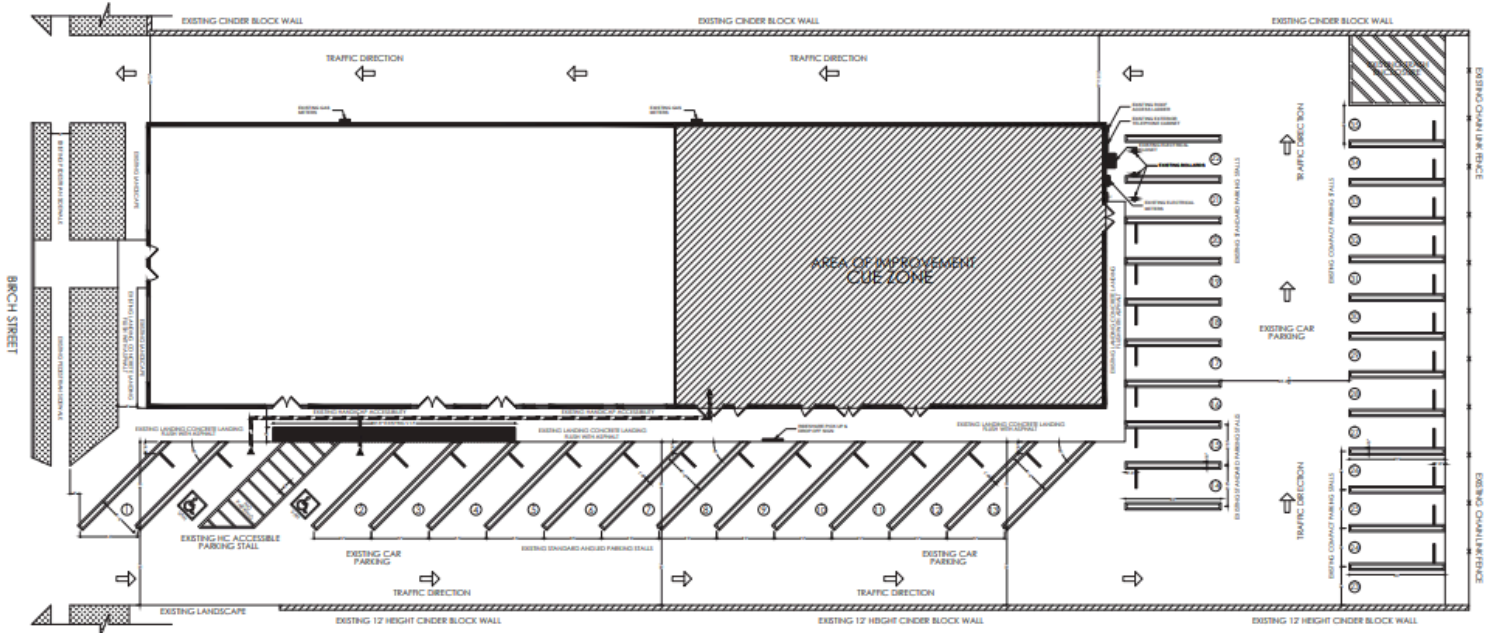




Appendix B – Site Plan and Parking Layout



APN # 427-121-18



Appendix C – Vicinity Map and Aerial Photo





VICINITY MAP:

