LIVERMORE
CALIFORNIA

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT **ITEM NO. 5.1**

DATE: November 17, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Riley, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Hearing to consider a request for a Conditional Use Permit Modification to allow an approximately 3,000 square-foot carwash with 12 vacuum stations at an existing gas station and food store property. The project proposes landscaping and the carwash exit driveway on City-owned land, subject to a lease that would be reviewed by the City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt resolutions:

1. Finding that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(b), Existing Facilities, for additions less than 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive;
2. Approving Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM) 22-004, subject to the attached Conditions of Approval;
3. Directing the Planning Manager to file a Notice of Exemption with the Alameda County Clerk and State Clearinghouse; and
4. Advising the applicant that the Planning Commission's action is subject to a 15-day appeal period.

SUMMARY

On August 8, 2022, Ali Amidy (the Applicant) applied to the City of Livermore for a Conditional Use Permit Modification (CUPM 22-004). The project includes the development of an approximately 3,000 square foot drive-through carwash and 12 self-serve vacuum stations at an existing gas station and food store property located at 4700 First Street (Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 99-21-11-3). The project site is located southwesterly of the Highway 580 Interchange at First Street, just south of a City of Livermore-owned vacant property.

The project site contains an existing gas station and food store on a site that is mostly paved. The proposed stand-alone car wash building is located on the west side of the property and 12 vacuum

stations are located on the north side of the site. Please see Attachment 1, Location Map, for the Project location.

Access to the carwash drive-through facility is proposed to be taken from the existing driveway along First Street. The Project requires a Conditional Use Permit Modification, subject to Planning Commission review and approval. The Planning Commission's action is considered final unless appealed within 15 days of the Commission's action.

DISCUSSION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project involves the addition of a drive-through carwash with self-service vacuum stations at an existing gas station property on the north side of First Street, south of Interstate 580 (I-580). The existing gas station/food store building is approximately 3,670 square feet in floor area on a property of approximately 0.82 acres. The carwash building is approximately 3,000 square feet. It is proposed west of (behind) the existing building. The proposed vacuum stations are located north of the existing building (See Attachment 2 - Development Plans).

The carwash facility will be one-story at approximately 25 feet, four inches in height. The exterior of the carwash building will be primarily composed of cultured stone veneer and smooth finishes with cornices and earth tone colors to complement the existing building. The vacuum stations would include arched fabric shade canopies. The carwash exit lane is proposed to operate on a portion of city property to the north, through a lease with the City, which will require separate and subsequent City Council approval.

The project site is located south of the First Street/I-580 freeway interchange. It is surrounded by commercial uses, including a shopping center, other gas stations, and a fast-food restaurant. The Arroyo Seco channel separates the project site from the commercial uses to the south and west. First Street separates the subject site from commercial uses to the east.

Conditional Use Permit Modification

The Project involves a modification to the original Conditional Use Permit consisting of the construction of a drive-through carwash facility and related self-service vacuum pumps including grading, additional piping and electrical, paving modifications of the existing food store and gas pumps allowing for the provision of additional parking, self-service vacuum pumps, drive aisles and a new trash enclosure. The Project is compatible with the existing commercial uses and those of the surrounding properties, subject to the conditions of approval.

PROJECT SITE CONTEXT

Table 1, below, summarizes the General Plan land use designation, zoning classification, and existing land use of the Project site and surrounding properties. The Project Site is shown in Attachment 1, Location Map.

	General Plan Designation	Current Zoning Classification	Existing Land Use

North	Regional Commercial	Planned Development	Vacant
South	Open Space (Arroyo Seco) and Regional Commercial	Planned Development 18-010	Shopping center on other side of Arroyo Seco
East	Highway Commercial	Planned Unit Development 195-94 and Highway Service Commercial	Gas stations on other side of First Street
West	Open Space (arroyo) and Regional Commercial	Planned Development 18-010	Shopping center/fast food restaurant on other side of Arroyo Seco
Subject Site	Regional Commercial	Planned Development	Gas station and food store

STAFF ANALYIS

General Plan

The Livermore General Plan designates the site as Regional Commercial (RC), which applies to commercial development along major streets, and adjacent and accessible to a highway or freeway, where any one or combination of significant community serving retail, office, and service activities are appropriate. The RC designation encourages the location of commercial uses generally consisting of a size, bulk, and coverage found in a regional retail shopping center environment, including motor vehicle and gasoline service stations.

General Plan Scenic Resources Policy: The site is subject to the General Plan 2045 Scenic Resources policies. The applicable policies do not prescribe a view angle for this area of the corridor in recognition that it is fully developed. However, the policies state that building additions in this area maintain the height of the existing structure.

The Project implements these policies by enhancing the existing regional commercial uses (a gas station and food store) with a drive-through carwash and related self-service vacuum facility. The proposed carwash building will maintain the existing one-story height of the building and includes architectural detailing consistent with the existing building. For these reasons, the Project is consistent with the General Plan.

Zoning District

The site is zoned Planned Development (PD). Specific PD regulations have not been adopted for this specific parcel. For commercial Planned Development districts, the Development Code applies the development standards of the Research and Development (I-1) zoning district and the land uses of the Neighborhood Business Commercial (CNB) zoning district. The CNB zoning district conditionally permits auto service stations and accessory uses such as car washes per the Development Code definition of auto service stations.

The existing building measures approximately 3,670 square feet, comprised of an approximately 2,270 food store and an approximately 1,400 square foot auto repair garage. The food store is located within a building addition that was approved with Conditional Use Permit (CUP 07-002) in 2007. The CUP also authorized a drive-through that was intended for the provision of coffee, other beverages and sundries, but was not constructed. The Project proposes a modification to the CUP to authorize the construction of stand-alone drive-through carwash building and related self-service vacuum pumps.

The proposed carwash drive-through facility meets city zoning requirements including setbacks, building coverage, paving and landscaping coverage.

Vehicle Rental

The a portion of site is currently used as an unauthorized U-Haul rental location, which occupies parking spaces and informal paved areas along the side and rear of the site. Those areas will be converted to parking, carwash, vacuum stations, and landscape with the new project. Since the site will no longer have space for outdoor vehicle and trailer parking or rental, staff recommends the following condition of approval.

- Recommended Condition. Upon issuance of the first building permit for the proposed project, all rental vehicles and trailers shall be removed from the site and are not permitted at the site unless specifically authorized through a separate land use entitlement issued by the Community Development Department.

Land Use Compatibility

The proposed carwash drive-through facility and self-serve vacuums are compatible with the existing land uses on surrounding properties, including the adjacent regional commercial center to the west and the gas stations to the east across First Street. The proposed facility is a customary secondary use of a gas station and food store and appropriate for this freeway-oriented location. The addition of the carwash facility and vacuum areas would allow drivers to make one stop instead of two or three.

Auto and Bike Parking

The project requires 17 parking spaces and 4 bicycle spaces. The proposed site plan provide 26 parking spaces and 4 bicycle spaces. The parking requirement is based on the Development Code requirement of 1 parking space per 250 square feet of commercial floor area. Bicycle spaces are required at a ratio of the greater of 4 stalls or 20 percent of the required vehicle spaces.

The site plan illustrates 26 parking spaces, including 8 spaces at the fuel pumps (four pump stations, each accommodating two cars) and 12 spaces at vacuum stations. The site plan illustrates the location of four bike spaces south of the existing building but does not specify their design. Staff, therefore, recommends a condition of approval specifying the acceptable rack design.

Fuel pump parking is normally counted towards the parking supply for gas stations. This is because a typical customer would purchase fuel and purchase items at the food store on the same visit and while at the gas pump, rather than making a separate trip just for the food store. Vacuum pump spaces should be counted as parking by the same rationale.

One of the proposed parking spaces, located east of the carwash exit lane near First Street, may conflict with on-site circulation of the site. That space is also farther away from the gas station/food store in a space that is not ideal for pedestrian circulation. For this reason, staff recommends removal of this parking space and conversion of the area to landscape.

The conditions of approval require the following adjustment to onsite parking:

- Recommended Condition. The applicant shall remove the parking space closest to First Street and convert the area to landscape. The landscape in this area shall include groundcover, shrubs, and one Strawberry Tree, consistent with the landscape palette for the rest of the site.

Staff recommends the following condition of approval regarding bicycle parking:

- Recommended Condition. Bicycle parking shall meet the design criteria contained in the Livermore Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Trails Active Transportation Plan Design Guidelines (adopted June 11, 2018).

Landscape

The project provides landscaping at the edges of the site and adjacent to the new carwash driveway. The plant palette, comprised mostly of low water use plants with several very low water use plants, meets the water use allowance of the City's Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (see Sheet C-5 for water efficiency calculations). The proposed planting will enhance the site and soften the hardscape at the edges of the site.

The proposed landscape palette, shown in the Development Plans, Sheet LP1.1 (Attachment 2), includes 17 plant species, 12 of which are California natives or cultivars of California native species. The native trees and shrubs include coast live oak, western redbud, holly leaf cherry, toyon, Yankee Point California lilac, and Howard McMinn manzanita. Most of the proposed plants provide nectar or pollen for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators. Overall, the proposed palette incorporates a substantial proportion of California native plants and provides a variety of resources for pollinators.

The total landscape area represents approximately 10.9 percent of the gross site area. The project is required to landscape eight percent for the parking area (Livermore Development Code - Table 4.12). Parking is distributed throughout the site and adequately buffered with landscape. The project relocates an existing propane tank to a landscape area south of the carwash, where turf and tall grass (California meadow sedge) will soften its appearance. Therefore, the project meets the required parking lot landscape area.

The landscape plans do not illustrate the existing landscape buffer along the site's First Street frontage. The Buffer includes two trees and several shrubs but no groundcover. As part of this project, staff recommends the applicant plant and irrigate Phyla nodiflora (commonly known as California frogfruit) as a groundcover in the front landscape buffer. This plant is used in the new plant palette and is a tough, low-growing and low water-use perennial herb in the verbena family.

- Recommended Condition. The applicant plant and irrigate Phyla nodiflora (commonly known as California frogfruit) as a groundcover in the central front landscape buffer adjacent to First Street.

The proposed Tree Plan (Sheet LP2.1, Attachment 2) shows that the project would include 9 trees, consisting of 2 Western Redbud (24-inch box), 5 Strawberry Trees (24-inch box), and 2 Coast Live Oaks (36-inch box). One tree, located at the northwest corner of the carwash, conflicts with the carwash and cannot be planted in that location. Additionally, two existing trees, a palm and a deciduous tree near First Street, are not shown on the plans. Deleting the conflicting tree from the plan and accounting for the two existing trees results in an onsite inventory of 10 trees. All trees are 24-inch to 36-inch box size, exceeding the minimum size requirements. However, the tree quantity is 2 fewer than the 12 shade trees required (LDC Table 4.13 requires 16 trees per gross site acre, minus the building footprint).

The recommended condition requiring the conversion of one parking space to landscape, will yield 11 trees onsite, which is 1 fewer than required. Staff recommends the following condition of approval to require an in-lieu payment for one large shade tree to compensate for the deficit in onsite trees.

- Recommended Condition. Prior to issuance of the first Building Permit, the applicant shall remit to the City of Livermore an in-lieu payment equal to the planted and irrigated value of one 24-inch box Coastal Live Oak trees. The value shall be subject to review and approval by the City of Livermore Public Works Department.

Most of the shrubs proposed for the project are at the city-required minimum size of 5 gallons. A few shrubs, for example the dwarf coyote brush, are proposed at three-gallon size. The proposed three-gallon shrubs in the landscape area along the carwash drive aisle are acceptable, given the layout of the parking areas and the drive aisles to meet city requirements.

The applicant will need to revise the landscape plan at the southeast corner of the property to match the revised site plan which was revised to accommodate Fire Department requirements (Sheet A-1.0). This can be done prior to the issuance of building permits. Staff recommends the following condition to achieve this.

- Recommended Condition. Prior to issuance of the first Building Permit, the applicant shall revise the landscape plans for consistency with the architectural site plan.

Tree Removal

The project proposes the removal of one mature eucalyptus tree on the rear of the site. The tree is causing significant pavement lift and is incompatible with the proposed site plan. Based on its size (over 24 inches in circumference at 4.5 feet above grade), the tree is considered a Protected Tree per Livermore Municipal Code section 12.20.160. Based on the tree's current damage to onsite improvements and its incompatibility with the proposed site plan, staff recommends removal of the tree and payment of an in-lieu replacement fee per the condition of approval below. The attached conditions of approval include standard conditions for tree removal

Building and Vacuum Design

The proposed carwash design incorporates stucco, stone veneer, and glass and aluminum windows, consistent with the existing gas station building. Cornices, molding, and decorative metalwork, provide additional detail. The proposed building is consistent with the existing building in massing and design.

The proposed vacuum stations have cantilevered shade canopies supported by curved posts. Sheet A-1.0 shows the canopies in a yellow fabric and the posts painted red. For compatibility with the other improvements, staff recommends the following condition:

- Recommended Condition. The carwash and vacuum awnings and poles shall be a light earth-tone color, subject to Planning Director review and approval prior to Building Permit issuance. Please refer to the City's commercial design guidelines for more information (please see pages 88 and 90 of the guidelines for the applicable polices).

Solid Waste Collection

The project will provide a roofed masonry enclosure for solid waste containers. Currently, solid waste bins are stored in the parking lot. Sheet A-1.1 of the plan set (Attachment 2) illustrates the proposed enclosure. The enclosure dimensions are smaller than the 10 feet by 18 feet typically required, but the enclosure is designed to store rolling carts rather than metal bins. Given the site constraints, staff recommends approval of the alternate enclosure design.

Active Transportation Plan and Public Improvements

There is a Zone 7 gravel service road adjacent to the Arroyo Las Positas south and west of the project site. The Active Transportation Plan identifies the road as a proposed Class 1A shared use path. Since the service road is off the project site and is not publicly accessible, this project is not obligated to improve the path to ATP standards. All necessary street frontage improvements are already in place.

City Lease

The land to the north, between the project site and I-580, is a vacant parcel acquired by the City for future freeway interchange improvements. The project proposes a 14-foot wide easement on the City property along the entire northern property line of the project site. The easement and associated lease would allow the applicant to install and maintain an exit drive for the carwash and a small area of landscape. Initial lease discussions involved a 30-year lease but the actual term may be shorter, with options to extend, subject to review and approval by the City Council. The applicant must enter into a lease with the City before obtaining a building permit for the project (see condition 3.F of the Engineering Considerations, attached as Exhibit A to the Conditions of Approval, Attachment 5).

Public Comment

City staff received one public comment on the project as of this report's publication. The email is included as Attachment 6.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This project is Categorically Exempt under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303(c), Class 3, New Construction or Conversion, which exempts in urbanized areas up to four commercial buildings not exceeding 10,000 square feet in floor area on sites zoned for such use if not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances where all necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not

environmentally sensitive.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location Map
2. Development Plans
3. Resolution - CEQA
4. Resolution - Project
5. Exhibit A - Conditions of Approval
6. Public comment

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