

**MINUTES**  
**Regular PEQC Meeting of the**  
**Planning and Environmental Quality Commission**  
**Tuesday, March 18, 2025**

The Regular PEQC Meeting Notice and Agenda of the Planning and Environmental Quality Commission of the City of Gardena, California, was called to order at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in the Council Chambers at 1700 W. 162nd Street, Gardena, California.

**PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING** by emailing the Planning Commission at [planningcommissioner@cityofgardena.org](mailto:planningcommissioner@cityofgardena.org) by 5:00 PM on the day of the meeting and write "Public Comment" in the subject line.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Ronald Wright-Scherr led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Chair Deryl Henderson; Vice-Chair Ronald Wright-Scherr; Commissioner Jules Kanhan; Commissioner Steve Sherman and Commissioner Stephen P. Langley. Employees present: Director of Community Development Greg Tsujiuchi; Community Development Manager Amanda Acuña; Deputy City Attorney Rosemary Koo; and Planning Assistant Kevin La.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – *No Items***

**5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Planning Assistant Kevin La asked if there were any comments from the public and noted for the record that no member of the public wished to speak to the Planning Commission at this time.

Chair Henderson asked for the election of Chair and Vice-Chair to be agendaized for the next meeting. Ms. Acuña agreed.

**6. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**6.A ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT #18-24, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #8-24**

A request for a conditional use permit to operate an amusement arcade within an existing commercial tenant space located in an existing commercial shopping center within the General Commercial (C-3) zoning district, in accordance with Section 18.32.030.H of the Gardena Municipal Code.

Environmental Consideration: The proposed project is being considered for a categorical exemption from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Guidelines Section 15301, as an existing facilities project and Section 15061(b)(3).

APPLICANT: Wawa Claw LLC (Representative: Matthew Chi)

LOCATION: 1425 West Artesia Boulevard, Ste 23 (APN: 6106-034-001)

Community Development Director Greg Tsujiuchi and Deputy City Attorney Rosemary Koo were present to answer any questions.

Community Development Manager Amanda Acuña presented the Staff Report for Environmental Assessment #18-24 and Conditional Use Permit #8-24 to operate an amusement arcade at 1425 West Artesia Boulevard, Suite 23.

Ms. Acuña presented the zoning map, which indicated that the site is located in the C-3 Zone. The site is situated within Gateway Plaza, a shopping center located at the northwest corner of Artesia Boulevard and Normandie Avenue. A photograph of the site was also displayed.

Ms. Acuña then showed the project floor plan, which encompasses an approximately 1,500 square foot tenant space. The applicant is proposing to establish an amusement arcade facility in this location.

Ms. Acuña discussed the site analysis, explaining that an amusement arcade requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate, as outlined in the Gardena Municipal Code (GMC) section 18.23.030.H. An amusement arcade is defined as any place that houses five or more amusement devices, as per the Gardena Municipal Code (GMC) and a Conditional Use Permit is required for any amusement arcade within the C-3 Zone. Furthermore, the City's Municipal Code mandates that an amusement arcade must obtain an establishment permit in conjunction with the City's business license regulations.

Ms. Acuña noted that the Commission is being asked to consider for the Conditional Use Permit request and if approved the applicant would be subject to for the amusement arcade establishment permit, subject to the Community Development Director's decision.

Ms. Acuña clarified the definitions of amusement devices and amusement arcades. An amusement arcade is five or more devices, and Amusement devices, by the City's code, refer to any mechanical or electrical machines that require a coin or token for playtime, which include video games, pool tables, air hockey, foosball, pinball machines, or any other similar skilled testing devices. The code specifically calls for mechanical grab machines to be included as amusement devices.

In December 2024, Ms. Acuña noted that WaWa Claw Incorporation applied to operate an arcade facility at the proposed site within Gateway Plaza. The facility is planned to feature 30 claw machine devices. The proposed hours of operation are from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Sunday, with 1 to 2 employees that are conditioned to be present during operating hours. The target audience is individuals ages 3 and older.

Ms. Acuña presented the project floor plan for the existing tenant space, identifying the entrance location, the 30 new claw machines, two restrooms, employee counter space, and the exit at the northern end of the space.

Ms. Acuña presented examples of the claw machines that were provided by the applicant but were not part of the agenda.

Ms. Acuña then noted that, according to Gardena Municipal Code section 18.64.030B, amusement arcades must maintain a distance of at least 300 feet from one another. She explained that amusement arcades are defined as having five or more amusement devices, which also include pool tables. She stated that Staff reviewed city records and identified two conditional use permits that had been issued for amusement arcades in separate billiard halls located at: Seoul Billiard – 1898 W. 157<sup>th</sup> St., and One Billiard – 15112 S. Western Ave. Additionally, another amusement arcade, Kiddleton, located at 15484 S. Western Ave., is under consideration for approval at the Tozai Plaza shopping center. Ms. Acuña confirmed that all these locations are at least 300 feet away from the subject property in Gateway Plaza.

Ms. Acuña informed everyone that according to GMC section 18.64.030.C, amusement arcades are required to provide adequate bicycle parking facilities. However, the Zoning Code does not specify a minimum bicycle parking requirement for non-residential areas. She then presented the project site plan, highlighting the commercial shopping center.

Ms. Acuña noted that staff had reviewed the original records and site area, revealing that there is currently one bike rack located on the site. She emphasized that the staff believes the intention was for the arcade facilities to be frequented by younger individuals on bicycles. However, due to the absence of a specific code requirement for adequate bicycle parking, staff must adhere to city and state standards, which only come into play when there is an increase in vehicle parking. The logic is that an increase in vehicle parking indicates that more people will be visiting the site. Furthermore, she noted that the conditional use permit for the amusement arcade facility does not increase parking demand. Therefore, it does not theoretically increase the bicycle parking requirement.

Lastly, Ms. Acuña discussed the environmental considerations for the proposed amusement arcade project, for which a conditional use permit is being requested. Staff conducted an analysis in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and found that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the CEQA guideline sections:

- 15301 – Existing Facilities
- 15061(b)(3) – No significant environmental implications
- 15300.2 – Not subject to exceptions to the exemptions in CEQA.

Ms. Acuña also noted that public hearing notices were properly advertised in the Gardena Valley News, and mailers were sent to property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the project site on March 6, 2025. At this time, no public comments regarding the project have been received.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- ☐ Conduct the public hearing;
- ☐ Receive testimony from the public; and
- ☐ Adopt Resolution No. PC 4-25 making the necessary findings and approving EA #18-24 and CUP #8-24 subject to the attached Conditions of Approval; and
- ☐ Direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

Ms. Acuña informed everyone that both staff and the applicant were available to answer questions.

Chair Henderson then asked if any of the Commissioners had questions for the staff. Shortly after, he announced that the Public Hearing was open and asked if anyone wished to speak on this item.

Chair Henderson asked the applicant to come forward.

Applicants Hugh Su and Matthew Chi introduced themselves, and Director Tsujiuchi informed the Commissioners that they would not be giving a presentation but were available to answer questions. Mr. Chi commended Ms. Acuña on the presentation.

Director Tsujiuchi asked Mr. Hugh Su and Mr. Matthew Chi to start by explaining their business concept. Mr. Chi shared a story from his family vacation, detailing how he was inspired by a concept that is very popular in Japan, Asia, and Taiwan. He brought this idea back to the United States, developed a business plan, and opened his first store in Torrance. He also mentioned that he has partnered with local schools and Girl Scouts and has received positive feedback from nearby restaurants. He noted that after discovering a vacancy in the Gateway Plaza on Artesia Blvd., he began exploring opportunities in Gardena and is excited about the probability of expanding his business there.

Commissioner Sherman pointed out that the document states that school children are not allowed on the premises during school hours. He wanted to confirm if this information was accurate, as it could affect the number of people able to play games. Mr. Matthew Chi confirmed that Sherman was correct, noting that most of the revenue is generated during peak hours, specifically from 7:00 PM until closing. Director Tsujiuchi added that an arcade business on Western Avenue had a similar policy back in the 70s and 80s.

Ms. Acuña mentioned that there is a code requirement under the amusement permit, which they must also obtain from the Community Development Department. This code requires them to post visible signs to help prevent truancy among children.

Commissioner Langley expressed his concerns about children riding their bicycles on the walkway, which could disrupt the outdoor seating areas of nearby restaurants leading up to the project site. He then asked Mr. Chi how he would address the situation if it arose, emphasizing that if bicycles were parked in front of the project site, it would negatively impact both neighboring restaurants and pedestrians walking by.

Mr. Matthew Chi replied that the landlord would be responsible for managing such situations and would decide on the location of the bike path. He noted that the landlord is quite strict about what can be placed outside the stores, ensuring that the walkway remains clear for customers.

Commissioner Langley added that he also has concerns about the handicapped spaces near the project site. Mr. Chi confirmed that the parking spaces are located a few spots away from the front of the project site. Mr. Hugh Su added that based on their experience with their Torrance location, they have not encountered issues with people riding bikes and parking them outside the store, and he believes this is not a concern for them at the moment.

Director Tsujiuchi made a suggestion to the Commissioners regarding motions. He noted that while a condition can be added at the time of making a motion, the code already stipulates that bike parking must be provided to the satisfaction of the city. He recommended that if staff believes it is necessary, they can include a condition. Since staff handles the complaints and code enforcement is responsible for monitoring, they will also communicate with other businesses if bicycle-related issues arise. The city can require businesses to install a bicycle rack either on their property, in front of the project's entrance, or within the facility, provided they have the property owner's approval.

Commissioner Langley inquired about when the business opened in Torrance. Mr. Hugh Su responded that they opened in September 2024. Commissioner Langley noted that they have not yet experienced the summer months.

Chair Henderson inquired whether it would be possible to install a temporary bicycle rack near the closed Carl's Jr. location until it becomes occupied. He expressed safety concerns regarding bicycle racks and cars sharing the same space. Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr agreed, and Director Tsujiuchi shared his opinions and gave his recommendations on the matter.

Chair Henderson then asked about the types of prizes offered. Mr. Chi responded that the prizes mainly consist of dolls and plushies. He also explained that they have a trade-up wall, where smaller prizes can be exchanged for larger dolls and other items.

Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr asked about the cost per play. Mr. Su replied that it is one dollar per token, and they offer various token packages.

Chair Henderson announced that the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Langley requested clarification regarding how to amend the motion. Deputy City Attorney Rosemary Koo explained that he could propose the motion with the necessary changes and should specify the details of the amendment he is requesting.

**MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Langley and seconded by Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr to Conduct the Public Hearing; Receive testimony from the public; and Adopt Resolution No. PC 4-25 making the necessary findings and approving EA #18-24 and CUP #8-24 subject to the attached Conditions of Approval; and Direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption, and the Community Development Director shall have the discretion to determine if the property owner or business owner is required to provide additional parking facilities for alternative transportation devices at any time while this Permit is in effect:**

**The motion was passed by the following roll call vote:**

**Ayes: Langley, Wright-Scherr, Sherman, Kanhan, and Henderson**

**Noes: None**

**6.B ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT #20-24, CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #9-24**

A request for a conditional use permit to operate an amusement arcade within an existing commercial tenant space located in an existing commercial shopping center within the General Commercial (C-3) zoning district, in accordance with Section 18.32.030.H of the Gardena Municipal Code.

Environmental Consideration: The proposed project is being considered for a categorical exemption from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Guidelines Section 15301, as an existing facilities project and Section 15061(b)(3).

APPLICANT: Kiddleton Inc. (Representative: Kanako Nishikawa)

LOCATION: 15484 South Western Avenue, Unit 110 (APN: 6103-010-074)

Community Development Director Greg Tsujiuchi, Community Development Manager Amanda Acuña, and Deputy City Attorney Rosemary Koo were present to answer any questions.

Planning Assistant Kevin La presented the Staff Report on Environmental Assessment #20-24 and Conditional Use Permit #9-24 located for Tozai Plaza located at 15484 South Western Avenue, Unit 110.

Mr. La displayed a zoning map indicating that the site is situated in the C3 Zone, which is designated for general commercial use, similar to the previous amusement arcade project. He shared photographs of the existing tenant space, which is a two-story structure spanning 3.2 acres. He noted that the Kiddleton sign was approved through building permits and is currently awaiting on their conditional use permit to be in full operation.

Mr. La went over the site plan for the property, highlighting the existing 28 tenant spaces and 216 parking spaces available to accommodate the business plaza. The applicant has requested to operate an arcade within a 1,000 square foot tenant space.

Mr. La reiterated the relevant Gardena Municipal Code (GMC) section 18.23.030.H, which applies to this project, mandating a conditional use permit to operate as an amusement arcade. According to the GMC, an amusement arcade is defined as any location housing five or more amusement devices and obtaining an establishment permit, along with a City business license.

Mr. La mentioned that the applicant requested a total of 31 amusement devices in the tenant space. The hours of operation are Monday to Sunday from 1:00 PM to 9:00 PM, with employees who are conditioned to be present during operating hours. The target audience is for all ages.

Mr. La presented the project floor plan, highlighting that there will be a variety of arcade machines and providing examples of these machines. He emphasized that there will be no entrance or access from Western Avenue.

Mr. La noted that in accordance with Gardena Municipal Code section 18.64.030B, amusement arcades must maintain a distance of at least 300 feet from one another. Staff reviewed city records and identified two conditional use permits that had been issued to Seoul Billiard and One Billiard, and the most recent Wawa Claw on Artesia Boulevard. Mr. La pointed out that the closest business, Seoul Billiard, is located at 1898 W. 157th Street, but it is further than 300 feet away, thereby complying with the distance requirement.

Mr. La also confirmed that for this proposed project, arcades are required to provide adequate bicycle parking. There is currently one existing bike parking space located approximately 60 feet away from the tenant space, as shown on the screen.

Mr. La mentioned that for the Environmental Considerations the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to guideline sections:

- 15301 – Existing Facilities
- 15061(b)(3) – No significant environmental implications
- 15300.2 – Not subject to exceptions to the exemptions in CEQA.

Mr. La noted that public hearing notices were properly advertised in the Gardena Valley News, and mailers were sent to property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the project site on March 6, 2025. At this time, no public comments regarding the project have been received.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- ☐ Conduct the public hearing;
- ☐ Receive testimony from the public; and
- ☐ Adopt Resolution No. PC 5-25 making the necessary findings and approving EA #20-24 and CUP #9-24 subject to the attached Conditions of Approval; and
- ☐ Direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption.

Chair Henderson asked if any of the Commissioners had questions for the staff.

Chair Henderson asked for the applicant to come forward. Mr. La confirmed that the applicant was present and available to answer questions.

Chair Henderson announced that the Public Hearing was open.

Mr. Osamu Harada, the Applicant Representative from Kiddleton Inc., introduced himself and provided some background on how the business was started. He discussed the various cities and states where they have successfully opened stores, as well as the locations of the machines within those stores. He expressed his eagerness to receive approval for the proposed project.

Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr inquired whether Mr. Osamu Harada had a plan in place regarding children riding their bicycles on the walkway, as this could potentially disrupt the outdoor seating areas of nearby restaurants. Mr. Harada responded that a designated bicycle area is located near the project site to help mitigate this issue, and staff will encourage customers to use that area. He expressed confidence in the security guards at Tozai Plaza to maintain order.

Director Tsujiuchi informed the Commissioner that they could propose the same condition as with the previous item. He then directed his comments to Mr. Harada, letting him know that the same condition would apply to his project, to which Mr. Harada agreed.

Commissioner Sherman asked what would be used to activate the machines. Mr. Harada confirmed that tokens would be used, and Mr. La referred to the floor plan, which showed that there were two token machines indicated. Mr. Harada further shared that the prizes include authentic Japanese capsule toys and other plushies.

Commissioner Kanhan asked how often the machines are cleaned. Mr. Harada confirmed that the staff is responsible for cleaning, sanitizing the machines, and replenishing the toys.

Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr then asked for the number of employees. Mr. Harada stated that there would be 1-2 employees during operating hours.

Chair Henderson announced that the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Langley stated that he would make the same amendment for the current project as he did for the previous item.

**MOTION: A motion was made by Commissioner Langley and seconded by Vice-Chair Wright-Scherr to Conduct the Public Hearing; Receive testimony from the public; and Adopt Resolution No. PC 5-25 making the necessary findings and approving EA #20-24 and CUP #9-24 subject to the attached Conditions of Approval; and Direct staff to file a Notice of Exemption, and the Community Development Director shall have the discretion to determine if the property owner or business owner is required to provide additional parking facilities for alternative transportation devices at any time while this Permit is in effect:**

**The motion was passed by the following roll call vote:**

**Ayes: Langley, Wright-Scherr, Kanhan, Sherman, and Henderson**

**Noes: None**



## 7. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Community Development Director, Greg Tsujiuchi announced upcoming city events.

- 1) Eggstravaganza Bonanza, Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Rowley Park.

Director Tsujiuchi noted that the location for the Easter Breakfast has yet to be determined.

- 2) Cinco De Mayo Parade & Festival, Saturday, May 3, 2025. The parade starts at 10:00 AM on Gardena Blvd.

Director Tsujiuchi mentioned that he is unsure if Commissioners are being asked to participate, but he will gather more information and keep the Commission informed.

Director Tsujiuchi requested clarification regarding the request made during the Open Oral Communication concerning the scheduling of the Election of Chair and Vice-Chair for a future meeting. Chair Henderson recalled that this typically happens in March.

Deputy City Attorney Rosemary Koo noted that, although it is common practice to hold these elections in March, there are no official written rules or bylaws governing this matter. Therefore, it would be acceptable to address it at the next meeting. Director Tsujiuchi agreed as it is consistent with the city election process, given that they are appointed by an elected official.

## 8. PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

- 1) COMMISSIONER LANGLEY – No items to report.
- 2) COMMISSIONER SHERMAN – No items to report.
- 3) VICE-CHAIR WRIGHT-SCHERR – No items to report.
- 4) COMMISSIONER KANHAN – No items to report.
- 5) CHAIR HENDERSON – No items to report.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Henderson adjourned the meeting at 7:59 PM.

APPROVED:

Respectfully submitted,



FOR: DERYL HENDERSON, CHAIR  
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission

By:



GREG TSUJIUCHI, SECRETARY  
Planning and Environmental Quality Commission