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Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: September 2, 2025

Prepared By: Carole Kendrick, Director of Development Services

PROJECT INFORMATION SUMMARY

Case File: Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 25-03, Variance (VAR) 25-01 and Master Sign Plan (MSP) 25-01 "Home Depot Tool Rental Center"

Request: Consideration of request to: (1) Approve a Conditional Use Permit to allow for the operation of an internal Tool Rental Center, equipment rental display in ten (10) parking stalls, truck rental in six (6) parking stalls, front sidewalk sales and display, rear storage/staging area, and seasonal sales/storage area including Christmas tree sales; (2) Approve a Variance to reduce the required parking from 484 stalls to 357 stalls; (3) Approve a Master Sign Plan amendment for proposed signage associated with the Tool Rental Center and (4) Find the project Categorical Exempt from environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.

Summary Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission open the public hearing, take testimony, and either (1) approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 25-03, Variance (VAR) 25-01 and Master Sign Plan (MSP) 25-01, subject to the conditions of approval (2) Continue the item to a future meeting for further discussion or additional information; or (3) Deny one or more applications.

<u>Property Owner/Applicant:</u>	Home Depot USA, Inc. / Lars Andersen & Associates, Inc.
<u>Address:</u>	600 Placerville Drive
<u>APN:</u>	323-580-028
<u>Lot Area:</u>	17.05 acres
<u>General Plan Designation:</u>	Commercial (C) & Low Density Residential (LDR)
<u>Zoning:</u>	Commercial (C) & Single Family Residential 20,000 (R1-20)
<u>Existing Use:</u>	Retail Home Improvement Store
<u>Environmental Document:</u>	Categorically Exempt per §15061(b)(3) & §15301
<u>Decision Making</u>	Placerville Zoning Ordinance §10-3-1(C) for CUP; §10-3-5(A) for Variance; §10-4-17 for MSP

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On May 6, 2025, Lars Andersen & Associates, Inc., on behalf of Home Depot USA, Inc., submitted an application for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 25-03 to amend the existing site plan for the Home Depot store located at 600 Placerville Drive. The proposal includes the addition of an internal Tool Rental Center (TRC), utilization of ten (10) parking stalls for equipment rental display, six (6) parking stalls for truck rental, front sidewalk sales and display, a rear storage/staging area, and a seasonal sales/storage area including Christmas tree sales. Additionally, a Variance application was submitted to reduce the required parking stalls from 484 to 357. The application also includes a Master Sign Plan (MSP) 25-01 proposing the addition of 3'-0" channel letters and placards for the Tool Rental Center on the building facade, with the exact build-out location to be determined. Existing signs, including the front elevation channel letters, garden center channel letters, contractor pick-up channel letters, and freestanding monument sign, will remain.

The internal Tool Rental Center involves the rental of tools ranging from small drills to larger power equipment, operated by Home Depot associates. The equipment rental area in the parking lot will display rental items on trailers, locked and secured, with no on-site maintenance or repairs. The truck rental program offers box trucks from 12' to 26' in length, with transactions handled inside the store and no on-site fueling or maintenance.

Front sidewalk sales will display items such as barbecues, patio furniture, and landscape products, maintaining a minimum 4' ADA-compliant walkway. The rear staging area allows for temporary storage of products for up to 72 hours during delivery, with no overnight deliveries. Seasonal sales in the parking lot, occupying 20 stalls, will occur from March 1 to July 31 and November 15 to December 31, with Christmas tree sales requiring an annual Temporary Use Permit (TUP).

BACKGROUND

The Home Depot store was originally approved on April 15, 2003, under Site Plan Review (SPR) 02-04 with a parking demand of 3 stalls per 1,000 square feet, requiring 361 stalls, and providing 391 stalls including 30 in the seasonal sales area. The current City Code requires 4 stalls per 1,000 square feet, resulting in a requirement of 484 stalls for the 120,744 SF building (97,126 square foot main store + 23,618 square foot garden center).

Staff review identified discrepancies in the provided site plan and parking analysis, noting that the site plan did not accurately reflect ongoing outdoor storage. The applicant responded on July 3, 2025, committed to adjust operations, revise the parking study, and include a Variance application for the parking reduction.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is a 17.05-acre parcel located at 600 Placerville Drive, developed with a 120,744 square foot Home Depot store, including a garden center, and associated parking lot. The site is bounded by Placerville Drive to the north, commercial uses to the east, and residential/open space to the south and west.

PROJECT SETTING

The subject property is zoned Commercial (C) with a General Plan designation of Commercial. Surrounding properties include commercial retail to the north and east, and low-density residential to the south and west. The site features include the existing store building, parking areas, and landscaping.

The project setting can also be seen in the following materials attached to this staff report:

- General Plan Land Use Map (Attachment E)
- Zoning Map (Attachment F)
- Aerial Photograph (Attachment G)

The land uses, zoning, and Placerville General Plan Land Use Element designations of the project site and surrounding area are shown in the following Table.

	LAND USE	GENERAL PLAN	ZONING
PROJECT SITE	Retail	Commercial (C)	Commercial (C)
NORTH	Commercial/Retail	Commercial (C)	Commercial (C)
SOUTH	Residential/Open Space	Low Density Residential (LDR)	Single Family Residential (R-1)
EAST	Commercial	Commercial (C)	Commercial (C)
WEST	Residential	Low Density Residential (LDR)	Single Family Residential (R-1)

PROJECT ANALYSIS

General Plan Consistency: The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Commercial land use designation, which allows for retail and service uses. The addition of tool and equipment rental enhances the home improvement retail function without altering the overall commercial character. The project supports Goal C of the Land Use Element by providing convenient access to goods and services for the community.

Zoning Consistency: The Commercial (C) zone permits retail uses, but the proposed outdoor display, storage, and rental operations require a Conditional Use Permit per Zoning Ordinance Section 10-4-4. The project complies with development standards for setbacks, height, and signage. The front sidewalk display maintains ADA access with a 4' walkway.

Parking and Variance: The City Code requires 484 parking stalls based on 1 stall per 250 SF of floor area. The proposed site plan provides 357 stalls, a reduction of 127 stalls, necessitating a Variance per Section 10-3-5(A). The applicant's parking demand study (see Attachment C), based on observations at four comparable Home Depot sites (Moreno Valley, CA; Granbury, TX; and two in Phoenix, AZ), estimates an average peak demand of 1.41 stalls per 1,000 SF on Saturdays, resulting in a demand of approximately 170 stalls for this site.

The Variance is justified as the site's original approval was at a lower ratio, and current operations and studies demonstrate adequate parking. Special circumstances include the large building format typical of home improvement stores, which generates lower parking demand than standard retail. Granting the Variance will not be detrimental to public welfare, as the project includes measures to improve traffic flow, such as limiting outdoor storage and opening an additional entrance/exit.

Signage and Master Sign Plan: The proposed Master Sign Plan complies with Section 10-4-17 of the Placerville Zoning Ordinance, which allows for coordinated signage programs and typically includes limits on total sign area based on building frontage or lot size. The increase from 495.5 square feet to 530 square feet represents an additional 34.5 square feet for the new 3'-0" channel letters and placards for the Tool Rental Center (see Attachment B).

The existing signage consists of a single two-sided, approximately 11' high by 15' at its base sign, with approximately 37.5 square feet of sign area. The proposed aggregate building and site signage exceeds the maximum allowed in the code by 331 square feet for a total of 530 square feet.

Other Standards: The project includes details for fencing and bollards in the rental areas, angled parking for equipment rental to facilitate access, and signage for reserved stalls. Seasonal sales are limited to specified periods, with Christmas tree sales requiring an annual TUP.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City has reviewed this request and determined that the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3), as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility of significant environmental effect, and Section 15301 for existing facilities, involving minor alterations with no expansion of use.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Property owners located within a 300-foot radius of the project site were notified of the public hearing on August 20, 2025, with a 10-day hearing notice in addition to a public notice in the Mountain Democrat (see Attachment H). At the time of report preparation, the Planning Department has not received any letters of comment from the public in favor of or opposition to

the project. Any comments received prior to the time of the scheduled Planning Commission meeting will be provided to the Commission at the time of the public hearing.

DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY

The Planning Commission is authorized under Zoning Ordinance Section 10-3-1(C) to act upon all applications for use permits within the City.

Section 10-3-3 of the City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance states: “Certain uses may be permitted in zones in which they are not otherwise outright permitted by this chapter, where such uses are deemed essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare, and are in harmony with the various elements or objectives of the comprehensive general plan and are not detrimental to surrounding property. (Ord. 1474, 1-8-1991)”

Section 10-3-5 of the City of Placerville Ordinance states: “(A) The commission may grant a variance to authorize a specific exception to any regulation of this title in accordance with the procedure specified in section 10-3-6 of this chapter. (B) The commission may grant variances from the terms of the zoning regulations contained in this title only when, because of special circumstances applicable to the property, including size, shape, topography, location or surroundings, the strict application of this title deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by other property in the vicinity and under identical zoning classification.

FINDINGS

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 25-03

1. No Significant Environmental Impacts: The project involves minor alterations to an existing facility with no expansion of use, resulting in no significant impacts to environmental resources, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.
2. Consistency with General Plan: The proposal enhances commercial services, aligning with Goal C of the Land Use Element for convenient access to goods and services for the community.
3. Zoning Compatibility: The uses are appropriate for the Commercial (C) zone with a CUP, maintaining harmony with surrounding properties.
4. Public Welfare: The operations are deemed desirable for public convenience, with no detriment to adjacent properties.
5. Parking Adequacy: Supported by the demand study, the provided parking accommodates peak needs.
6. CEQA Exemption: Qualifies under Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.

Variance (VAR) 25-01

1. Special Circumstances: The large-format retail generates lower parking demand than the code assumes, as evidenced by studies comparing peak demand (1.41 stalls per 1,000 SF) at comparable Home Depot sites.
2. No Special Privilege: The reduction aligns with actual parking demand and the original approval standards (3 stalls per 1,000 SF in 2003), rather than granting an unfair advantage.
3. No Injury to Public: Adequate parking is provided (357 stalls exceed the estimated peak demand of 170 stalls), with improvements to traffic flow such as limiting outdoor storage and adding an entrance/exit.
4. Consistency with General Plan: Supports commercial viability without adverse impacts, aligning with the Commercial land use designation.

Master Sign Plan (MSP) 25-01

1. Compliance with Sign Ordinance: The MSP provides for coordinated signage consistent with Section 10-4-17, incorporating the new TRC wall sign without exceeding the permitted sign area or number based on building frontage.
2. Aesthetic and Functional Consistency: The plan maintains the site's visual character while clearly identifying the new Tool Rental Center, promoting business identification without adverse impacts on safety or aesthetics.
3. No Significant Environmental Impacts: The signage addition involves no physical alterations beyond minor installations, consistent with the CEQA exemption under Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

1. Hold a public hearing and take public testimony; and,

Option 1:

1. Approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 25-03, Variance (VAR) 25-01 and Master Sign Plan Amendment (MSP) 25-01 subject to the attached conditions of approval; and
2. Direct staff to prepare a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the applicant to file with the El Dorado County Clerk Recorder's Office.

Option 2:

1. Continue the item to a future meeting for further discussion or additional information.

Option 3:

1. Deny one or more applications.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Site Plan & Project Description
- B. Master Sign Plan Amendment
- C. Parking Analysis
- D. Draft Conditions of Approval
- E. General Plan Land Use Designation Map
- F. Zoning Map
- G. Aerial Photograph
- H. Proof of Publication

INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

City of Placerville General Plan

City of Placerville Zoning Ordinance

Contents of City of Placerville Planning Department Project File CUP25-03, VAR25-01, MSP25-01, SPR25-04, ZC02-03, SPR02-04, and GPA02-02