



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

BY: Shayna Gropen, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: Consideration of Conditional Use Permit 23-010 and Lot Line Adjustment 24-001; Construction of a New Car Wash; Location – 414, 418, 422 East Grand Ave; Applicant – Ryan Talley

DATE: April 4, 2024

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

Approval of conditional use permit will authorize the construction of a new car wash on the subject property. The lot line adjustment will create new parcel boundaries by extinguishing two (2) parcels, allowing for the construction of the car wash.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

None.

RECOMMENDATION:

1) Adopt a Resolution approving the conditional use permit and lot line adjustment; and
2) Find the project is categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15332 of the State CEQA Guidelines regarding infill development.

BACKGROUND:

The 18,882 square foot project site is comprised of three (3) separate parcels located at 414, 418, 422 East Grand, all of which are zoned Highway Mixed Use (HMU) (Attachment 2). The project site is located just east of the US 101 Grand Avenue Northbound Freeway off-ramp, at the corner of East Grand Avenue and Oak Street. Each parcel is currently developed with a single-family home, which is considered a legally nonconforming use, as single-family residential is not an allowed use in the HMU zoning district. The property located at 422 East Grand Avenue has an accessory dwelling unit in addition to the single-family home. The project site is bordered by residential uses to the north along Oak Street and Cornwall Avenue, McDonalds to the east, and commercial auto-related businesses to the south across East Grand Avenue, including Jiffy Lube and Coast Motors.

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The purpose of the HMU zoning where the site is located is to provide areas with a variety of visitor-serving and auto-related uses in areas convenient to both freeway traffic and vehicles or pedestrians. Development standards and design guidelines are intended to enhance this specialized mix of uses. The HMU district implements and is consistent with the Mixed-Use land use category of the General Plan. The HMU zone allows both auto-related and drive-through services with the approval of a conditional use permit (CUP).

Pursuant to [Arroyo Grande Municipal Code \(AGMC\) Section 16.16.050](#), CUP applications shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission after receiving a recommendation from the Community Development Director, Staff Advisory Committee and Architectural Review Committee.

Staff Advisory Committee (SAC)

The SAC discussed the proposed project on February 15, 2024. The Committee discussed items such as site circulation, and the location of the car wash entrance and exit along Oak Street. The SAC was supportive of the project as presented and expressed support for the site design, considerations to eliminate impacts to noise-sensitive receptors, and chosen architectural style.

Architectural Review Committee

The Architectural Review Committee reviewed the project at its meeting on March 4, 2024 (Attachment 3). The Committee was supportive of the project and appreciated the design aesthetic, site design, and car wash use. The ARC recommends approval of the project to the Planning Commission as submitted.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

Project Description

The proposed project consists of the construction of a new automated drive-thru car wash facility. The applicant is proposing an approximately 1,637 square foot car wash with a width dimension of twenty feet five inches (20'5") and a length of approximately eighty feet (80'). The car wash tunnel would be situated on the site parallel to E Grand Avenue and features a compact tunnel design. The primary structure on the project site will contain the tunnel as well as a 396 square foot office and 527 square foot storage area. Within the office area there will be an ADA accessible bathroom and an employee area including a kitchen and lockers. Additionally, the applicant is proposing underground water reclamation tanks to achieve 70% water recycling on the site. The project plans can be viewed as Attachment 4.

The car wash would be a fully automated system that a customer would drive through after paying at a 54 square foot kiosk along the eastern edge of the project site. There are thirteen (13) parking spaces for vacuuming and one ADA parking space identified within the project site. There will be a maximum of three (3) employees present during

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business hours. The proposed hours of operation during November through January are 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, and 8:00 am - 7:00 pm during the months of February through October. Proposed lighting on the sight is minimal, as the car wash will be closed during nighttime hours. The lighting will be down lighting on the building and around the vacuum stations, as well as black goose-neck style light posts around the site perimeter. The lighting will be soft, warm light as opposed to bright white or florescent lighting.

The applicant also proposes a lot line adjustment (LLA) to merge the three parcels into one larger lot. The proposed LLA will extinguish two of the bisecting lot lines and allow for proper circulation within the project site, as well as enable the construction of the primary building on the site which would otherwise cross lot lines.

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan Land Use designation of the project site is Mixed Use, which is intended to provide for a variety of retail, service, commercial, offices, residential, and other compatible uses that support multiple neighborhoods and the greater community. The project is consistent with the identified policies and implementation measures in the Land Use Element, Noise Element and Economic Development Element below.

Land Use Element

LU8-1: Permit the continuation of gasoline stations and supporting automotive service facilities in appropriate locations adjoining freeway access or at strategic major arterial street intersections provided that their design and operation are compatible with adjacent uses. Require that expansions or modifications of existing facilities be designed to convey a high quality architectural and landscape character, consistent with the overall character of the City.

LU11-2: Require that new development should be designed to create pleasing transitions to surrounding development.

LU11-2.5: Design development projects within City of Arroyo Grande to provide screening as necessary to shield neighboring properties from the adverse effects of that development.

LU12-13.3: Require that trash enclosures, loading areas, mechanical equipment, and outdoor storage areas be screened from public view as appropriate; design enclosures and screening with materials which are compatible with the project's architecture, and which do not detract from the rural, small town character of the community.

The project is consistent with the abovementioned General Plan Land Use Elements regarding compatibility of use and overall site design. The project site is designed with ample screening in the form of landscaping, a new six-foot (6') concrete block wall for

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buffering along the northern perimeter of the site, and pleasing architectural design elements that shield neighboring properties from adverse effects while simultaneously providing an effectual transition to surrounding development.

Noise Element

N5: To avoid or reduce noise impacts through site planning and project design, giving second preference to the use of noise barriers and/or structural modifications to buildings containing noise-sensitive land uses.

N4&5-3: Where development of a project subject to discretionary approval may result in land uses being exposed to existing or projected future noise levels exceeding the levels specified by the policies in the Noise Element, the City shall require and acoustical analysis as part of the environmental review under CEQA at the time the application is accepted for processing. For development not subject to discretionary approval and/or environmental review, the requirements for an acoustical analysis shall be implemented prior to the issuance of a building permit.

N2-1: Procedures shall be developed and employed to ensure that noise mitigation measures required pursuant to an acoustical analysis are implemented in the development review and building permit process.

The project is consistent with the abovementioned General Plan Noise Element regarding site design through the strategic orientation of noise-generating activities away from sensitive receptors. Additionally, a noise study was conducted in accordance with the Arroyo Grande Municipal Code (AGMC) Section 9.16 in order to demonstrate compliance, and develop noise mitigation measures to be implemented prior to construction.

Economic Development Element

ED5-2: Continue to enhance connectivity and increase retail utilization of the East Grand corridor, the Village Core, and the Traffic Way and El Camino Real mixed-use corridors.

The project satisfies the General Plan Economic Development Element by introducing a commercial and visitor-serving use along East Grand Avenue, a mixed-use corridor.

Development Standards

The project is subject to the development standards of the HMU zoning district. These standards include setbacks, floor-area ratio, lot coverage, and building height. Front and rear setbacks can be as little as zero feet, or up to 15 feet when the project site abuts a residential use. This project site is directly adjacent to a residential use to the north, therefore a rear setback of 15 feet is required. There is not a side setback requirement in

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this zone unless a site abuts a residential use or residentially zoned parcel. The adjacent use is a fast-food restaurant, therefore no side setback is required from the eastern side lot line. The maximum lot coverage and floor-area ratio for HMU zoned parcels is 75%. With a size of 18,882 square feet, a maximum of 14,161.5 square feet of floor area can be proposed. The combined building footprints of all structures on the lot, including the 54 square foot kiosk, is approximately 2,614 square feet, which is much less than the lot coverage limit for the HMU zone. The total impervious surface area proposed on the project site is 13,664 square feet, which accounts for 72% of the total project area.

Building height in the HMU zone is limited to 30 feet or three stories, whichever is less. Heights of up to 36 feet are allowed for visitor serving uses with the approval of a CUP. The height of the car wash tunnel is approximately 25 feet; therefore, the height of the proposed structure complies with the maximum allowed height of the zone. Compliance with the development standards is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Development Standards

Development Standard	HMU Requirement	Proposed
Setbacks:		
Front	0-15 Feet	0
Rear	0 - 15 feet*	90
Side	0 feet*	27-35 feet
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.75	.14
Lot Coverage	75%	14%
Height	30 feet or three-stories	25

*Wherever a lot in any commercial or mixed use district abuts a residential use or a lot in any residential use district, a minimum building setback of twenty (20) feet measured from the property line shall be required for proposed commercial use.

Access and Parking

The site is accessed from Oak Street, which is classified as a local street. A new twenty-four-foot (24') driveway will be constructed per City standards to serve as both the entrance and exit to the project site.

The Municipal Code does not include a specific parking requirement for a car wash use, so staff applied the parking rate for general retail and services of one space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area. The combined area of the car wash pay kiosk, equipment room (including the restroom), car wash tunnel, office, kitchen, and locker areas are approximately 2,590 square feet, which results in a parking requirement of 11 spaces. The car wash would be a fully automated system, requiring employees only to take a customer's payment at the kiosk. The parking spaces will be available for customers to park upon exiting the car wash tunnel to use the provided vacuums, and clean the interior of their cars, if desired. The project as proposed requires a total of 11 parking spaces and the requirement is met by providing 13 parking spaces.

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Traffic Analysis

The applicant submitted a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) for the project that was prepared in accordance with the City's Multimodal Transportation Study Guidelines (Attachment 5). The TIA evaluates the impacts of project-generated trips on intersections and roadways in the vicinity of the project. The intersections at East Grand Avenue and Oak Street, and East Grand Avenue and El Camino Real were analyzed in this TIA. The intersection of East Grand Avenue and El Camino Real operates at a level of service (LOS) E at the AM peak hour and at LOS F in the peak PM hour. The project is anticipated to add 35 trips during the AM peak period and 50 during the PM peak. Based on trip generation and distribution, 45 PM peak hour trips will be added to the E. Grand Avenue and Oak Street intersection spread among four turning movements, and 25 peak hour trips will be added to the East Grand Avenue and El Camino Real intersection spread among two through movements. This addition of project traffic is not expected to degrade LOS at any intersections or roadway segments analyzed in the TIA.

In addition to evaluating LOS, traffic analysis considers vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a metric for evaluating traffic impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act. VMT refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project. The City's Transportation Study Guidelines include exemptions for projects that meet certain criteria. Projects with a floor-area ratio of less than 0.75 and have floor area of less than 50,000 square feet meet this exemption, therefore no VMT analysis is required.

Noise

[Arroyo Grande Municipal Code \(AGMC\) Section 9.16](#) establishes standards for acceptable exterior and interior noise levels and describes how noise is to be measured. These standards are intended to protect persons from excessive noise levels, which are detrimental to the public health, welfare and safety and contrary to the public interest because they can: interfere with sleep, communication, relaxation and the full enjoyment of one's property; contribute to hearing impairment and a wide range of adverse physiological stress conditions; and adversely affect the value of real property.

[AGMC Section 9.16.040](#) establishes a list of exterior noise level standards and lists a number of noise-sensitive uses. When adjacent to one of these noise-sensitive uses, such as an office or residences, exterior noise levels may not exceed 70 decibels during the daytime (7am-10pm) and may not exceed 65 decibels during the nighttime (10pm-7am). This section further states that when ambient, pre-project noise levels exceed the maximum allowable, that the noise standard for the proposal shall not exceed the existing ambient noise levels.

The applicant commissioned a noise impact study that was completed December 22, 2023. The noise study can be viewed as Attachment 6. The study evaluates the existing ambient noise levels at the site and analyzes future noise impacts as a result of the

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project. Pursuant to AGMC Section 9.16, there are two metrics for determining the maximum allowable noise levels; decibels, and hourly equivalent sound level (dBA L_{eq}). Maximum decibels is simply the maximum noise level at any one time, whereas L_{eq} is the average noise level over a certain period of time. During that evaluation, noise was measured at three points throughout the project site and found an average noise level of 64.1 dBA L_{eq} , with a maximum noise level of 69.6 dBA L_{eq} and a minimum of 59.5 dBA L_{eq} . The maximum noise level measured during the analysis ranged between 69.1 decibels and 84.4 decibels. The ambient noise levels, which can be attributed to traffic on E. Grand Avenue, exceed the maximums allowed by both of the aforementioned metrics contained in the AGMC. AGMC Section 9.16.040.C states that when the ambient noise level exceeds the applicable exterior noise level standards, applicable standard shall be adjusted so as to equal the ambient noise level.

The project proposal incorporates several design measures in order to minimize the noise created by the use. These measures include a 120 HP International Dryer Company Predator system or equivalent to meet the acoustical benchmarks, a reduced car wash exit size of ten feet by ten feet (10'x10'), a six-foot (6') wall at the north property line, and an acoustic liner that will line sixteen feet (16') of the south wall near the exit to dampen the noise from within the tunnel. Any modification of the dryer equipment at a later date would require a re-evaluation including a new sound study. The noise analysis concludes that the proposed project will not result in an increase in the existing ambient noise levels, and therefore the project complies with the noise standards in the Municipal Code. The conditions listed in Section 8.3 of the noise analysis are included as conditions of approval to ensure compliance with the noise standards.

Architecture

The car wash structure is presented in a simple, modern-agrarian architectural style. The main tunnel where the car washing takes place will be clad with white composite horizontal board and bat siding, rustic brown wooden decorative composite shutters and barn door, and asphalt shingle roofing, all of which will be visible along East Grand Avenue. The project site will feature a white wooden fence around the perimeter and a flagpole near the project exit. The plans show approximately three (3) black goose-neck style light posts incorporated throughout the project site's interior landscaped areas, as well as several black wall-mounted downward turned exterior light fixtures primarily featured at the tunnel entrance, exit, and along the concrete walkway. Solar paneling will be installed on the asphalt shingle roof of the tunnel structure and pay kiosk.

The pay kiosk will be constructed in a similar architectural style to the primary car wash structure and will maintain consistent features such as color scheme and selected materials in order to create a consistent aesthetic across the project site. The trash enclosure will be located in the northeastern section of the project site near the vacuum

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stations, within a landscaped area, and will be constructed per the City of Arroyo Grande's engineering standards.

Signage

The plans show temporary banner signage near the car wash entrance and exit. Additionally, one ground sign and one projecting sign are proposed as a part of this project application. The signs are internally illuminated and oriented perpendicular to the road to capture traffic traveling along East Grand Avenue. The ground sign will be placed within a landscaped area in the southeast corner of the project area. The projecting sign will be placed on the car wash structure near the tunnel entrance, towards the southwest corner of the project area. The proposed signs meet the Development Standards regarding size, location, and number of allowed signs based on use and building frontage. Based on the building frontage of 80 feet, the business is allowed up to 132.5 square feet of signage. The two proposed signs combine to a total of 59.52 square feet which is below the maximum square footage of signage allowed.

Landscaping

A significant amount of landscaping is proposed with this project. Seven (7) new Crepe Myrtle Trees are included in the landscape plan, mostly positioned around the perimeter of the site. A variety of smaller shrubs are proposed between the trees, including fountain grass, sweet mist, Mexican sage, pride of Madeira shrubs, and Marjorie Channon shrubs. Areas adjacent to parking spaces will be planted with low growing shrubs and have artificial turf installed. The two existing street trees along Grand Avenue will be removed prior to construction in order to access underground utility connections and will be required to be replaced with a species of the City's choosing prior to project completion. All landscaping is required to be species that have low or very-low water needs to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo). The purpose of MWELo is to reduce water consumption for landscaping by requiring plant species that are appropriate for the local climate. In accordance with AGMC 16.84, no irrigated turf is proposed within the landscaping plan.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Planning Commission's consideration:

1. Adopt a Resolution approving the proposed project.
2. Modify and adopt the Resolution;
3. Make findings for denial and do not adopt the Resolution; or
4. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

The project will develop a highly visible site into a more suitable commercial use. The establishment of a car wash use is compatible with the HMU zoning designation of the site and would result in a community serving use along a major transit corridor.

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DISADVANTAGES:

The construction of the project will result in a net loss of four residential units.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The project was reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and it was determined to be categorically exempt pursuant to Section 15332 of the State CEQA Guidelines regarding infill development. CEQA Guidelines Section 15332 states that a categorical exemption for infill development is appropriate when the following conditions exist:

- a) 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; and
- b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres and substantially surrounded by urban uses; and
- c) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; and
- d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic noise, air quality, or water quality; and
- e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The 18,882 square foot project site has already been substantially graded and developed, and therefore, does not possess any value as habitat for rare, endangered, or threatened species. The proposed uses are consistent with the City's General Plan Mixed-Use land use designation and the zoning standards for the Highway Mixed-Use zone. The traffic analysis and noise study submitted by the applicant indicate that the project will not result in significant effects to transportation or produce harmful noise levels. The car wash will recycle water reducing its impact on water usage and quality, and the operations are typical of an urban environment and will not be detrimental to air quality. The site is located in an urbanized area and can be served by City water and sewer utilities and other public utilities such as natural gas, electricity, and cable.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City's website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2. Property owners within 300 feet of the project site were mailed public hearing notices 10 days prior to the public hearing and a public hearing sign was posted at the project site. A public hearing notice was also published in the Tribune on March 22, 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1. Resolution
- 2. Project Location

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3. Architectural Review Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Project Plans
5. Traffic Impact Analysis
6. Noise Impact Study