



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
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KATHLEEN MOLLOY PREVISICH, PLANNING DIRECTOR

September 8, 2011

Agenda Date: October 12, 2011

Agenda Item: 9

Planning Commission
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street,
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Review of Ocean Honda service operations as approved by Commercial Development Permit 111075 following the preparation of a noise study for the car wash bay.

Members of the Commission:

Condition II. D of Commercial Development Permit approval 111075 requires that your Commission re-review the noise reduction measures for the car wash bay at the Ocean Honda dealership, as approved on July 13, 2011. These include a restriction on the hours of operation of dryers at the car wash bay to 8:00 to 5:00 weekdays only (not including Holidays) along with the installation of an electronic timer to ensure compliance, and that the applicant return to the Planning Commission on October 12, 2011 with a noise study prepared by an acoustic expert, including recommendations as required to reduce noise from the car wash, to show conformance with the noise policies of the General Plan.

Background

Ocean Honda was approved by Commercial Development Permit 05-0252, which allowed for the construction of the automobile dealership and also the adjacent Store More America facility. The dealership as it exists today is in conformance with the final approved plans for the Commercial Development Permit as amended by Minor Variations 07-0244 and 08-0178, which included the sales and service areas and car wash in their current location.

The Conditions of Approval for the approved Commercial Development Permits restricted the hours of business for the dealership to 7:00 am - 7:00 pm daily. Auto service operations, which includes use of the car wash, were further restricted to Monday through Friday only, and weekend repair and service was prohibited.

Earlier this year, following a complaint that noise associated with blow dryers at the car wash bay was occurring seven days a week, it was confirmed that the dealership had commenced the servicing of vehicles on weekends and was not operating in compliance with the Commercial Development Permit.

An application was therefore submitted to amend the Conditions of Approval and to allow for weekend servicing of vehicles at the automobile dealership. The Amendment to the Commercial Development Permit, 111075, was approved by your Commission on July 13, 2011 for the increased vehicle service hours and in addition, limits were placed on the operation of the blow dryers at the car wash bay to mitigate disturbance to neighboring residences. Conditions of Approval for this Permit are included as Exhibit A.

However, at the hearing it was determined that additional information was required to determine whether the operation of the blow dryers at the car wash bay was in conformance with noise regulations as set out in the County General Plan. Therefore the applicant was directed to have a noise study prepared by an acoustic expert for the car wash bay, and to return to the Planning Commission on October 12, 2011 with further mitigations proposed to reduce noise from the blow dryers if shown by the noise study to be necessary. This report, prepared by Edward L. Pack and Associates, Inc. on July 25, 2011, is included as Exhibit B.

Permit Review

The dealership is currently operating in substantial compliance with the Conditions of Approval of 111075. Use of the blow dryers has been limited to between 8:00 and 5:00 on non holiday weekdays only, and an electronic timer has been installed at the car wash bay to ensure compliance with these restricted hours of operation. No further complaints have been received from neighboring properties and the dryers are no longer operating in the early morning (before 8:00am), in the evening (after 5:00pm), on weekends or during Holidays. Noise from the dryers, although reduced, does still continue during permitted work hours.

The results of analysis of the noise levels produced by the car wash, as set out in the Noise Assessment Study prepared by Edward L. Pack Associates, Inc. show that both the hourly average noise levels and the maximum noise levels produced by the blow dryers at the car wash bay are in compliance with the standards set out in the Noise Element of the Santa Cruz County General Plan.

The Noise Element allows for maximum noise levels for short term impacts to 70 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum, and a maximum 50 dBA hourly average during the daytime hours of 7:00am to 10:00pm. Based upon the readings taken, the maximum short term noise impact at the most affected adjacent residence, from use of the dryers, is 58 dBA and the hourly average is 48 dBA, which fall within the allowed levels. These readings were taken adjacent to the rear yard of the most affected residence on Carriker Lane but on the dealership side of the existing sound wall. The given noise levels that would exist within the rear yard of the residences were based upon calculations that allowed a 5.4 decibel reduction for the soundwall and an additional small reduction for the increased distance from source of the noise.

In addition, the Noise Element also restricts the maximum impulsive noise level to 65 dBA. Since the use of the car wash does not produce any impulsive noise (a noise of an extremely short duration such as that created by a pile-driver or by a gunshot) no reading of impulsive noise levels were required to be taken for the Noise Assessment Study.

The Noise Assessment Study concludes that since the noise levels produced by the car wash are within the required maximum levels, no additional mitigation measures are required to further reduce the remaining day time disturbance from the dryers.

Summary and Conclusion

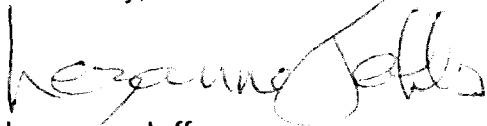
As a result of the Noise Assessment Study prepared by Edward L. Pack Associates, Inc. it can be shown that the Ocean Honda Dealership is operating in compliance with the Noise Element of the County General Plan as set out in 6.9.4 "Commercial and Industrial Development" and as illustrated in Figure 6-2. Further, the previous imposition of reduced hours of operation, through new conditions of approval, reduces the impact of the dealership on the adjacent residential uses and minimizes potential use conflicts. It should be noted however that these residences are located on a site that currently has both a Commercial General Plan and Zoning designation.

Recommendation

As a result of the analysis and discussion above and the results of the Noise Assessment Study (Exhibit B), staff recommends that your Commission take the following action:

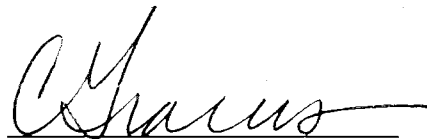
- Accept and file this report, and:
- Maintain all existing Conditions of Approval for the Ocean Honda dealership as Amended by Permit 111075, including the restriction on the allowed hours of operation for the blow dryers at the car wash bay.

Sincerely,



Lezanne Jeffs
Project Planner

Reviewed by:



Cathy Graves
Principal Planner

Exhibits:

- A. Conditions of Approval of Permit 111075
- B. Noise Assessment Study prepared by Edward L. Pack Associates, Inc
- C. Correspondance

Conditions of Approval

Exhibit A. Project plans, 2 sheets, prepared by Avanessian Associates, Architects, dated 5/12/08.

- I. This permit authorizes an amendment to the Conditions of Approval of 05-0252, 07-0244 and 08-0178 for an existing car dealership (Ocean Honda), to allow for the servicing of vehicles at weekends and to set a limit on the hours of operation of the blowers at the car wash bay. Prior to exercising any rights granted by this permit including, without limitation, any construction or site disturbance, the applicant/ owner shall:
 - A. Sign, date, and return to the Planning Department one copy of the approval to indicate acceptance and agreement with the conditions thereof. Other than condition V.D. of the recorded Conditions of Approval, concerning hours of operation for vehicle sales and service operations, all conditions of permit numbers 05-0252, 07-0244 and 08-0178 are incorporated herein by reference and are also conditions of this approval.
- II. Operational Conditions
 - A. In the event that future County inspections of the subject property disclose noncompliance with any Conditions of this approval or any violation of the County Code, the owner shall pay to the County the full cost of such County inspections, including any follow-up inspections and/or necessary enforcement actions, up to and including permit revocation.
 - B. The hours of business for the car dealership shall be between the hours of 7:00am to 7:00pm daily. Auto repair and service operations are limited to 7:00am to 7:00pm Monday through Friday and to 7:00am to 5:00pm on weekends.
 - C. Use of the blow dryers at the car wash is limited to between ~~7:00~~ 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday through Friday. Use of the blowers is prohibited on weekends and Holidays. *An electronic timer to regulate the hours of operation of the dryer shall be installed. (Amended at Planning Commission 7/12/11)*
 - D. *The applicant shall have a noise study prepared by an acoustic expert that includes recommendations to reduce noise from the car wash and to ensure conformance with the noise policies of the General Plan. The applicant shall return to the Planning Commission on October 12, 2011 with further mitigations proposed to reduce noise from the blow dryers, if required. (Amended at Planning Commission 7/12/11)*
- III. As a condition of this development approval, the holder of this development approval ("Development Approval Holder"), is required to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the COUNTY, its officers, employees, and agents, from and against any claim (including attorneys' fees), against the COUNTY, its officers, employees, and agents to attack, set aside, void, or annul this development approval of the COUNTY or any subsequent amendment of this development approval which is requested by the Development Approval Holder.



EDWARD L. PACK ASSOCIATES, INC.

1975 HAMILTON AVENUE
SUITE 26
SAN JOSE, CA 95125

Acoustical Consultants

TEL: 408-371-1195
FAX: 408-371-1196
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July 25, 2011
Project No. 43-031

Ms. Michele Eveland
Ocean Honda
3801 Soquel Drive
Soquel, CA 95073

Subject: Noise Assessment Study of the Car Wash, Ocean Honda, 3801 Soquel Drive, Santa Cruz County

Ref. (a): Santa Cruz County General Plan, Santa Cruz County, Department of County Planning and Building, December 19, 1994

Dear Ms. Eveland:

This report presents the results of a noise assessment study of the car wash operations at Ocean Honda at 3801 Soquel Drive in Santa Cruz County. The car wash operational noise levels presented herein were evaluated against the standards of the County of Santa Cruz Noise Element, Ref. (a). The purpose of the analysis was to determine the noise levels at the nearby residences along Carriker Lane for compliance with the County noise standards. The results of the analysis reveal that the hourly average ($L_{eq(h)}$) noise levels and the maximum (L_{max}) noise levels are in compliance with the standards. Mitigation measures will not be required.

Section I of this report contains a summary of our findings. Subsequent sections contain site and operational descriptions, analyses and evaluations.

I. Summary of Findings

The findings presented below were evaluated against the standards of the County of Santa Cruz Noise Element, which restricts noise from stationary sources at commercial facilities. The Noise Element limits short-term noise levels to 70 A-weighted decibels (dBA) maximum (L_{max}) and 50 dBA hourly average ($L_{eq(h)}$) during the daytime hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. The car wash is not in operation before 7:00 a.m. or after 10:00 p.m.

Note that the County of Santa Cruz Noise Ordinance (not to be confused with the Noise Element) is a curfew ordinance which limits noise annoyance between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. for sources within 100 ft. of a sleeping space, but does not quantify noise limits. Because the car wash is more than 100 ft. away from the nearby residences, the Noise Ordinance standards do not apply.

- The car wash operational noise levels at 15 ft. from the car wash door were 80 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$ and 89.6 dBA L_{max} .
- The car wash operational noise levels in the rear yard of the most impacted Carriker Lane residence were 48 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$ and 58 dBA L_{max} .

The noise levels at the most impacted residential property are within the 50 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$ and 70 dBA L_{max} noise limits of the Santa Cruz County Noise Element standards.

II. Site and Operational Descriptions

The Ocean Honda car wash is located at the west side of the Ocean Honda building near the northerly corner. The door to the car wash faces west. The car wash is a rollover type with stationary dryer blowers. Vehicles are driven into the car wash and stopped during the wash cycle. The vehicles are then backed out under the blowers.

The most impacted residential property line is approximately 223 ft. line-of-sight from the car wash doorway. This is an angled distance from the car wash to the property line between the Store More America buildings.

Each wash and dry cycle is approximately 3:15 minutes in duration. There is some down time between vehicle wash cycles. Thus, each car is washed approximately every 4 minutes during heavy usage. Over the operational day, there are approximately 120 washes conducted. For a worst-case scenario, there could be up to 15 washes in one hour.

III. Analysis and Evaluation of the Noise Levels

To determine the car wash operational noise levels, recordings of the car wash sound levels were made at two locations. Location 1 was 15 ft. from the car wash door and Location 2 was 13 ft. from the most impacted residential property line, 210 ft. from the car wash door. The noise levels were measured on July 20, 2011 using a Larson-Davis LDL 812 Precision Integrating Sound Level Meter. The meter yields, by direct readout, a series of descriptors of the sound levels versus time, including the maximum levels and the continuous equivalent-energy levels (L_{eq}).

The measurement locations are shown on the following satellite image.

Two vehicle washes were measured at Location 1 and two vehicle washes were measured at Location 2.

Table 1. on the following page provides the results of the sound level measurements and analysis. The hourly L_{eq} assumes that 15 washes occur in the one hour period. For the residential rear yard, the higher of the measured washes were used for the calculations.



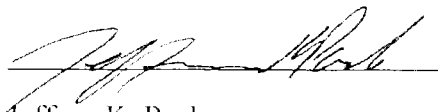
TABLE 1				
Ocean Honda Car Wash Noise Levels				
Location 1 – 15 ft.	Wash L_{eq}	Wash L_{max}	Duration	$L_{eq(h)}$
Wash 1	81.0 dBA	89.6 dBA	3:16	80.2 dBA
Wash 2	80.4 dBA	89.1 dBA	3:13	79.5 dBA
Location 2 – 210 ft.				
Wash 3	55.7 dBA	64.5 dBA	3:10	54.7 dBA
Wash 4	54.9 dBA	63.3 dBA	3:12	53.8 dBA
Carrier Rear Yard				
Dist. = 233 ft., -5.4 dB soundwall		57.6 dBA		48.0 dBA

As shown above, the noise levels in the most impacted residential rear yard were calculated to be 57.6 dBA L_{max} and 48.0 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$. Thus, the noise levels are within the 70 dBA L_{max} and 50 dBA $L_{eq(h)}$ limits of the Santa Cruz County Noise Element standards. Mitigation measures will not be required.

This report presents the results of a noise assessment study of car wash operations at Ocean Honda at 3801 Soquel Drive in Santa Cruz County. The study findings are based on field measurements and other data and are correct to the best of our knowledge. However, changes in the operational scenario, operational hours, noise regulations or other changes beyond our control may result in future noise levels different than those reported herein. If you have any questions or would like an elaboration on this report, please call me.

Sincerely

EDWARD L. PACK ASSOC., INC.


Jeffrey K. Pack
President

Lezanne Jeffs

From: Barbara Carriker [blcarriker@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Sunday, September 11, 2011 3:26 PM
To: Lezanne Jeffs
Subject: RE: Ocean Honda

Dear Lezanne....I'm e-mailing this letter to you with the thought that it will arrive more quickly than snail mail from a tiny town in Montana. Can you get copies to the planning commission? If not, let me know and I'll mail copies. Thanks for your help and keeping me informed. Barbara Carriker

3074 Carriker Lane

Soquel, CA 95073

Sept. 11, 2011

Santa Cruz Planning Commission

701 Ocean St.

Santa Cruz, CA 95060

To members of the planning commission:

I'm writing in regards to the Ocean Honda noise issue that was discussed at the July 13, 2011 meeting. I'll be out of the area when the October 12 meeting occurs, so I will provide you with my opinion.

Ocean Honda has kept the jet blowers turned off after 5 p.m. and on weekends. The nearby residential neighborhood is appreciative.

However, there's still concern over the intermittent noise from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Apparently the noise study showed that the blower decibels were barely within allowable levels because they were not constant. While a person's hearing may not be impacted by the noise, one's stress level is. You could compare the blower noise to listening to your next door neighbor use a leaf blower for 30 seconds at a time about a hundred times a day during working hours.

The residences on Carriker Lane were built in the late 1940s. My house was built by my dad in 1948 when zoning was probably not even considered. It was mostly surrounded by huge open fields. Now the homes are enclosed by warehouses and businesses. Our homes are non conforming in that we are residences within a commercially zoned area. I accept that progress happens. But I will always believe that businesses need to respect their neighbors.

Ocean Honda has been a good neighbor except the disruptive sound of the jet blowers. If there is no way to quiet the blowers, perhaps Honda could let the cars air dry or towel dry them. Please don't allow this kind of noise pollution to continue.

Thanks you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Carriker