

Agenda Report



MEETING DATE: Tuesday, July 9, 2024

TO: City Council

FROM: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MERRIAM
ASSOCIATE PLANNER CARMONA

SUBJECT: MAJOR MODIFICATION TO SPECIAL USE PERMIT U-122-88
WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (PP2024-7115) TO ADD
PODIATRY RELATED USES TO THE PAJARO HILL
COMMERCIAL CENTER MASTER USES LIST LOCATED AT
1051 SOUTH GREEN VALLEY RD (APN: 018-281-32)

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt a resolution approving the Major Modification to Special Use Permit U-122-88 to add Podiatry related uses to the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center Master Uses List located at 1051 South Green Valley Road (APN 018-281-32), based on the attached findings and conditions of approval and finding project exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a Class 1 Categorical Exemption pursuant to section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines.

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Application: PP2024-7115

Location: 1051 South Green Valley Road (APN: 018-281-32)

Lot Size: 5.57± acres (242,759 SF)

General Plan: General Commercial

Zoning: CV (Visitor Commercial) with a Planned Development overlay

Surrounding: Residential Medium Density in the RM-2 Zoning District to the east, General Commercial in the CT Zoning District to the South, General Commercial in the CT Zoning District to the west and Residential Low Density in the R-1 Zoning District to the North.

Existing Use: Commercial Shopping Center

Proposed: Commercial Shopping Center

Flood Zone: N/A

CEQA Review: The project is eligible for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption, in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines

BACKGROUND:

On January 27, 1988, the City of Watsonville City Council approved Special Use Permit U-122-88 to allow a Specific Development Plan for the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center. The Special Use Permit approved creation of a master-related uses list for the shopping center (Attachment 1).

In 1990, the subject 5.57-acre parcel was developed as a commercial shopping center by property owner Jay Paul Company. The Pajaro Hill Commercial Center has remained in operation since its development and contains a diverse mix of commercial businesses, including Subway, Tina Nails & Hair, Big 5 Sporting Goods, Baskin Robbins, Jack in the Box, and Firestone Complete Auto Care Tire Shop.

Proposal

On May 15, 2024, The Foot Doctors of Santa Cruz County Inc., applicant, on behalf of property owner, The Jay Paul Company, submitted a Major Modification to Special Use Permit U-122-88 with Environmental Review (PP2024-7115) to add podiatry related uses to the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center master uses list (Attachment 2).

PROCESS

Major Modification to Special Use Permit

Pursuant to [WMC § 14-12.1000\(b\)](#) all major modifications to approved Special Use Permits are subject to review by the original approving body, if all findings in [WMC § 14-12.513](#) can be made in support of the project.

STANDARD OF REVIEW & APPEAL PROCESS

The decision whether to approve this Major Modification to Special Use Permit U-122-88 is adjudicative and requires environmental review. For more information on standard of review and process, see the [Standard of Review and Process Overview](#) on the City website.

DISCUSSION:

Existing Site

The 5.57-acre subject site is located southeast of the Main Street and South Green Valley Road intersection. The Pajaro Hill Commercial Center, positioned along Highway 152 and Highway 1, serves as a gateway to Watsonville. The site features a commercial shopping center with five buildings. The primary building, situated on the eastern portion of the parcel, is 38,864 square feet. The remaining four are standalone structures, housing the following businesses:

- Firestone Complete Auto Care
- Jack in the Box
- Ocean Breeze Family Dental (shared building)
- A vacant building previously occupied by Wells Fargo

Access to the shopping center is available from Main Street, with two additional entry points on South Green Valley Road and a fourth on Green Meadow Drive. Figure 1 identifies the subject site and surrounding uses.



FIGURE 1 Aerial Photograph of Project Site and Surrounding Uses

Source: Google Earth, 2024

Proposed Project

The property owner, The Jay Paul Company, is requesting to modify the master use list for the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center. The proposed modification would add "Podiatrist and related uses" (DLU 669) to the list. This change would enable leasing the vacant Wells Fargo building to The Foot Doctors of Santa Cruz County, currently located in Watsonville at 47 Penny Lane, Suite 1.

General Plan

Land designated General Commercial in the *City of Watsonville's 2005 General Plan* allows for a variety of commercial uses such as retail sales, personal, professional, financial, business and medical office services, entertainment, restaurant, and lodging intended to serve the needs of the community and the surrounding region.

The proposed project would be compliant with the following 2005 General Plan goals, policies, and implementation measures concerning General Commercial land uses in Watsonville:

- **Goal 4.3 Commercial Land Use** – Revitalize the central business district and provide adequate neighborhood commercial services.

Staff Analysis: The Pajaro Hill Commercial Center at 1051 S Green Valley Road was approved for Special Use Permit U-122-88, which created a master uses list aimed at expanding commercial uses and establishing a regional commercial center. This master use list has been successful for the past 30 years, but recent vacancies and limitations on certain uses have made it challenging to attract new tenants. The proposed major modification to Special Use Permit U-122-88 seeks to add "Podiatry-related uses" (DLU 669) to the list. This change would enable the property owner to lease the vacant building to The Foot Doctors of Santa Cruz County, revitalize the shopping center, and enhance commercial services for the community.

- **Policy 4.C. Commercial Land Use** – The City shall plan for revitalization of the central business district along with the distribution of convenient neighborhood commercial centers.

Staff Analysis: The request to modify a Special Use Permit U-122-88 seeks to add "Podiatry-relates uses" (DLU 669) to the master uses list for the Pajaro Commercial Center located at 1051 S Green Valley Road. Approval of this modification will assist the property owner with revitalizing an existing commercial shopping center and ensuring convenient neighborhood commercial centers remain for city residents.

- **Implementation Measure 4.C.2.** – Neighborhood Commercial Land Use – The City shall designate an appropriate amount of land for neighborhood commercial services to meet the daily shopping needs of surrounding residential populations.

Staff Analysis: The original Special Use Permit U-122-88 designated the property at 1051 S Green Valley Road as a commercial shopping center. The subject property has remained a commercial shopping center since its development. The recommendation to approve this modification to add "Podiatry-related uses" (DLU 669) to the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center master uses list ensures the city is maintaining its neighborhood commercial services to meet the daily shopping needs of the surrounding residential populations.

Zoning

The purpose of the Visitor Commercial (CV) Zoning District is to provide for commercial areas catering primarily to tourist and visitors; to encourage the orderly development of areas of attraction and special interest to persons residing both within and outside the community; and to provide business, service, lodging, amusement, and entertainment facilities which will enhance such areas and meet the needs of the visiting public. [WMC § 14-16.1600](#)

The request to modify Special Use Permit U-122-88 to add "Podiatry-related uses" (DLU 669) to the master uses list for the Pajaro Hill Commercial Center requires approval from the Planning Commission. The major modification to Special Use Permit U-122-88 is

considered a substantial change to a permitted use and is subject to Planning Commission approval. [WMC § 14-16.1603\(e\)](#)

Environmental Review

This project qualifies for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption per Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines because it involves adding a new medical use to an existing master uses list for an existing shopping center. The project does not involve an expansion of use and is located in an area that is not environmentally sensitive where all necessary public services and facilities are available.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Original Special Use Permit U-122-88 Approval
2. Updated Pajaro Hill Commercial Center Master Uses List