



AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, April 1, 2025

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

WRITTEN BY: Interim Assistant Community Development Director Orbach

RECOMMENDED BY: INTERIM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MEEK

APPROVED BY: INTERIM COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MEEK

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT AND DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (PP2023-6377) FOR A NEW 7,670-SQUARE-FOOT DRIVE-THROUGH CAR WASH FACILITY ON A 1.18-ACRE SITE LOCATED AT 632 EAST LAKE AVENUE (APN: 017-321-02), FILED BY VANCE SHANNON, APPLICANT, ON BEHALF OF BILL HANSEN, PROPERTY OWNER

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution approving a Special Use Permit and Design Review Permit with Environmental Review (#PP2024-6377) for a new 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility on a 1.18-acre site located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02) and finding the project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15332 (Class 32 In-Fill Development).

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Application: PP2023-6377

Location: 632 East Lake Avenue

Parcel Size: 1.18± acres (51,531± SF)

General Plan: General Commercial

Zoning: Thoroughfare Commercial (CT)

Surrounding: General Commercial in the CT Zoning District to the northeast, Residential Medium Density in the RM-2 Zoning District to the east and southeast, General Commercial in the CNS Zoning District to the south, and General Commercial in the CN Zoning District to the west and northwest.

Existing Use: Vacant Lot

Surrounding: A mix of single- and multi-family residential to the east and southeast and west and commercial uses to the north, and vacant commercial land to the south.

Proposed: Drive-Through Car Wash Facility

Flood Zone: N/A

CEQA Review: The proposed development of a new drive-through car wash facility on a vacant commercial parcel qualifies as categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15332 (Class 32 In-Fill Development).

Applicant: Vance Shannon with Quick Quack Car Wash, 6020 West Oaks Blvd, Suite 300, Rocklin, CA 95765

Prop. Owner: Bill Hansen, P.O. Box 203, Watsonville, CA 95076

BACKGROUND

According to the Santa Cruz County Assessor's Office, the subject vacant parcel was established via the Esther Rodgers Trust via map 3314 O.R. 05. In 1870, a single-family residence known as the Rodgers House was constructed. The single-family residence remained on the property until 1998 when the historic structure was relocated to the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds.

On December 8, 2023, Vance Shannon with Quick Quack Car Wash, on behalf of property owner, Bill Hansen, submitted an application for a Special Use Permit, Design Review Permit, and Environmental Review and a Zoning Map Amendment (PP2023-6377) for construction of a new 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility on a 1.18± acre site located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02).

On October 4, 2024, Community Development Director Suzi Merriam sent a letter to the property owner reiterating that the proposed project at 632 East Lake Avenue does not comply with the required 150-foot setback from the boundary lines of adjacent parcels zoned for residential purposes (Attachment 9). Director Merriam stated that the property owner had requested that the regulations be changed so that the project could proceed, but pointed out that City staff does not have the authority to amend provisions of the Municipal Code. However, Director Merriam informed the property owner that the topic of amending the Drive-Through Facilities Restrictions Ordinance (WMC Chapter 14-41) would be on the next available City Council meeting agenda on October 22, 2024, and committed to bringing any ordinance changes recommended by the City Council back to the Planning Commission and City Council as quickly as possible (Attachment 2).

On October 22, 2024, City staff presented an overview of WMC Chapter 14-41 (Drive-Through Facilities Restrictions) to the City Council for review and discussion. City Council provided direction to staff to bring back an analysis of potential modification options to the Council for review (Attachment 3).

On November 19, 2024, the Planning Commission opened and closed the public hearing for application #PP2023-6377. During deliberations, the four members of the Planning Commission present at the

meeting discussed the item and made a motion to continue the item to a date uncertain, with direction to City staff to try to identify a date before the end of 2024 to bring the item back for discussion with a full Planning Commission in attendance (Attachment 10 – November 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes). Staff identified several potential meeting dates meeting this criteria and polled Planning Commissioners on their availability, but a quorum was not available on any of the dates identified. As such, the project was scheduled for the next available public hearing on January 7, 2025, to continue Planning Commission deliberation of this item (Attachment 4).

On January 7, 2025, the property owner pulled application #PP2023-6377 from the Planning Commission meeting agenda (Attachment 5).

On January 14, 2025, City staff presented options for modification of WMC Chapter 14-41 (Drive-Through Facility Restrictions) to the City Council for review, discussion, and direction. City Council directed staff to bring an ordinance modifying Chapter 14-41 to exclude the Thoroughfare Commercial (CT), Neighborhood Shopping Center (CNS), and Visitor Commercial (CV) Zoning Districts from the 150-foot setback requirement in WMC § 14-41.100(a)(1) to Planning Commission for consideration and recommendation to City Council (Attachment 6).

On January 16, 2025, the property owner submitted application #PP2025-8346 for a Zoning Map Amendment, changing the zoning map designation from CNS to CT for a 1.18± acre parcel located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02).

On February 10, 2025, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution recommending to City Council adoption of an ordinance amending WMC Chapter 14-41 (Drive-Through Facility Restrictions) to remove the 150-foot residential setback requirement from the CT, CNS, and CV Zoning Districts (Attachment 7).

On February 10, 2025, the Planning Commission also adopted a resolution recommending to City Council approval of a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning designation from CNS to CT for a 1.18± acre site located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02); and finding the Zoning Map Amendment exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3) (Attachment 8).

On March 11, 2025, the City Council introduced, for first reading only, [an ordinance](#) amending WMC Chapter 14-41 (Drive-Through Facility Restrictions) to remove the 150-foot residential setback requirement from the CT, CNS, and CV Zoning Districts.

On March 11, 2025, the City Council also introduced, for first reading only, [an ordinance](#) approving a Zoning Map Amendment to change the zoning designation from CNS to CT for a 1.18-acre site located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02).

On March 25, 2025, the City Council adopted [an ordinance](#) amending WMC Chapter 14-41 (Drive-Through Facility Restrictions) to remove the 150-foot residential setback requirement from the CT, CNS, and CV Zoning Districts.

On March 25, 2025, the City Council also adopted [an ordinance](#) amending the Zoning Map to designate the parcel located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02) as CT and directing changes on the Zoning Map of the City of Watsonville.

Proposal

The proposed project involves construction of a new, 7,670-square-foot, drive-through car wash facility on a vacant 1.18-acre site located at 632 East Lake Avenue (APN: 017-321-02). The proposed project requires a Special Use Permit with environmental review for the stand-alone mechanical car wash use and a Design Review Permit for the new building construction.

Standard Of Review

The decisions before the Planning Commission related to the Special Use Permit and Design Review Permit with Environmental Review are adjudicative/quasi-judicial decisions that require findings for approval or denial that must be supported by substantial evidence. The Special Use Permit findings are set forth in [WMC Section 14-12.513](#) and the Design Review Permit findings are set forth in [WMC Section 14-12.403](#).

For more information, see the [Standard of Review and Process Overview](#) on the City website.

DISCUSSION

Existing Site

The subject site is vacant, has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial and is within the CNS Zoning District. The project site is located along Highway 152 on the east side of East Lake Avenue between Eaton Avenue and Tuttle Avenue. The land uses directly surrounding the project site are commercial to the north, commercial vacant land to the south, and residential development to the east and west. East Lake Avenue is the northeastern gateway into the city.



FIGURE 1 Subject site and surrounding uses.

Source: Google Aerial (2024)

Proposed Project

The project proposes the construction of a one-story 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility for Quick Quack Car Wash. As designed, access into the car wash facility is achieved via a 36-foot-wide driveway approach where three drive lanes provide queuing for 15 or more automotive vehicles between the pay canopy and the driveway exit to the adjoining vacant property. Customers would pull up to the pay canopy and remain in their vehicles with the car idling while deciding which services to use/purchase. After completing the transaction at the pay kiosk, the customers would drive their vehicle through the 106-foot-long drive-through car wash tunnel. At the end of the tunnel, an industrial blower would dry the vehicle. The customer, depending on services purchased, would then either exit the car wash facility or park in the vacuum area to clean the interior of their vehicle. Customers could also bypass the car wash and go directly to the vacuum area. The vacuum area provides 19 parking spaces. The total number of parking spaces provided for the project site is 25.

Other site improvements include a new trash enclosure, 15,426 square feet of new landscaping, and a new 8-foot CMU masonry sound wall along the southern and eastern property lines. The project plans are provided in Attachment 1.

Zoning Consistency

The Zoning Ordinance implements the General Plan, regulates the future growth of the city, and promotes orderly community development. It includes the Zoning Map, which sets forth the designations, locations and boundaries of zoning districts.

The Zoning Map designation for the subject parcel is Thoroughfare Commercial (CT). A drive-through car wash facility (GLU 6341) is conditionally permitted within the CT Zoning District with the issuance of a Special Use Permit if all findings can be made in support of the project ([WMC §14-12.513](#)). Staff analysis related to the zoning code consistency and Special Use Permit and Design Review Permit findings is included in the following sections.

WMC Chapter 14-41 Drive-Through Facility Restrictions

Chapter 14-41 of the Watsonville Municipal Code sets the development standards for drive-through facilities within the City of Watsonville. "Drive-through facilities" are defined as a commercial use that conducts business in whole or part with a person or persons who enters a commercial property in a motor vehicle and transacts from said motor vehicle from any location on such property that is not designated parking space ([WMC Section 14-18.279](#)). The proposed car wash facility fits the definition of a drive-through facility. Therefore, the proposed drive-through facility must also meet the development standards in [WMC Section 14-41.100](#) and the design standards in [WMC Section 14-41.102](#). The standards, with staff analysis, are below.

WMC Section 14-41.100

a) *Location*

- 1) *In the CN zoning district, no drive-through lane, speakers, menu boards and/or take out windows shall be located within 150 feet from any property boundary line of a parcel zoned for residential purposes.*

Staff Analysis: With the recent ordinance amending the zoning, the subject parcel is zoned CT, so this requirement is not applicable.

- 2) *No more than one Drive-Through Facility shall be located within 200 feet of the nearest point of a signalized intersection except as set forth in (3) below.*

Staff Analysis: The subject parcel is not located within 200 feet of the nearest point of a signalized intersection.

- 3) *No Drive-Through Facility shall be located within 300 feet of any of the following "gateway" intersections:*
 - (i) *Main Street at Front Street*
 - (ii) *Main Street at Freedom Boulevard*
 - (iii) *Main Street at Green Valley Road*
 - (iv) *Riverside Drive at Rodriguez Street*
 - (v) *Riverside Drive at Blackburn Street*
 - (vi) *Freedom Boulevard at Airport Boulevard*

(vii) *East Lake Avenue at Martinelli Street*

Staff Analysis: The subject parcel is not located within three hundred feet of any of the identified “gateway” intersections.

Based on staff analysis, the proposed project complies with the location standards.

WMC Section 14-41.102

- a) *Trash facilities are located to accommodate patrons using the drive-through facilities in an areas away from residential uses;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed trash enclosure is centrally located on the front portion of the lot away from adjacent residential uses and adjacent to the trash generating vacuum area.

- b) *Lighting, noise, fumes, rodents, pests and odors can either be eliminated, mitigate or reduced so as not to adversely affect neighboring properties or uses;*

Staff Analysis: The photometric plan indicates that light trespass will not exceed 0.5 foot candles at any property line adjacent to parcels with residential uses. Noise is mitigated by the installation of an eight-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall along the East and South lot lines where there are parcels with residential uses.

- c) *The impact on neighboring properties or uses due to activities associated with the proposed facility and its hours of operation do not unreasonably interfere with adjoining residential uses;*

Staff Analysis: As conditioned, and with the mitigation measures incorporated into the site design, impacts to neighboring properties will be minimized and will not interfere with adjoining residential uses.

- d) *Traffic generated by the Drive-Through Facility can be reasonably accommodated by the property and neighborhood streets, without creating a materially adverse traffic impact, or a material or safety hazard to vehicles or pedestrians;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed project is located along East Lake Avenue, which is also State Route 152 (SR-152). The location along a major thoroughfare can reasonably accommodate the traffic generated by the drive-through facility without creating adverse traffic impacts or hazards to vehicles or pedestrians.

- e) *On-site pedestrian walkways shall not intersect the drive-through vehicle lanes, except visibility is clear, and the pedestrian walkway is emphasizes by enriched paving and striping;*

Staff Analysis: The project site contains one pedestrian walkway that crosses the drive-through vehicle lane. It is marked with pedestrian crosswalk striping.

- f) *Drive-through lanes include a minimum 14 foot width on curves and a minimum 11 foot width on straight sections;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed drive-through lane maintains a 14-foot width on curves and straight sections.

- g) *Drive-through lanes provide sufficient vehicle stacking area behind the menu board to accommodate a minimum of four (4) cars;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed queuing lane provides stacking for at least 15 vehicles behind the pay canopy.

- h) *No drive-through lanes shall exit directly onto a public right-of-way;*

Staff Analysis: The drive-through lane does not exit onto the public right-of-way.

- i) *Landscaping shall screen drive-through and drive-in lanes from the public right-of-way and shall minimize the visual impact of the menu board and directional signs;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed project includes 15,426 square feet of new landscaping, including seven new trees along the East Lake Avenue frontage. There is also a large existing redwood tree along the project frontage that will remain. The new landscaping will screen much of the site from public right-of-way.

- j) *Drive-through lanes shall be constructed with (PCC) concrete;*

Staff Analysis: Proposed drive-through lanes are noted as being concrete on the plan set.

- k) *Drive-through lanes shall be set back from the face of the curb of any street frontage a minimum of 20 feet;*

Staff Analysis: The drive-through exit lane is located approximately 69 feet back from the face of curb along East Lake Avenue.

- 1) *Only one menu board may be permitted and shall be a maximum of 30 square feet in the area of the sign face, with a maximum height of seven feet and shall face away from the street.*

Staff Analysis: No menu boards are proposed on the site plan. The Quick Quack business model utilizes attendants with mobile devices that are presented to the drivers of vehicles in the queuing line.

Based on staff analysis, the proposed project complies with the design standards.

Special Use Permit

The purpose of a Special Use Permit is to ensure the proper integration of uses which, because of their special nature, may be suitable only in certain locations or zoning districts or only if such uses are arranged or designed in a particular manner ([WMC § 14-12.500](#)). This special review shall be for the purpose of determining that the proposed use is, and will continue to be, compatible with surrounding, existing, or planned uses; and for the further purpose of establishing such special conditions as may be necessary to

ensure the harmonious integration and compatibility of uses in the neighborhood and with the surrounding area ([WMC § 14-12.501](#)).

Staff reviewed the application for the proposed drive-through car wash facility for consistency with the required Special Use Permit findings in [WMC §14-12.513](#). The findings, with staff analysis, are below.

- a) *The proposed use at the specified location is consistent with the policies of the General Plan and the general purpose and intent of the applicable district regulations;*

Staff Analysis: The subject parcel at 632 East Lake Avenue has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial and is zoned Thoroughfare Commercial (CT). The proposed project, a drive-through car wash facility, is an allowed use in the General Commercial land use classification and may be conditionally permitted with Planning Commission approval of a Special Use Permit with Design Review in the CT Zoning District. As conditioned, the project is consistent with the district regulations.

- b) *The proposed use is compatible with and preserves the character and integrity of adjacent development and neighborhoods and includes improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate development related adverse impacts such as traffic, noise, odors, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent development and neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, buffer yards, and addition of landscaping, walls, or both, to mitigate such impacts;*

Staff Analysis: The project proposes construction of a 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility. Site improvements include a new trash enclosure and 15,426 square feet of new landscaping. The landscaping includes 27 new trees, seven of which will be located along the East Lake Avenue frontage. The project also includes a new eight-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall constructed on the eastern and southern property lines of the site. In addition, the industrial air blower is situated away from residential properties and is buffered with trees and landscaping to mitigate noise towards East Lake Avenue. As such, the project design mitigates the potential impacts of the proposed use on adjacent residential properties.

- c) *The proposed use will not generate pedestrian or vehicular traffic which will be hazardous or conflict with the existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed project provided a Traffic Assessment Report prepared by Armen D. Hovanessian with AHTC Inc. The report indicates that the site is located on East Lake Avenue which is also State Route 152. The proposed trip generation for the drive-through car wash facility was compared with other service stations located on East Lake Avenue. The report states that the proposed project would not have major adverse effects that will be hazardous or conflict with the existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood.

- d) *The proposed use incorporates roadway improvements, traffic control devices or mechanisms, or access restrictions to control traffic flow or divert traffic as needed to reduce or eliminate development impacts on surrounding neighborhood streets;*

Staff Analysis: The subject vacant parcel is located within the urban service area, where all necessary infrastructure is readily available. Therefore, the project does not require roadway improvements, traffic control devices or mechanisms, or access restrictions to control traffic flow or divert traffic to reduce or eliminate development impacts on surrounding neighborhood streets.

- e) *The proposed use incorporates features to minimize adverse effects, including visual impacts and noise, of the proposed special use on adjacent properties;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed drive-through car wash facility is proposed to include 15,426 square feet of new landscaping, including 27 new trees, seven of which will be planted along the frontage of East Lake Avenue. The project also proposes an 8-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall constructed on the eastern and southern property lines to mitigate noise from the car wash tunnel and 17 vacuum stations.

- f) *The proposed special use complies with all additional standards imposed on it by the particular provisions of this chapter and all other requirements of this title applicable to the proposed special use and uses within the applicable base zoning district; and*

Staff Analysis: The project complies with the standards and requirements of the Watsonville Municipal Code as well as the *Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards*.

- g) *The proposed special use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience and welfare, and will not result in material damage or prejudice to other property in the vicinity.*

Staff Analysis: As designed and conditioned, the proposed drive-through car wash use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare and will not result in damage or prejudice to other property in the vicinity.

Based on staff analysis, the proposed project is consistent with the required Special Use Permit findings.

Design Review

All new construction, exterior remodeling, additions, or changes in use requiring additional parking, which involve structures used for multi-family residential, commercial, industrial or public purpose are subject to Design Review ([WMC § 14-12.400](#)). No Building Permit shall be issued for a development subject to Design Review until a Design Review Permit has been approved in accordance with WMC Chapter 14-12 and conditions of approval have been met.

Per [WMC §14-12.402\(a\)](#), the Zoning Administrator shall be the final decision-maker for Design Review. However, under [WMC §14-12.402\(b\)](#), the Zoning Administrator may refer the Design Review to the

Planning Commission instead of making a decision on the application. Because the Special Use Permit for the proposed project at 632 East Lake Avenue requires approval by the Planning Commission, the Zoning Administrator referred the Design Review decision to the Planning Commission so that the permit applications can be reviewed together.

Development Standards

Table 1 below illustrates how the project complies with the development standards of the CT Zoning District.

TABLE 1 Consistency of Buildings with CT Zoning District Regulations

Provision	Standard	Proposed
Front Setback	15 ft.	69 ft. (trash enclosure), 118 ft. (tunnel)
Side Setbacks	None	9 ft. 10 in. and 56 ft. 5 in.
Rear Setback	10	53 ft. (staffing station), 71 ft. (tunnel)
Maximum building height (feet)	35 ft.	29 ft.

Parking

The minimum parking requirement for a drive-through car wash facility (GLU 63) is five spaces, plus 1 space for each 800 square feet floor area in excess of 3,000 square feet, pursuant to [WMC §14-17.1001\(d\)](#).

A 7,670-square-foot drive-through facility requires 11 parking spaces.¹ As indicated in Table 2, the project provides 19 customer parking spaces via the vacuum station area and five (5) additional parking spaces for employees with one (1) designated as an accessible parking space, for a total of 25 parking spaces.

TABLE 2 Minimum Parking Requirement

Use	Required Spaces	Spaces Provided
GLU 63	11	19
Additional Spaces	--	6
Total	11	25

Fencing

The proposed Site Plan and Landscape Plan include a new 8-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall constructed on the eastern and southern property lines. No fencing is located in the front setback or on the northern property line.

Trash Enclosure

A trash enclosure is proposed in front of the drive-through car wash building but is screened by an existing redwood tree. Proposed materials will consist of metal gates and concrete block walls. The trash

¹¹ Calculation: 5 spaces + 1 space x [(7,670 sf – 3,000 sf) ÷ 800 sf] = 5 + 5.8 = 10.8 (rounded up to 11)

enclosure is to be constructed to the most current City standard (City of Watsonville Public Improvement Standard No. S-602).

Site Access/Circulation

The subject property is vacant but is developed with a sidewalk, curb, and gutter along the frontage of East Lake Avenue. The project proposes construction of a one-story 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility for Quick Quack Car Wash. As designed, access into the car wash facility is provided via a 36-foot-wide driveway approach where three drive lanes provide queuing for at least 15 motor vehicles. The right-hand lane is a right-turn only leading into the driveway to the adjacent vacant commercial property rather than the car wash queuing lane, which could cause problems if that lane is used as a queuing lane for a future drive-through facility on the adjacent parcel.

Customers would pull up to the pay canopy and remain in their vehicles with the car idling while deciding which services to use/purchase. After completing the transaction at the pay kiosk, the customers would drive their vehicle through the 106-foot-long drive-through car wash tunnel. At the end of the tunnel, an industrial blower would dry the vehicle. The customer, depending on service purchased, would either exit the car wash facility or park in the vacuum area to vacuum their vehicle. Customers could also bypass the car wash and go directly to the vacuum area.

Lighting/Visual Impact

As shown on the photometric plan, the project would provide lighting at the vacuum and pay canopy area, as well as provide eight 16-foot-tall light poles throughout the project site (Attachment 1). The photometric plan demonstrates that little to no light (0.5-foot candles or less) is expected to spill over onto adjoining residential properties. Therefore, the project is not anticipated to create a glare nuisance for adjacent residential properties or within the public right-of-way.

Stormwater

The project is proposing 35,514 square-feet of new impervious surface and is subject to a Tier 4 peak management stormwater control performance requirement. The Preliminary Stormwater Control Plan & Hydrology Report (prepared by Tait & Associates) provide drainage calculations supporting the design of the proposed runoff retention system (Attachment 10). As shown on these plans, proposed drainage facilities and post-construction features include directing runoff from impervious surfaces (e.g., roof, hardscape, parking areas) to underground infiltration chambers. These drainage management features are intended to control the flow rate and reduce the pollutant load to pre-project levels.

Engineering staff have reviewed the project's proposed drainage plans. A condition of approval on any future approval would require the project to comply with the City's post-construction stormwater management requirements, pursuant to [WMC § 6-3.535](#).

Traffic Impact Analysis

A Traffic Assessment Report (AHTC Inc., September 5, 2024) was prepared for the proposed drive-through car wash facility located at 632 East Lake Avenue (Attachment 11). The report compared data from a Quick

Quack Car Wash located in Fontana, CA. The Fontana facility has the same design as the proposed project at 632 East Lake Avenue because they both feature a 130-foot-long queueing aisle with three lanes. The report found that the Fontana car wash is surrounded by more densely developed urban area than the subject property located at 632 East Lake Avenue. The report also compared other service stations located along East Lake Avenue with the proposed project. The report found the traffic trips generated by the proposed development would not pose a hazard to the existing and anticipated traffic on East Lake Avenue. The report recommends installing a stop sign for the proposed driveway on East Lake Avenue and posting no parking signs along the project frontage. The traffic impact analysis was reviewed by the Public Works Department and found to meet all WMC development standards regarding traffic trip generation.

Noise Standards

Chapter 12 (Public Safety) of the City of Watsonville 2005 General Plan includes the following goals and policies concerning noise that is relevant to the proposed project:

- **Goal 12.8 Noise Hazard Control.** Evaluate new and existing land uses in the city for compatibility related to noise effects and require, as appropriate, mitigation where harmful effects can be identified, and measurable improvement will result.
- **Policy 12.M Noise.** The City shall utilize land use regulations and enforcement to ensure that noise levels in developed areas are kept at acceptable levels, and that future noise-sensitive land uses are protected from noise that is harmful.

The Public Safety Element also identifies the City's noise compatibility guidelines for different land uses. According to Figure 12-6 of the General Plan, the normally acceptable noise limit for commercial land uses is 75 CNEL and the conditionally acceptable noise limit is 82.5 CNEL. By comparison, the acceptable and conditionally acceptable noise limits for single-family residential land uses are 60 and 75 CNEL, respectively (Watsonville, 2005; Figure 12-6).

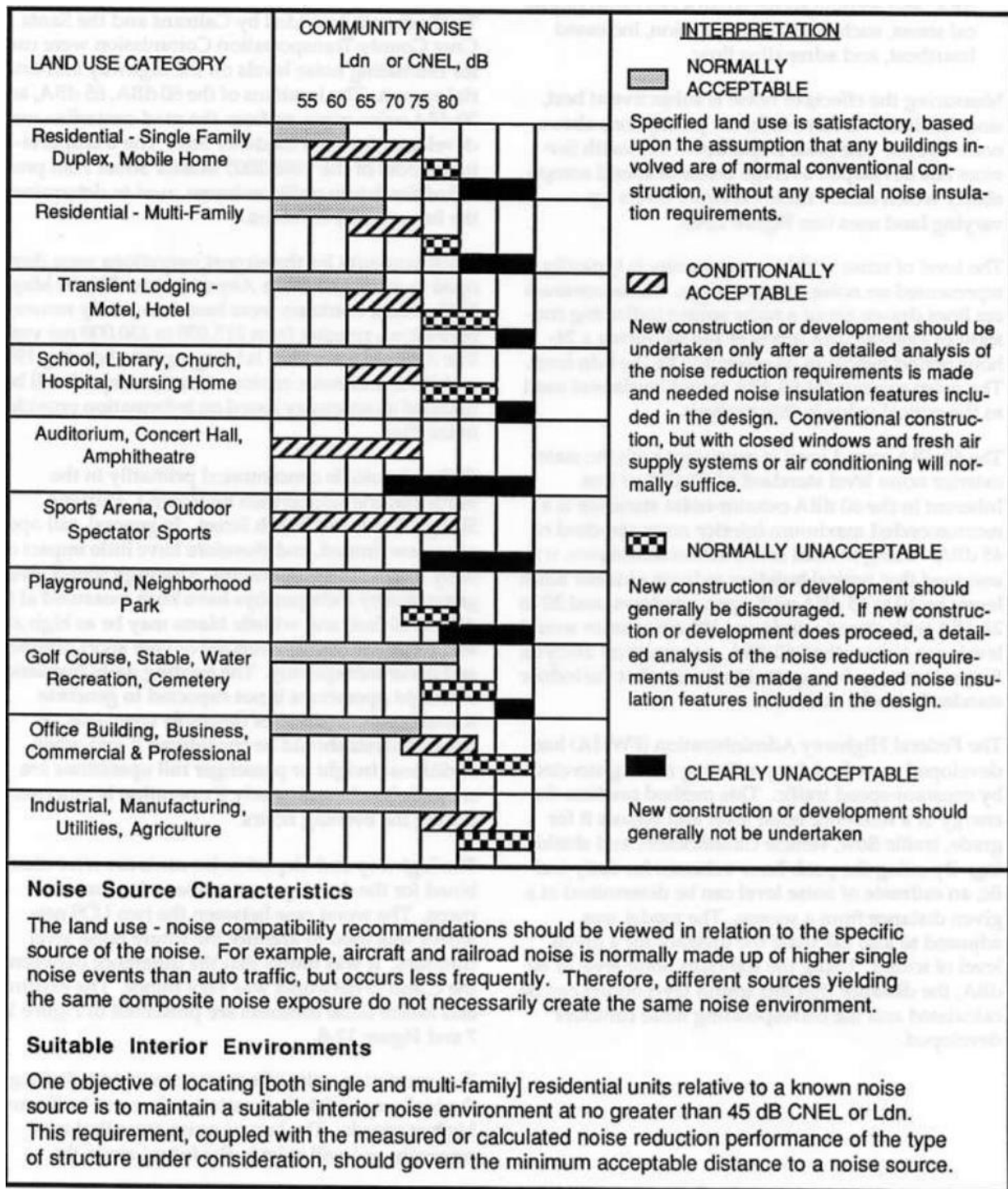


FIGURE 3 Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

Source: Watsonville 2005 General Plan

Noise Study

Noise is defined as unwanted sound that disturbs human activity. Noise levels (or volumes) are generally measured in decibels (dB) using the A-weighted sound pressure level (dBA). The A-weighting scale is an adjustment to the actual sound pressure levels to be consistent with that of human hearing response, which is most sensitive to frequencies around 4,000 Hertz (about the highest note on a piano) and less sensitive to low frequencies (below 100 Hertz).²

Sound pressure is measured on a logarithmic scale with the 0 dBA level based on the lowest detectable sound pressure level that people can perceive. Based on this logarithmic scale, a doubling of sound energy is equivalent to an increase of 3 dBA and, in general, a 3 dBA change in the ambient noise level is noticeable, while 1-2 dBA changes are not. Because of the nature of the human ear, a sound must be about 10 dBA greater than the ambient noise level to be judged as twice as loud. Quiet suburban areas typically have noise levels in the range of 40-50 dBA, while areas adjacent to arterial streets are typically in the 50-60 dBA range. Noise levels typically attenuate, or drop off, at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from their origin. However, attenuation rates vary. For example, noise from heavily traveled roads typically attenuates at about 3 dBA per doubling of distance. In addition, intervening structures and other obstructions may reduce noise levels. For instance, a solid wall or berm may reduce noise levels by 5 to 10 dBA.³

Table 3 below provides the characteristics associated with changes in noise levels.

TABLE 3 Change in Noise Level Characteristics

Changes in Intensity Level (dBA)	Changes in Apparent Loudness
1	Not perceptible
3	Just perceptible
5	Clearly noticeable
10	Twice (or half) as loud

A Noise Impact Study dated February 9, 2024, was prepared by Claire Pincock with MD Acoustics, LLC (Attachment 12). The noise study demonstrates where the potential impact of noise would be directed due to the proposed blower system for the drive-through car wash facility. It also assumes the construction of a new 8-foot CMU masonry wall along the property line boarding adjacent residential properties to mitigate noise levels in that area. Table 4 provides the modeled changes in noise levels at four nearby locations to the east, south and west.

As shown on Figure 4 and detailed in Table 4, noise levels are not anticipated to change significantly above ambient noise levels at adjoining residential properties to the east and south with the construction of a

² California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2013. Technical Noise Supplement to the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol <http://www.dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/environmental-analysis/documents/env/tens-sep2013-a11y.pdf>

³ Federal Transit Administration (FTA). 2006. Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Noise_and_Vibration_Manual.pdf

sound wall to attenuate noise, increasing 2-4 dBA. In addition, while the Operational Noise Level Contours map shows noise levels of 55-60 dBA for residential properties across East Lake Avenue, the project's contribution to noise levels is anticipated to be only 1 dBA because of traffic noise resulting in ambient noise levels of 65 dBA. A change in noise levels due to the drive-through car wash facility of 1-2 dBA would not likely be perceptible. An increase of 3-4 dBA would be just perceptible to noticeable.

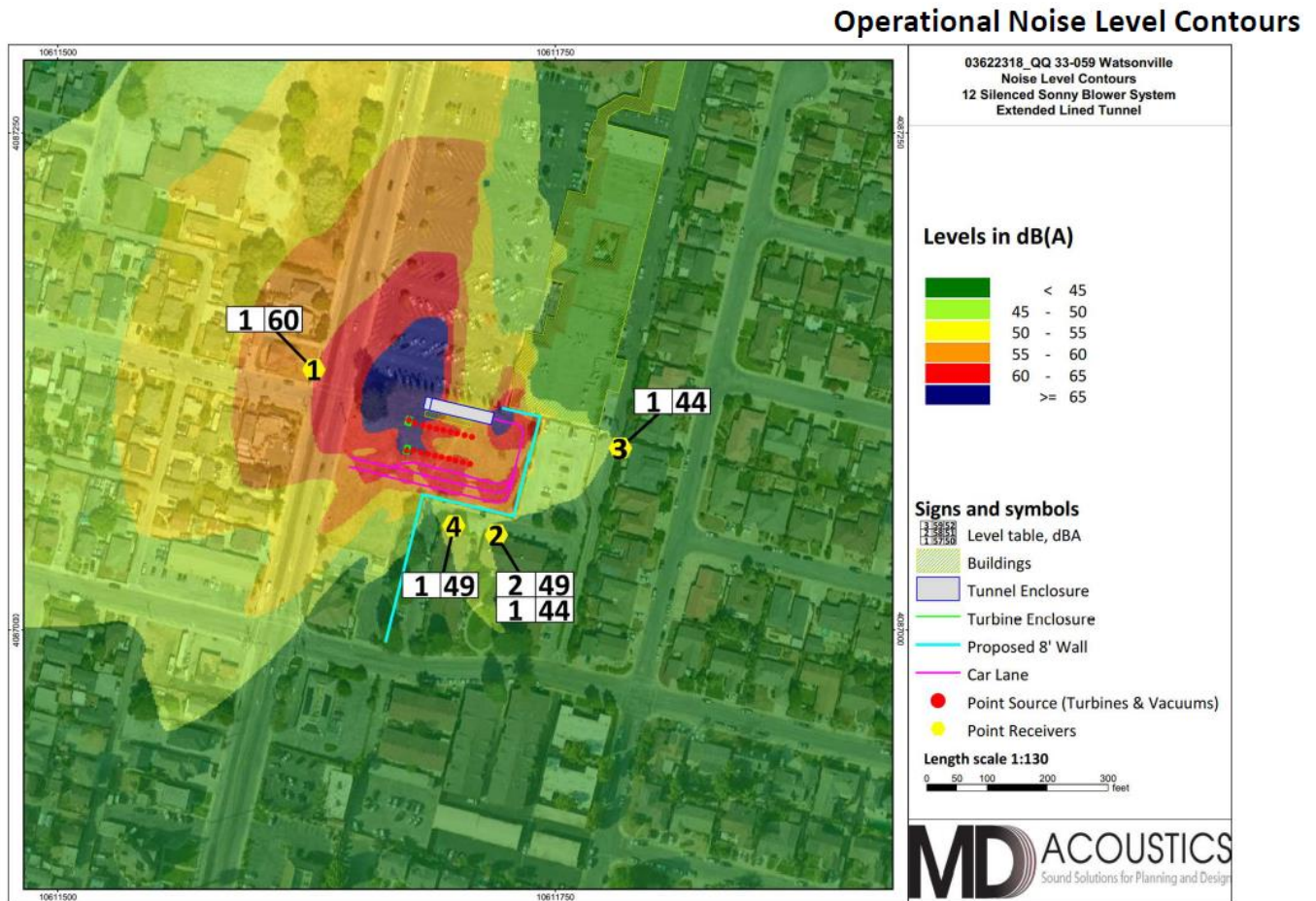


FIGURE 4 Operational Noise Level Contours Map

Source: Project applicant, MD Acoustics, LLC (2024)

The following design features described in the Noise Impact Study are intended to reduce potential noise impacts and are included as a condition of approval:

- A blower inlet silencer (12 Sonny's blower system with the silencer package or equivalent) shall be installed to meet acoustical benchmarks.
- An acoustic liner (Acoustiblok perforated metal panels or equivalent) shall line 15' of the exit.
- An interior lined wall (Acoustiblok perforated metal panels or equivalent) shall extend from the top of the tunnel to 10' from the floor to block the line of site from the entrance to the blowers.
- An 8' tall wall shall be constructed along the south and east property line.

TABLE 4 Modeled Operational Noise Levels

Receptor ¹	Floor	Existing Ambient Noise Level (dBA, Leq) ²	Project Noise Level (dBA, Leq) ³	Total Combined Noise Level (dBA, Leq)	Change in Noise Level as Result of Project
1	1	65	60	66	1
2	1	47	44	49	2
	2	47	49	51	4
3	1	47	44	49	2
4	1	47	49	51	4

Notes:
¹ Receptors 1 thru 3 represent surrounding residential uses.
² See Appendix A for the traffic ambient noise projections.
³ See Exhibit E for the operational noise level projections at said receptors.

Source: Project applicant, MD Acoustics, LLC (2024)

Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards

Table 4 below demonstrates how the project complies with the criteria and standards for Automobile Mechanical Wash (Attachment 9), as follows:

- **Landscaping.** The Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards require a minimum of four percent landscaping. As shown in the Landscaping Plan (Attachment 1, Sheet L1), a total of 25 percent of the project site will be landscaped, with 27 trees, seven of which will be located along the frontage of East Lake Avenue.
- **Fencing.** The Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards also require fencing when establishing a drive-through car wash facility adjacent to residential zoned property. The project is abutting a residential zoned property located at 610 Tuttle Avenue. Therefore, the project is proposing construction of an 8-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall along the eastern and southern property lines.

TABLE 4 Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards

Criteria/Standard	Required	Proposed
Minimum Lot Size	10,000 sq. ft.	51,531 sq. ft.
Parking	5 spaces	25 spaces
Landscaping	4%	25%
Fencing	Yes	8 ft. CMU wall along residential property lines

Design Review Findings

When considering applications for Design Review, the Planning Commission shall evaluate the impact of the Design Review on and its compatibility with surrounding properties and neighborhoods to ensure the appropriateness of the development and make the findings set forth in [WMC § 14-12.403](#).

Staff reviewed the application for the proposed drive-through car wash facility for consistency with the required Design Review Permit findings. The findings, with staff analysis, are below.

- a) *The proposed development is consistent with the goals and policies embodied in the adopted General Plan and the general purpose and intent of the applicable district regulations;*

Staff Analysis: The subject parcel at 632 East Lake Avenue has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial and is zoned Thoroughfare Commercial (CT). The proposed project, a drive-through car wash facility, is an allowed use in the General Commercial land use classification and may be conditionally permitted with Planning Commission approval of a Special Use Permit with Design Review in the CT Zoning District. As conditioned, the project is consistent with the district regulations.

- b) *The proposed development is compatible with and preserves the character and integrity of adjacent development and neighborhoods and includes improvements or modifications either on-site or with-in the public rights-of-way to mitigate development related adverse impacts such as traffic, noise, odors, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent development and neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may include but shall not be limited to the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, buffer yards, and the addition of landscaping, walls, or both;*

Staff Analysis: The project proposes construction of a 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash facility. Site improvements include a new trash enclosure and 15,426 square feet of new landscaping. The landscaping includes 27 new trees, seven of which will be located along the East Lake Avenue frontage. The project also includes a new eight-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall constructed on the eastern and southern property lines of the site. In addition, the industrial air blower is situated away from residential properties and is buffered with trees and landscaping to mitigate noise towards East Lake Avenue. As such, the project design mitigates the potential impacts of the proposed use on adjacent residential properties.

- c) *The proposed development will not generate pedestrian or vehicular traffic which will be hazardous or conflict with the existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed project provided a Traffic Assessment Report prepared by Armen Hovanessian with AHTC Inc. The report indicates that the site is located on East Lake Avenue which is also State Route 152. The proposed trip generation for the drive-through car wash facility was compared with other service stations located on East Lake Avenue. The report states that the proposed project would not have major adverse effects that will be hazardous or conflict with the existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood.

- d) *The proposed development incorporates roadway improvements, traffic control devices or mechanisms, or access restrictions to control traffic flow or divert traffic as needed to reduce or eliminate development impacts on surrounding neighborhood streets;*

Staff Analysis: The subject vacant parcel is located within the urban service area, where all necessary infrastructure is readily available. Therefore, the project does not require roadway

improvements, traffic control devices or mechanisms, or access restrictions to control traffic flow or divert traffic to reduce or eliminate development impacts on surrounding neighborhood streets.

- e) *The proposed development incorporates features to minimize adverse effects including visual impacts of the proposed development on adjacent properties:*
- 1) *Harmony and proportion of the overall design & the appropriate use of materials;*
 - 2) *The suitability of the architectural style for the project; provided, however, it is not the intent of this section to establish any particular architectural style;*
 - 3) *The siting of the structure on the property, as compared to the sitting of other structures in the immediate neighborhood;*
 - 4) *The size, location, design, color, number, and lighting; and*
 - 5) *The bulk, height, and color of the project structure as compared to the bulk, height, and color of other structures in the immediate neighborhood;*

Staff Analysis: The proposed drive-through car wash facility only includes two buildings and a few accessory structures. The buildings include a 7,670-square-foot drive-through car wash tunnel and a 250-square-foot remote staffing station. The site will also include 15,426 square feet of new landscaping, including 27 new trees, seven of which will be planted along the frontage of East Lake Avenue. Along the southern and eastern property lines adjacent to residential development, the project proposes an 8-foot-tall CMU masonry sound wall. The project, as designed, will minimize adverse effects on adjacent properties.

- f) *The proposed development complies with all additional standards imposed on it by the particular provisions of this chapter, any City of Watsonville architectural guidelines, development and public improvement standards, and all other requirements of this title applicable to the proposed development; and*

Staff Analysis: The proposed project complies with the standards and requirements of the Watsonville Municipal Code including the *Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards*.

- g) *The proposed development will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience and welfare or result in material damage or prejudice to other property in the vicinity.*

Staff Analysis: As designed and conditioned, the proposed drive-through car wash use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, convenience, or welfare and will not result in damage or prejudice to other property in the vicinity.

Based on staff analysis, the proposed project is consistent with the required Design Review findings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15332 (Class 32 In-Fill Development) because the proposed in-fill development project: is consistent with applicable general plan designation and policies and zoning designation and regulations; occurs within city limits on a site of less than five acres; is located on a project site that has no value for habitat for

endangered, rare, or threatened species; would not result in significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

The Planning Commission could deny the Special Use Permit and Design Review Permit with Environmental Review #PP2024-6377. The Planning Commission would need to provide staff with supportive evidence that would support the findings and give direction to staff to return with a resolution supporting that determination.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Plan Set – 06.03.2024
2. Letter re Quick Quack – 10.04.2024
3. CC Minutes – 10.22.2024
4. PC Minutes – 11.19.2024
5. PC Agenda – 01.07.2024
6. CC Minutes – 01.14.2024
7. Resolution 02-25 – Zoning Code Text Amendments
8. Resolution 03-25 – Zoning Map Amendment
9. Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards
10. Preliminary Stormwater Report
11. Traffic Study
12. Noise Impact Study