



SUBJECT

Proposal to Replace One of Six Existing Self-Service Bays with Touch Free Automatic Car Wash Equipment at Bubble Machine Car Wash at 22235 Mission Boulevard (APN: 428-0036-058-01) Requiring a Conditional Use Permit (Application No. UP-25-0012). Applicant: Melvin Higginbotham, MHA Design Services; Owner: Prem Kumar.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission approve the proposed Conditional Use Permit to replace one of six existing self-service bays with touch-free automatic car wash equipment based on the analysis set forth in this staff report and the findings (Attachment II), and subject to the conditions of approval (Attachment III).

SUMMARY

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to replace one of six existing self-service bays at Bubble Machine Car Wash with touch free automatic car wash equipment on a 0.37-acre site at 22235 Mission Boulevard. Bubble Machine Car Wash would offer both automatic and self-service car washes. As conditioned, the business hours of operation would be reduced from 24 hours to 7:00 am to 9:00 pm.

BACKGROUND

On May 1, 2025, the City received a CUP application to replace one of six existing self-service bays at Bubble Machine Car Wash with touch free automatic car wash equipment at 22235 Mission Boulevard. The property owner, Prem Kumar, has operated Bubble Machine Car Wash since 2022. Prior to that, the car wash operated as Tiny Bubble Machine under different ownership from 2002 to 2022. The car wash use on the subject property dates back to 1965, when the City first approved the construction of the self-service car wash. At that time, a CUP for the car wash was not required, so the use is considered to be legal non-conforming to current code requirements.

Public Outreach: On May 9, 2025, the Planning Division mailed out 199 Notices of Receipt of Application (NORs) for the CUP to the owners and occupants of all properties within 300 feet of the site, as well as to the North Hayward Neighborhood Task Force and Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association. At the time, staff received one public comment opposing the project due to noise, trash, loitering, and traffic concerns.

On December 19, 2025, public hearing notices were once again mailed to the 199 owners and occupants of all properties within a 300-foot radius of the project site, as well as the same neighborhood groups who received the NOR. A public hearing notice was also published in *The Daily Review* newspaper on this same date. As of the preparation of this staff report, Planning Division staff has not received any additional public comments regarding the proposed project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Existing Conditions. The 0.37-acre site contains a 3,549 square foot self-service car wash facility with six bays and eight parking spaces, six of which are equipped with self-service vacuums and is located at 22235 Mission Boulevard. The self-service car wash currently operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The project site is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial uses and is adjacent to a motorcycle shop and detached residential homes. Existing concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls and wood fences of various heights are constructed along portions of the property lines shared with the adjacent residential properties.

Proposed Project: The proposed project consists of converting one of the six existing self-service bays at Bubble Machine Car Wash into a touch-free automatic car wash bay to expand services and offer automatic washes. Specifically, the automatic car wash would be located in the bay adjacent to the motorcycle shop. Vehicles would continue to enter from Mission Boulevard and exit out on Pearce Street. The business proposes to reduce its hours of operation from 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily. The remaining five bays will continue to operate as self-service wash bays, and all six vacuum stalls will remain available for customer use. The business will continue to operate without on-site employees, with the owner performing weekly maintenance and restocking.

Site Improvements: As discussed previously, existing CMU walls and wood fences of various heights are constructed along property lines shared with adjacent residential properties. As part of the project, the existing wooden fence located along the shared property lines with the residence at 22240 Pearce Street will be replaced with a masonry wall to serve as a noise barrier (Condition #14) and further reduce any potential noise impacts to adjacent properties.

Parking: Per Section 10-24.3.2.050(A)¹ of the Hayward Municipal Code, there is no requirement for a minimum number of off-street automobile parking spaces for the proposed change. Therefore, the project is not required to provide parking. However, as discussed above, the project site has eight existing parking spaces to accommodate customers.

Noise Study: According to Chapter 4, Article 1 of the Hayward Municipal Code (HMC), Section 4-1.03.1 (a)², noise levels may not exceed seventy (70) dBA between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., or sixty (60) dBA between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. A Noise Study prepared by Bollard Acoustical Consultants, Inc. (BAC) evaluated the noise generated by the proposed automatic car wash equipment at adjacent residential and commercial properties during the proposed hours of operation. The study considered the noise reduction provided by the existing CMU walls along the northwestern property line. The proposed automatic car wash would be located adjacent

¹ Hayward Municipal Code Section 10-24.2.2.040 - Mission Boulevard - Corridor Neighborhood (MB-CN)

² Hayward Municipal Code Section 4-1.00 - Public Nuisance

to the motorcycle shop and behind the residences at 22240 Pearce Street. BAC concluded that the predicted noise levels would comply with HMC Section 4-1.03.1(a), and no mitigation is required provided the automatic car wash equipment does not operate between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. As a result, the applicant adjusted the business hours of operations to ensure compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance.

Per Section 10-1.1045(j)(1)(g)³ of the Hayward Municipal Code, drive-in establishments, including car wash facilities, are required to construct a masonry wall along any property line abutting a residential use. Accordingly, the existing wooden fence along the shared property lines with the residence at 22240 Pearce Street will be replaced with a new masonry wall (Condition #14). As indicated above, the Noise Study concluded that the proposed automatic car wash would comply with all applicable noise regulations without requiring any mitigation measures. The new masonry wall will act as an additional noise barrier, further reducing noise levels. A copy of the noise study is included as Attachment VI.

POLICY CONTEXT AND CODE COMPLIANCE

Zoning Ordinance: The project site is zoned Mission Boulevard – Corridor Neighborhood (MB-CN) District⁴. This zoning classification allows for a wide variety of commercial, retail, civic, automotive, and moderate-intensity, medium-scale residential uses. The MB-CN Zoning District conditionally permits drive-in establishments including car washes with approval of a CUP. The Planning Commission may conditionally approve a CUP subject to the Findings set forth in Section 10-1.3225⁵ of the Hayward Municipal Code. The required Findings are listed below:

- The proposed use is desirable for the public convenience or welfare;
- The proposed use will not impair the character and integrity of the zoning district and surrounding area;
- The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare; and
- The proposed use is in harmony with applicable City policies and the intent and purpose of the zoning district involved.

Staff has included additional details and analysis of the proposed findings in Attachment II.

Hayward 2040 General Plan: The project site is designated Sustainable Mixed Use (SMU) in the *Hayward 2040 General Plan*⁶. This land use designation allows for commercial development, including retail, dining and service uses. The project includes the replacement of one existing self-service bay with touch free automatic car wash equipment within an existing car wash and as such, the project is consistent with the site's General Plan land use designation. The project is also consistent with a number of General Plan Goal and Policies, including but not limited to the following:

- The City shall encourage the establishment and expansion of commercial businesses that increase local spending within Hayward and provide needed goods and services to local residents and businesses (Economic Development Policy ED -1.11).

³ [Hayward Municipal Code Section 10-1.1045 – Minimum Design and Performance Standards](#)

⁴ [Hayward Municipal Code Section 10-24.2.2.040 – Mission Boulevard - Corridor Neighborhood \(MB-CN\)](#)

⁵ [Hayward Municipal Code Section 10-1.3225 – Conditional Use Permit Findings](#)

⁶ [Hayward 2040 General Plan](#)

- Grow the local economy and employment base by supporting efforts to expand and retain local businesses (Economic Development Goal ED 3).
- The City shall encourage the integration of a variety of compatible land uses into new and established neighborhoods to provide residents with convenient access to goods, services, parks and recreation, and other community amenities (Land Use Policy LU-1.6).
- The City shall encourage the development of neighborhood amenities and complimentary uses in central locations of the neighborhood whenever feasible (Land Use Policy LU-3.2).

STAFF ANALYSIS

As conditioned, staff believes the Planning Commission can make the required findings to conditionally approve the replacement of one of six existing self-service bays with touch free automatic car wash equipment for Bubble Machine Car Wash. The findings to support the recommendation for approval and related conditions of approval are included in Attachments II and III to this staff report, respectively.

Touch-free automatic car washes provide a convenient and efficient way for vehicle owners to clean their vehicles while eliminating the risk of damage associated with traditional automatic car wash systems that use brushes and other equipment to clean the vehicle. As such, the proposal to install touch free automatic car wash equipment will allow Bubble Machine Car Wash to expand services and offer the Hayward community a touch free automatic car wash, addressing a current service gap in the area.

As shown in Attachment VII, eight standalone car wash businesses operate within the City of Hayward, including Bubble Machine Car Wash; this count excludes car wash services provided at gas stations. Of these, Mission Car Wash at 23981 Mission Boulevard is the only car wash offering hand-wash services, while all others are either self-service or utilize automatic car wash equipment that makes direct contact with vehicles. If approved, Bubble Machine Car Wash would become the first car wash in Hayward to offer touch-free automatic car wash services, providing a unique option for both residents and businesses while also potentially attracting regional customers. As such, the project will fulfill a demonstrated need while supporting economic activity along Mission Boulevard.

The property owner has successfully operated Bubble Machine Car Wash for over three years and has no code enforcement violations. To date, the owner has made several site improvements, including installing exterior lighting to enhance visibility, adding security cameras for 24-hour surveillance, and repaving the site. As mentioned previously, Bubble Machine Car Wash is located within a mixed-use neighborhood with a variety of residential and commercial uses. With approval of a conditional use permit, the proposed project is consistent with the Mission Boulevard - Corridor Neighborhood zoning district, as well as the goals and policies of the City's General Plan, which calls for the expansion of commercial businesses that increase local spending within Hayward and provide needed goods and services to residents and businesses.

Planning Division staff has further determined that potential nuisances associated with the establishment will be minimized with the implementation of the Conditions of Approval. All vehicles will be required to queue on-site to prevent vehicles from encroaching into or blocking the public right-of-way, including sidewalks and travel lanes. Furthermore, the car wash will no longer operate 24-hours per day but will be reduced to operate between 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM. In addition, a new masonry wall will be constructed on site to replace the existing wooden fence, which will further reduce noise levels to neighboring properties.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1), Existing Facilities, in that project involves the minor alteration of an existing self-service car wash facility to expand services to include touchless automatic car washes.

NEXT STEPS

Following the Planning Commission hearing, a ten-day appeal period will take place. If no appeal is received, then the Commission's decision will become final, and the applicant would then be able to proceed with the application of building permits for the project. If an appeal is filed, then a public hearing with the City Council will be scheduled for a date to be determined.

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