



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, September 7, 2021

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MERRIAM
IVAN CARMONA, ASSOCIATE PLANNER

SUBJECT: Staff Report- CNS Zoning District Text Amendment.docx

STATEMENT OF ISSUES

Text amendment to the conditional uses section of Part 14, Neighborhood Shopping Center District of the Zoning Ordinance to allow mechanical car washes (DLU 6341) as a conditionally permitted use in the Neighborhood Shopping Center District.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt amendments to Section 14-16.1403 (Conditional Uses) to allow mechanical car washes (DLU 6341) as a conditionally permitted use in the CNS (Neighborhood Shopping Center) Zoning District.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Neighborhood Shopping Center (CNS) Zoning District is to establish regulatory controls on commercial shopping center complexes located outside the central business district of the City; and to provide predominantly commercial retail with limited service and amusement uses on a common parcel, or a combination of adjacent parcels with common access for the public to be located on major streets and arterials. [WMC § 14-16.1400](#).

A wide range of retail commercial and certain business and personal service-related uses are permitted in this District. Shopping centers often have automobile service stations (GLU 51), which is principally permitted under § 14-16.1401. While automobile car washes (DLU 6341) are allowed conditionally in other commercial zoning districts, they are not a conditionally permitted use in the CNS Zoning District.¹ This omission is the reason for the proposed text amendment.

¹ Automobile car washes are allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial (CN), Thoroughfare Commercial (CT), and Visitor Commercial (CV) Zoning Districts with issuance of a Special Use Permit.

Car washes are often appurtenant to gas stations if they can be accommodated on the premises. The City has established criteria and standards for combining the servicing of motor vehicles with their washing on a drive-in or drive through basis. Key design consideration include that the site is sufficiently large to allow the addition of a car wash while ensuring the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians on and around the site (Attachment 1).

There are a number of gas stations in the City that include automobile car washes. As noted in Table 1, some of them are in or next to shopping centers and one of the gas stations with a car wash is located in the CNS Zoning District. At present, this gas station with a car wash is considered legal, non-conforming use². Table 2 provides a list of existing gas stations that would be potentially eligible to allow the addition of a car wash.

As areas zoned CNS are intended to provide convenient shopping with limited amounts of retail and service uses to adequately supply the day-to-day needs of the community, allowing car washes in the CNS Zoning District would provide a useful service in convenient locations. Similar to the CT, CV and CN Zoning Districts, the CNS Zoning District is located predominantly on major streets. The Watsonville 2005 General Plan identifies East Lake Avenue, Freedom Boulevard, and Main Street as major arterial streets that can accommodate high volumes of traffic.

TABLE 1 Existing Standalone Car Washes and Gas Stations with Car Washes in the CT, CV, CN, and CNS Districts

Address	Name	Zoning District	Shopping Center
1520 Freedom Blvd	SOFSPRA Coin-Op Car Wash	CNS	No
1719 Freedom Blvd	Fernandez Auto Sales & Car Wash	CT	No
1830 Freedom Blvd	Shell Gas Station & Car Wash	CNS	Yes
401 E Lake Ave	SOFSPRA Coin-Op Car Wash	CN	No
676 E Lake Ave	East Lake Gas & Car Wash	CN	No
1851 Main St	Chevron Gas Station & Car Wash	CT	Yes
298 Green Valley Rd	Arco Gas Station & Car Wash	CT	No
69 Lee Road	Arco Gas Station & Car Wash	CV	No

TABLE 2 Existing Gas Stations without Car Washes

Address	Name	Zoning District	Shopping Center
455 Airport Blvd	7 Eleven	CT	No
1455 Freedom Blvd	76 Gas Station & 7 Eleven	CNS	Yes
1428 Freedom Blvd	Valero Gas Station	CNS	Yes

The text amendment to allow mechanical car washes would provide zoning ordinance consistency given that there are existing car washes in the zoning district, and this district is very similar to the CT, CN, and CV districts. These Districts are located in convenient locations

² Chapter 14-20 Nonconforming Uses and Structures

surrounded by residential neighborhoods, major streets, shopping center that provide retail and service uses for the day-to-day needs of the community. Existing car washes in the CNS District would now conform to the Zoning ordinance in the Municipal Code.

Proposed automotive car washes (DLU 6341) within the CNS Zoning District would still require a Special Use Permit, giving the City the ability to determine whether such use would satisfy the Zoning Ordinance in the proposed location.

Environmental Review

The proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in that the action is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the text amendment to allow and regulate mechanical car washes (DLU 6341) in the CNS Zoning District would have a significant effect on the environment. *CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3)*.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The proposed zoning code text amendment may allow for greater flexibility for property owners and existing gas station owners to expand their businesses by proposing installation of a mechanical car wash (DLU 6341). This aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 4: Economic Development by amending the ordinance to allow greater flexibility of development for gas station owners.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the City by approval or denying the proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION

1. Deny the proposed amendment
2. Adopt the proposed amendment, with revisions

ATTACHMENTS

1. Automobile Mechanical Wash Criteria and Standards