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MEMORANDUM

To:	Planning Commission	From:	Wendy Atkins
Date:	May 7, 2025	Re:	C-Store Replacement and New Carwash P23-00300-MOD 111 Howell Mountain Road, Angwin Assessor's Parcel Number 024-400-001

Background

Pursuant to Section 303 of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Planning Division has prepared this environmental evaluation for the proposed C-Store Replacement and New Carwash Use Permit Major Modification application (P23-00300-MOD).

Project Description

The applicant is requesting approval of a Use Permit Major Modification for a convenience store replacement and a new carwash. Approval of the use permit major modification would allow for the following: 1) Demolish the existing 3,196 sq. ft. convenience store/auto service building that was damaged by fire; 2) Construct a new 2,234 sq. ft. convenience store; 3) Construct a new 1,164 sq. ft. carwash, 4) Install 18 parking spaces (including 8 fueling positions); 5) Install two new building signs and modify one existing freestanding sign; 6) Proposed convenience store hours of operation from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Friday 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., and closed Saturdays; and, 7) Proposed carwash hours of operation 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. closed Saturdays.

Existing Setting

The project parcel is located in the central portion of the census-designated place in Napa County, Angwin, situated geographically between College Avenue, Brookside Drive, and Howell Mountain Road, to the north, south and east, respectively. The project is located within the Planned Development zoning district (PD) and is accessed from both Howell Mountain Road and Brookside Drive. Howell Mountain Road eventually connects to Silverado Trail, approximately 7.3 miles south of the project site. The parcel has a General Plan designation of Urban Residential (UR).

The approximate 0.67-acre subject property is a rectangular shaped parcel bounded by residential parcels to the north and west, commercial development to the south, and institutional, Pacific Union College to the east. The nearest residence is located approximately 150 feet to the west. There are no creeks, streams, ephemerals or wetlands identified on the subject property. There is a ribbon of trees and other vegetation adjoining the west side of the property which then runs to the northwest along College Avenue. There is a bike/pedestrian path on the southwest side of the vegetated area. There is a bermed landscaped area at the southwest corner of the property along Brookside Drive and small landscape planters dotted along the other street frontages. The properties to the west, east, and south are owned by Pacific Union College. The property is currently developed with a 3,196 square foot convenience store and auto service building, which was damaged by a fire in 2022, and a 714 sq. ft. fueling canopy. The convenience store and auto service building are not operational. The 714 sq. ft. fueling canopy includes eight fueling stations, which are currently operational.

The property is served by the Pacific Union College Water & Sewer System, which is licensed by the California State Water Resource Control Board.

The project site is not located on any of the lists of hazardous material sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.

Property History

On May 16, 1966, a Use Permit was approved (U-70-66) which established a commercial shopping center on the westerly side of Howell Mountain Road south of its intersection with College Avenue. The Use Permit also approved design and a plot plan for the Standard Oil Station including eight fueling position (gas station) and 3,196 sq. ft. auto service building (including an office) with a sign limited to 100 sq. ft. On February 20, 1997, a building permit for a new sign and replacement signs was approved. On February 18, 2000, a Use Permit Modification (99221) was approved as part of an interior remodel to authorize the sale of convenience retail items at the service station.

Before the fire, which damaged the convenience store/auto service building, the parcel was developed with eight position fueling stations (a gas station), seven parking spaces and a 3,196 sq. ft. convenience store/auto service building.

CEQA Exemption Criteria and Analysis

Article 19 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) establishes a list of classes of projects that are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. This project qualifies as an exempt activity under:

- CCR §15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities), which exempts a project that consists of additions to existing structures provided that the addition will not result in an increase of more than 50 percent of the floor area of the structures before the addition or 2,500 square feet, whichever is less, such as replacement of the convenience store.
- CCR §15302 (Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction), which exempts a project which replaces a commercial structure with a new structure of substantially the same size, purpose, and capacity, such as a convenience store.

- CCR §15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), which exempts a store, motel, office, restaurant or similar structure not involving the use of significant amounts of hazardous substances, and not exceeding 2500 square feet in floor area, such as a carwash.
- CCR §15311 (Class 11, Accessory Structures), which exempts the construction, or replacement of minor structures accessory to existing commercial, such as on-premises signs.

Noise

According to the Chevron Angwin – Angwin, CA - Acoustical Assessment conducted by Kimley Horn dated April 15, 2025, the automated drive-thru carwash would include a conveyor wash tunnel with one dryer system and would not include speakers or intercoms. Carwash operations would occur during daytime hours, in accordance with Section 8.16.070 of the Napa County Code (NCC). The Project would utilize one AquaDri FS-40 dryer system. The AquaDri FS-40 dryer system generates 98 dBA at a distance of 10 feet from the source when the outside door is open.

As provided in Table 5: Car Wash Noise Levels, car wash dryer operations would generate a noise level of approximately 57 dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor to the west (multi-family residential) and 49.1 dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor to the north (single-family residential). Additionally, car wash dryer operations would generate a noise level of approximately 57 dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor to the east (retail). The car wash would not exceed the County's daytime exterior noise standard of 60 dB for urban residential uses, 50 dB for rural residential uses, or 65 dB for retail uses. Further the car wash would not operate after 9:00 p.m. and therefore would not exceed the County's nighttime (9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) noise standards.

In addition, a standard carwash vacuum unit generates 72 dBA at a distance of 10 feet. Based strictly on distance attenuation from the newly proposed stalls, vacuum noise at the nearest sensitive receptor (multi-family residential uses to the west) would be approximately 43 dBA, which is below the County's daytime (55 dBA) and nighttime (50 dBA) exterior noise standards for residential uses.

Biological Resources

The approximate 0.67-acre subject property is relatively flat with slopes between 2.37% to 4.4% and is developed with the existing service station and associated improvements. As noted above, there is a bermed landscape area in the southwest corner of the property, along Brookside Drive, and additional planters along the other two streets. Adjoining the project site to the northwest are areas identified as Douglas-fir-Ponderosa Pine according to County of Napa Environmental Mapping (GIS Vegetation layer).

Special-Status Plants—According to the Special-Status Plant Survey Report conducted by Sequoia Ecological Consulting, Inc. dated September 13, 2024, no special-status plant species or sensitive natural communities were identified within the project site or surrounding 500-foot buffer during the botanical surveys. Accordingly, project implementation and construction is not anticipated to impact special-status plant species or sensitive natural communities as the C-store, carwash and associated site improvements are proposed on existing developed areas.

CNDDDB Owl Habitat— According to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) website, structural components of high-quality spotted owl habitat include a multilayered, multispecies

canopy, large conifer overstory trees, shade-tolerant understory conifers or hardwoods, moderate to high canopy closure, live coniferous trees with deformities (e.g. cavities, broken tops, mistletoe infections), large snags, and large logs and other woody debris in the groundcover. The proposed location for physical development is within previously disturbed areas, and no tree removal would occur as part of the project; therefore, no direct impact to NSO habitat would occur. Pacific Union College (PUC) employs a Forest Manager who conducts periodic owl surveys. Forestry operations require a survey calling point within ¼ miles of places where forestry operations will be conducted. The closest spotted owl point that has been identified is one mile from the project location.

PUC has a CAL FIRE “Non Industrial Timber Management Plan” (NTMP) that covers most of the forested areas of PUC’s property. PUC uses this plan to harvest commercial timber, and ensure harvesting activities are in line with all related state regulations. When that plan was created, a forestry analysis for Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) nesting/roosting territory was completed for the entire NTMP area to determine which parts of the property would need annual NSO surveying to conduct forestry operations. Work under CAL FIRE permitting has to adhere to all California Fish & Game and U.S. Fish & Wildlife regulations regarding the protection of the NSO. The land PUC owns along Howell Mountain Road near the project location was deemed to not be NSO nesting/roosting habitat, based on an analysis by a Registered Professional Forester of forest inventory data regarding tree size and number, and PUC is not required by CAL FIRE to do NSO surveying for forestry work in the land we own along Howell Mountain Road near the project location.

PUC is required to do annual NSO surveying for forestry operations in the land PUC owns east of our primary campus, which was deemed to be potential nesting/roosting habitat in the analysis done for the creation of the NTMP. PUC has been calling for six years and has not had any NSO responses to their calling in that time. As of April 15, 2025, PUC is in the process of conducting this year’s annual NSO surveying.

Tribal Cultural Resources

On October 24, 2024, County Staff sent invitations to consult on the proposed project to Native American tribes who had a cultural interest in the area and who as of that date had requested to be invited to consult on projects, in accordance with the requirements of Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1. Two responses were received within 30-days of the tribes’ receipt of the invitations. The response from the Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley indicated that the project was not within the aboriginal territories of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, and comments were declined. The response from Middletown Rancheria requested a tribal consultation for the project.

On November 21, 2024, Planning staff met with a member of the Middletown Rancheria, who indicated the tribe is interested in the site and requested a tribe representative be on site during ground disturbance. Condition of Approval 4.12.a. has been included to address this request. In addition, in the event that any archaeological materials are encountered during earth-disturbing activities when an archaeologist is not present, the project must comply with standard Condition of Approval 7.2 and construction of the project would be required to cease, and a qualified archaeologist would be retained to investigate the site. Accordingly, project implementation and construction is not anticipated to impact cultural resources.

Stormwater Control Plan

Engineering staff has reviewed the latest iteration of the Stormwater Control Plan (SCP), dated December 6, 2024, and determined it is acceptable and consistent with the requirements of Napa County Code Section 16.28.100 (Reduction of pollutants in stormwater). A Regulated Project Stormwater Control Plan (SCP) in accordance with the latest edition of the BASMAA Post-Construction Manual for review and approval by the Engineering Division in PBES shall be submitted prior to building permit issuance, as indicated in Attachment B.

Transportation

A trip generation analysis was prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. dated July 8, 2024, which utilized Napa County Traffic Impact Study (TIS) Guidelines to determine the number of project-generated net new daily trips, if the number of project-generated net new trips is less than 110 trips, the project would not require the preparation of a TIS.

Trip generation for projects are typically developed utilizing trip generation rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual. However, due to the rural characteristics of the project location within Angwin and the specific change in land uses, the ITE Trip Generation Manual was not utilized. Many of the data sets used to develop the trip generation rates within the ITE Trip Generation Manual were collected from sites located in suburban or urban cities with higher populations and within areas with more pass-by traffic. These locations are not similar to the project location, which is in a rural area and located away from major highways or freeways where it is expected to generate primarily local traffic rather than regional traffic. Furthermore, the ITE Trip Generation Manual does not contain land uses that best represents the proposed project changes for the increase in convenience store size and addition of the carwash tunnel. Within the ITE Trip Generation Manual, there are no land uses available to determine the trip generation for a convenience store size increase since the most similar land uses available assumes an increase in trips associated with the gas station use for the vehicle fueling positions. However, the project is not changing the number of vehicle fueling positions for the existing gas station use. For the carwash use, trip generation rates for land uses within ITE Trip Generation Manual are developed based on stand-alone carwashes and not for those within a gas station. Therefore, these data points would not be representative of the proposed project and would not be appropriate to be used to develop the proposed trip generation.

Instead, custom trip generation rates were developed by collecting driveway volumes at locations similar to the proposed project. Traffic counts were collected at a convenience store and carwash (both located within a gas station, similar to the proposed project) to develop the proposed project trip generation. Traffic counts were also collected at an auto care shop to develop the existing land (the auto care shop) which was removed because it was damaged by a fire. The data locations are similar to Angwin in that they are located within rural cities or towns and located away from major freeways or highways that would result in fewer regional trips. Custom trip generation rates developed from the data collection were then applied to the proposed project land use changes to determine the net new daily trips generated.

The difference between the daily trip generation for the existing uses to be removed and the proposed uses to be constructed is an additional 99 daily trips. Since the difference in daily trips is less than 110 trips, a TIS was not required for the project.

Public Utilities

Water and sewer services are provided by the Pacific Union College Water & Sewer System. The system is licensed and regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board. The Facilities Director has provided a letter dated January 10, 2024, indicating that there are adequate resources to serve the proposed project.

The carwash will include a reclamation system (see Attachment L). The system re-uses at least 50% and up to 90% of the water used for the car wash. It treats the water to remove dirt and soap until it can be re-used for future car washes. That reclamation process reduces the water usage per car wash to anywhere between 23 and 40 gallons, depending on the exact car wash type (brush vs. touchless, etc.), which has not been finalized yet.

Under Section 15300.2 of the California Environmental Quality Act, Exceptions [to findings of exemption], a project cannot be deemed exempt under Section 15303, Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), and Section 15311, Accessory Structures [signs], if environmental sensitivities exist on the project site. The list of sensitivities identified in Section 15300.2 include: (a) Location; (b) Cumulative Impact; (c) Significant Effect; (d) Scenic Highways; (e) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (f) Historical Resources. Staff has reviewed the County's GIS Environmental Resource maps (which identify potential environmental sensitivities) in conjunction with Section 15300.2 and has determined that such environmental sensitivities do not exist on the project site. This determination was made based on the analysis discussed above, and as follows:

15300.2. EXCEPTIONS [to Exemption from CEQA]

- (a) Location. Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. The project does not result in substantial effects to mapped or designated environmentally sensitive areas or resources. No native trees or native vegetation would be removed to construct the project.
- (b) Cumulative Impact. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant. The applicant proposes to construct a new 2,234 sq. ft. convenience store and a new 1,164 sq. ft. carwash. Uses within the immediate area of the project site include residential units, the Pacific Union College, and a shopping center. While it is possible that a reconstructed convenience store and new carwash in the project area would contribute to cumulative impacts, the modest nature of the proposed project would not increase activities in the project area enough to result in significant cumulative impacts to the area. The entirety of project development would occur within previously disturbed areas and would cause minimal ground disturbance. Taking into consideration the number of vehicle trips produced by the convenience store reconstruction and carwash, the addition of 99 vehicle trips would be considered negligible. Therefore, staff has concluded that the project site would not result in cumulative impacts.
- (c) Significant Effect. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. There are no proposed activities on the subject property that would

result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Development of the proposed project would occur within previously disturbed areas on the project site, including convenience store reconstruction, new carwash, and the parking area. No additional development of the property is proposed. As such, there are no unusual circumstances on the subject property that could be subject to impacts resulting from implementation of the proposed project.

- (d) Scenic Highways. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR. The subject property is accessed via Howell Mountain Road and Brookside Drive, which are not officially designated as a state scenic highway. The project would result in no tree removal, no rock outcroppings, and no historical structures exist on the project site. As such, the project would not result in damage to scenic resources within a state scenic highway.
- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The project is not on any lists of hazardous waste sites.
- (f) Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. There are no known historical resources on the subject property. Therefore, based upon the analysis above, the proposed project meets the criteria for a categorical exemption under §15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) of the State Guidelines.

Conclusion

For all of the reasons articulated above and contained within the administrative record for the Project, PBES staff have determined the Project is categorically exempt. Furthermore, none of the exceptions in 14 CCR Section 15300.2 for the Class 3 exemption are applicable because the site will not result in substantial effects to mapped or designated environmentally sensitive areas or resources and would not result in a cumulative impact as the project proposes minimal improvements to an existing facility. Further, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances, as the project site has been developed in its current state since the late 1960's. The site is not located on a designated scenic highway or on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5.