

**COUNTY OF EL DORADO
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**



Date: February 26, 2026

Staff: Lela Shelley

DESIGN REVIEW PERMIT

FILE NUMBER: DR22-0007/Cool Station Automobile-Based Commercial Project

APPLICANT: Melvin Higginbotham, Architect

OWNER: David W Dwelle / David M Dwelle Trustees, Nella Invest, LLC

REQUEST: Design Review Permit for proposed two-phase construction to include a convenience store and fuel canopy as Phase One; and a drive-thru quick serve restaurant with carwash for Phase Two.

LOCATION: Northeast corner of the intersection of State Highway 49 and State Highway 193, within the Cool Rural Center, in the Cool area (Exhibit A).

SUPERVISOR DISTRICT: 4

APN: 071-080-007 & 071-500-036 (Exhibit B)

ACREAGE: 5.2 Acres

GENERAL PLAN: Commercial (C) (Exhibit C)

ZONING: General Commercial (CG), Community Design Review (CG-DC) (Exhibit D)

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT: A Mitigated Negative Declaration determination based on an Initial Study prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Exhibit M).

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration based on the Initial Study prepared by staff, subject to CEQA findings;
2. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15074(d), incorporated as Conditions of Approval; and
3. Approve Design Review DR22-0007, based on the Findings and subject to the Conditions of Approval as presented.

BACKGROUND/EXISTING CONDITIONS/SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The project site is located on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada foothills, within the Cool Rural Center. The project proposal consists of two (2) undeveloped parcels which are mostly flat, gently sloping to the southwest. The site primarily consists of highly disturbed grassland vegetation, bare soil, patches of gravel and some paved areas. A cluster of native oak trees, pine trees and rock outcroppings on the eastern portion of the site would remain. A cluster of rock outcrops occupy much of the western portion of the project site. An existing utility corridor runs east/west through the southern portion of the project site, as well as a paved pedestrian/bicycle path which would be extended as part of this proposal.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is a Design Review Permit for the two-phase construction and occupancy of a 7,205-square-foot commercial building, fueling station, and carwash. Phase One consists of a 4,620-square-foot convenience store and a 3,024-square-foot fuel canopy. Phase Two would expand the commercial building to include a 2,585-square-foot drive-thru quick serve restaurant and development of an 1,892-square-foot carwash.

The facility would be developed near the center of the project site, with the main frontage facing State Highway 193 (Georgetown Road) to the south. The fuel canopy would sit 55 feet south of the commercial facility and includes 360-degree clearance around the whole fueling area. Two (2) fuel tanks are proposed to sit 52 feet north of the commercial facility. The project would include 56 parking stalls, six (6) bicycle stalls, 12 spaces under the fuel canopy, and a trash enclosure. Three (3) of the spaces would accommodate trailers or recreational vehicles, and two (2) electric vehicle charging stalls. The site plans reflect an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible pedestrian crosswalk connecting each entrance to the commercial buildings. There is an additional

pedestrian crosswalk connecting to the trash enclosure.

Site access would be provided via two (2) encroachments: one (1) from State Highway 49 and one (1) from State Highway 193. There is a trailway which runs along the frontage of the site along State Highway 193. The trailway would be preserved as part of the proposed project and would be provided with 14 parking stalls with easy access to the trailhead.

The project proposes landscaping to surround the whole developed site, a landscaped area to surround the drive-thru, and several landscape islands breaking up lines of parking stalls. The site would result in 70% of lot area being covered with impervious surface.

The proposed commercial facility, including the Phase Two carwash, would have consistent exterior finishing. Both structures would sit at a height of 24 feet and would include a brick veneer wainscoting. Siding would be painted with earthtone sand, and earthtone brown, with a darker terra cotta trim. The main commercial building would have a metal roof in a dark zinc gray. The carwash building would have a parapet design in the same earthtone color scheme (Exhibit F).

Utilities would connect into the existing public water service provided by Georgetown Divide Public Utility District (GDPUD) and electric service by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). Wastewater sanitation would be provided via a private septic system on adjacent parcel to the east (APN 071-500-036).

STAFF ANALYSIS

The project is proposed on a CG-DC zoned parcel (Exhibit D) with the General Plan land use designation of C. The proposed multi-tenant commercial facility is permitted by right within the CG zone with approval of a Design Review Permit, per the design review zoning overlay review requirements. The identified location of the proposed commercial facility complies with the setback standards of the zone district. The proposed commercial facility meets the required development and design standards as described in the Findings. Staff has determined that the project, as proposed, is consistent with the applicable County General Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance requirements, as discussed in the Findings.

Environmental Review

In accordance with the CEQA, staff has prepared an Initial Study analyzing the potential environmental effects resulting from implementation of the project (Exhibit M). Based on the Initial Study, a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared with five (5) mitigation measures (MM 3.4-1, MM 3.4-2, MM 3.5-1, MM 3.18-1, and MM 3.18-2), for potential impacts to Biological Resources, which would lessen the potential impacts to less than significant. A MMRP incorporates these measures (Exhibit N), and public comments were received and considered (Exhibit O).

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15075, filing a Notice of Determination (NOD) is required to initiate a 30-day statute of limitations on legal challenges to the County's environmental determination. The filing of the NOD is optional; however, not filing the NOD extends the statute of limitations for legal challenges to the project from 30 days to 180 days. Should the applicant choose to have the NOD filed and recorded, the applicant shall submit to the Planning Division a recording fee of \$50.00, as required by the County Recorder, as well as the current 2026 California Department of Fish and Wildlife CEQA review fee for a Mitigated Negative Declaration, \$3,043.75. This fee is used to help defray the cost of managing and protecting the State's fish and wildlife resources.

Agency Review

The project was reviewed by County agencies including the Air Quality Management District, Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Management Department, Stormwater Department, Parks and Trails, Economic Development, and Surveyor's Office. Outside agencies included El Dorado Irrigation District (EID), El Dorado Fire Protection District, GDPUD, Georgetown Divide Recreation District, Caltrans, CalFire, and PG&E were also consulted. Responses and comments by these agencies have been incorporated into the Conditions of Approval. This project was reviewed by the Cool Pilot Hill Advisory Committee (CPHAC) on March 31, 2023, and a second meeting was held voluntarily by the applicant on May 15, 2023, to present how the project was revised to address comments.

REVIEW AUTHORITY

The Planning and Building Department Director has the authority to defer original approval authority on staff-level projects to the Planning Commission, based on the complexity of the proposal, according to Note B of Table 130.50.030.A—Review Authority. For this project, the Planning and Building Department Director has chosen to defer original approval authority to the Planning Commission.

SUPPORT INFORMATION

Attachments to Staff Report:

Findings

Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A.....	Location Map
Exhibit B	Aerial Map
Exhibit C	General Plan Land Use Map
Exhibit D.....	Zoning Map
Exhibit E	Site Plan
Exhibit F.....	Exterior Elevations
Exhibit G.....	Architectural Renderings
Exhibit H.....	Signage
Exhibit I	Preliminary Landscape Plan
Exhibit J	Photometric Site Plan
Exhibit K.....	Traffic Analysis Study
Exhibit L	Pre-Application PA21-0021
Exhibit M	Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)
Exhibit N	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)
Exhibit O	CEQA Comments

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