

9/22/24

Proposed Tsunami Express Car Wash

We are Bob and Sue Koponen – we live at 1035 Polk Place; our property is directly behind the proposed car wash.

We visited the Roseville Tsunami car wash and gathered this information:

We talked to a neighbour that lived in the nearby condo, which is approximately 650 feet from the car wash. She shared that the noise from the car wash dryer & vacuums can be heard inside her residence **with the windows and doors shut**. We live directly behind the proposed car and are very concerned about the noise of this business. Will we be able to sit on our deck or use the backyard without hearing the 13 hours a day of noise from the dryer & vacuums? **We are very concerned about the sound pollution!**

The Roseville facility washes approximately 300 cars a day or about 23 cars per hour. We were told that the dryer shuts off after 6 minutes of non-use. That being stated, we are concerned that the noise from the dryer & vacuums be a constant source of sound pollution. **We are very concerned about the sound pollution!**

Regarding the over-height sound barrier, what will prevent the noise from just going up and above the sound barrier wall? Our property sits higher than current grade on the existing proposed property. **We are very concerned about the sound pollution!**

Traffic:

The intersection at 50th Ave. & Central is busy and congested with most of the businesses entrances and exits happening at that location. How can it possibly handle another 150-300 cars a day safely? Fiftieth avenue is a main entrance into many of the surrounding neighborhoods! It is very busy with traffic from home residences, school buses, service businesses for the home residences and bicycles. There aren't any sidewalks for citizens that walk this street which include many children walking to and from school. **We are very concerned about the traffic!**

Light:

We have a problem with the existing lighting on the current building. The lights on the back of the that building adjoins to our property and are so bright that it illuminates our backyard/deck also, as far away as the house across the street. **We are very concerned about the lighting!**

As long time Columbia Heights residents, we ask the you please take our concerns into consideration and address the noise, traffic and light concerns, prior to approving this business.

Thank you and please reach out with questions. Bob Koponen @ 612-709-2700.

Andrew Boucher

From: Carrie Gille <carriegille@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 3:51 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: Car wash next to ALDIs

Hi Andrew,

There's a post on the Heights neighborhood Facebook site about a potential car wash going in between ALDIs and Jimmy John's on 50th and central. Your name was mentioned for feedback.

In short, so far there are over 40 comments on the post and none are positive. Concerns about noise, pollution, traffic, safety for school children using that road, light pollution, noise pollution. Also, lots of "do we really need another car wash?!". I mean—there are SO many car focused businesses on central and we already have traffic issues on that road. This is not a Facebook group prone to hysterics—it's a group that generally has thoughtful and community focused concerns. Also, with hopefully safely improvements coming to Central, adding yet another car-centric business seems premature.

Carrie Gille
Heights resident

Andrew Boucher

From: dana.alexon@q.com
Sent: Saturday, September 21, 2024 12:17 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Cc: Sulmaan Khan
Subject: RE: Comments re Proposed 999 50th Car Wash

Thank you for sharing the full plans submitted by Tsunami!

I have reviewed the plans submitted by the Tsunami car wash and have the following comments:

1. The project is 'shoehorned' onto the property, with very little free space. While property lines in Columbia Heights are often smaller, this means that the facilities that can be built must be smaller to fit the available space. I believe a business that fills the available space fully from the beginning leaves no room for expansion in the future. Assuming this business becomes highly successful, what options would exist for expansion on this site?
2. There does not appear to be any space for employee parking, yet the proposal states that employees would be staffing the site during all open hours. In my visits to the 'Mister' facility on Central Avenue, it is common to see at least 4 employees on site there and they often park on Tyler Place near the rear of their facility since there is no on-site employee parking available. I believe a new facility should be self-sufficient and that employees should not need to park off-site. Parking on the street in the area would exacerbate the anticipated traffic issues. At the proposed Tsunami facility, where will these employees park?
3. The design drawing for the property shows space for 8 vehicles in line within the property. As a customer at Mister, I have frequently seen twice this many cars in 2 lanes waiting for washes on nice days, especially in the winter, with cars waiting to enter the facility backing up on northbound Central Avenue. Where would the overflow vehicles wait for their turn to enter the facility and what provisions for managing traffic on 50th Avenue would the Tsunami staff have during these overflow events?
4. Once a car has entered the east entrance and another pulls in behind it, there is no provision for escape in the event the driver decides not to get a wash, except for waiting until they are first in line then driving all the way around the facility. There should be a more convenient 'out' for drivers that change their minds, but the property doesn't allow the space for it.
5. Proximity of the east entrance to the intersection of 50th Avenue and Tyler Street seems problematic. Cars waiting to turn into the entrance potentially from 3 directions could easily cause a traffic jam on streets that are not designed for such events. The path around such traffic jams does not exist.
6. Plans do not show the driveway exit from 1002 50th Avenue. This is a duplex home, and it is common for the residents of this property to park 2 cars in tandem on this driveway. When this happens, the rear car extends to within about a foot of the curb cut causing a dangerous lack of visibility for drivers on northbound Tyler Street wishing to turn either direction onto 50th Avenue; these drivers often cannot see

beyond the parked vehicle in this driveway. I have had more than one close call at this intersection as a result of this situation, despite using extreme caution. The added traffic for the car wash would likely make this situation even more dangerous.

7. The 2-way traffic at the west entrance to the facility seems like it will cause additional traffic problems. I understand the desire to allow use of the vacuums without having to be a wash customer, but the current design of the property does not seem conducive to that without causing traffic issues. The number of stalls for vacuums does seem adequate, and I like the 13-foot width which allows for movement around the vehicle on both sides.

8. I would be concerned with how much noise escapes this property during operational hours. Typically the noise from the vacuums is most significant and this noise will be directed to the south, into the residential neighborhood across 50th Avenue and along the north end of the 4900 block of Tyler Street. It does appear there is a wall proposed on the east side of the Tsunami property, but that will not mitigate the sound coming to the south. I certainly would not want that sound all day every day if I lived closer to this proposed facility.

9. The color scheme and overall branding of the facility seems reasonable and having a working and active business in place of an empty office building would be a positive development.

Unrelated to this proposed facility, I recently noticed a competitor building a new full-service car wash facility near the corner of 85th Avenue and Springbrook Drive in Coon Rapids. I can't compare the site size, but two key differences stood out immediately to me as I drove past the Coon Rapids facility: the surrounding roads are designed for commercial traffic volume and the surrounding properties are all commercial. I think these are key components to success of such a new development.

I remain skeptical that the proposed facility will be a positive addition to the surrounding residential neighborhood and am therefore not in favor of continuing with this development.

On Thu, 22 Aug, 2024 at 8:52 AM, Andrew Boucher <ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov> wrote:

To: dana.alexon@q.com

Cc: SKhan@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Dana,

Thank you for reaching out and providing initial comments. I've attached their full application containing:

- Applicant narrative (pgs. 4-5),
- Existing conditions (pg. 7)
- Demolition and tree preservation plan (pgs. 8-10)
- Proposed site plan on (pg. 11)
- Civil plan set showing grading, stormwater design and SWPPP plans, civil details, and landscaping plan (pgs. 11-22)
- Elevations and signage (pgs. 23-39)
- Photometric plan (pg. 40)
- The remaining pages (pgs. 41-94) are stormwater calculations.

I appreciate the comments you've made in regards to the existing traffic and safety issues surrounding your neighborhood with the existing commercial activity. Staff shares these concerns as well and have been working to address some of these components with the applicant and MNDOT about the traffic and safety issues at that location if I can share some of those actions with you.

1/2. The proposed project does not meet the scale of intensity to trigger a traffic impact study, which is going to be required for both of the redevelopment sites at 44th and Central as well as the former Medtronic site as these are containing multiple commercial properties and high density residential. However, I've discussed the issue of vehicle stacking and queueing with our Public Works/Engineering Department because there is concern with the applicant anticipating between 200-400 customers per day (approximately 30 per hour) that their proposed site plan can accommodate the amount of traffic without the stacking spilling into the street and impeding levels of service, especially with the concerns you're raising with the hills and sight lines. As a condition of approval and part of the development review, the City is requiring the applicant to provide a queue length analysis to project how many vehicles are expected to queue at the entrance during peak times and whether this could cause backups into the street. This analysis will be helpful in determining when they anticipate those peak demands so the City can better understand if the peak demands are occurring the same time as other businesses in the immediate area.

3/4. Staff has had conversations internally about the traffic lights in that area in particular and the practical difficulties in trying to make legal left turns from the location you described. This seems like it consistently comes up as a problem location and the City is working with MNDOT to address the traffic light signal at 50th Avenue and Central because it does seem to be one of the direct causes of those traffic backups/chokepoints.

As far as traffic goes, I think from staff's perspective, the most immediate traffic concerns are going to be from the vehicle stacking at the entrance primarily with the exit being largely controlled and limited to the one vehicle leaving the car wash bay as well as any individuals using the vacuums independent of the car wash. Once we receive the queue length analysis, that will quantify the extent of the impact this proposal would have on the existing streets. I am also waiting for the Fire Department to provide their review comments to determine whether they have any concerns regarding emergency vehicle access to the site.

In the context of the larger transportation, traffic, and safety issues in the City, I would strongly recommend that you make these comments on [Columbia Heights Transportation Safety Action Plan \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com). These are all valid and significant concerns that fit a general trend that I have been hearing about this area as residents have been commenting on this project, so I think you should definitely look at the study and timeline as well as leave your comments on those specific intersections/streets, especially considering the future redevelopment of Central Avenue.

Please let me know if you have any other questions or would like to discuss the project further after you've reviewed the site plan.

Thanks,
Andrew



Andrew Boucher, AICP | City Planner (he/him)

[City of Columbia Heights](https://www.cityofcolumbiaheights.com) | Community Development Department

3989 Central Avenue NE | Columbia Heights, MN 55421

aboucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Direct: 763-706-3673 | Main: 763-706-3670

From: dana.alexon@q.com <dana.alexon@q.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2024 4:15 PM

To: Andrew Boucher <ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov>

Subject: Comments re Proposed 999 50th Car Wash

I am not in overall opposition to the concept of a high-quality, full-service car wash in Columbia Heights however I would like to make the following comments regarding traffic and access in our neighborhood. Unfortunately, I have a work commitment at the same time as the public hearing, so I am submitting my thoughts ahead of time without being able to view the site plan or hear the proposal.

1. Hills in the area make sight lines shorter than would otherwise be expected. Traffic on Tyler Street between 49th and 50th Avenue is frequent and often at speeds higher than prudent. The multi-family homes on this street mean many parked cars on the street, making it often a single travel lane. The hill that peaks at the intersection of Lincoln Terrace definitely affects the distance that drivers on Tyler Street can see. Conditions on this street are often near the capacity of what it can handle safely. There are several children living in this block of Tyler Street and often they play in or near the street, whether they should or not.
2. Traffic on 50th Avenue is very heavy east of Central Avenue, primarily because of the success being enjoyed by Aldi. Most eastbound traffic comes off Central Avenue and turns left into the Aldi lot, but certain times of the day there is a fair amount of traffic that continues east on 50th, either straight up the hill or turning right onto Tyler Street. Westbound traffic converges into the intersection of 50th and Central which is not fit to handle as much traffic as it does. The convergence of westbound traffic from Aldi, the Jimmy John's east exit, and the service road west of Jimmy John's often backs up into each of those lots, with a few residential cars coming down 50th or north on Tyler turning to 50th adding on.
3. The traffic lights at Central Avenue are heavily timed to keep Central Avenue moving, and the traffic light allowing 50th Avenue traffic often does not clear the intersection, meaning that drivers become impatient and take chances.
4. The traffic lane arrangement on 50th Avenue east of Central is not well marked. There is a sign to westbound traffic indicating the right lane is a turn lane but often motorists wait in that lane to cross Central Avenue, meaning that drivers wanting to make the legal right turn on red must wait the full traffic light cycle. This backs up westbound traffic further than it otherwise would need to. The peak of this backup tends to be late afternoon and early evening when Aldi, Jimmy John's and several businesses in the strip mall south of 50th are all at their peaks. The worst tends to be on school days when traffic coming from the high school comes down 50th Avenue or uses Tyler Street to avoid backups on 49th Avenue.

The success of all the current local businesses is wonderful, and I hope it continues! However adding another high traffic business that, by its very nature, is car-centric clearly means a major reconfiguration of traffic in this area is of critical importance if this project is approved. For example, I am a customer of Mister Car Wash in the 4400 block of Central and that business is an example of how a busy day can cause a major traffic problem in a business of this type.

I am very concerned that providing proper access to a business such as that proposed in an area that is already backed up during several hours of the day is not possible.

If possible, can you share an electronic version of the proposed site plan as a .pdf file?

Respectfully,

Dana Alexon

1035 Lincoln Terrace

763-807-6565

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Andrew Boucher

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If possible, can you share an electronic version of the proposed site plan as a .pdf file?

Respectfully,

Dana Alexon
1035 Lincoln Terrace
763-807-6565

Andrew Boucher

From: Garedeew A Ergette <garedeew.ergette@cummins.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 3:22 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Cc: Garedeew Ergette; Leeha Allison
Subject: Against proposed car wash on 50th/central

Hello Andrew,

I hope all is well and I do not believe we have met. My name is Garedeew, and I reside in Columbia Heights. I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed car wash at the intersection of *Central* and *50th Street*. This area is already quite busy, primarily due to the presence of ALDI and other small businesses in the vicinity.

As someone who works from home, I regularly observe the traffic flow on Fillmore and 50th Street, and I believe there are several important factors to consider:

- **Heavy Traffic:** The intersection is already congested, with multiple businesses in the area, including ALDI, Heights Bakery, and Jimmy John's.
- **Safety Concerns:** Children from nearby schools, whether walking, biking, or being driven, could be at risk of accidents. The lack of sidewalks only exacerbates this danger, potentially making students late to class or, worse, causing injuries.
- **Seasonal Congestion:** During peak seasons, the traffic congestion could worsen significantly, similar to what is observed at the car wash on Central and 44th.
- **Competition:** The proposed car wash may struggle to succeed due to existing competition from other car washes nearby.
- **Traffic Backup:** The flow of traffic on Central Avenue may be further obstructed by vehicles turning into the ALDI, the car wash, and other businesses.
- **Impact on Property Values:** The increased traffic and noise could lead to a decrease in property values, potentially forcing neighbors to relocate.
- **Environmental Concerns:** The proposed car wash could raise noise and emission levels in our neighborhood, impacting our quality of life.

I can provide additional reasons why I am opposed to this development, but I wanted to start by sharing these concerns with you. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and will be attending the upcoming hearing on this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Sincerely,
Garedew

Garedew A Ergette
Supplier Recovery Manager

garedew.ergette@cummins.com

Cummins Inc.
3850 Victoria Street North
Shoreview, Minnesota 55126
United States

Andrew Boucher

From: info
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 3:54 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: FW: Opposing car wash by Aldi for the city planner

-----Original Message-----

From: Gerri <gerri.moeller@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 10:26 AM
To: info <Columbia.HeightsInfo@ci.columbia-heights.mn.us>
Subject: Opposing car wash by Aldi for the city planner

I just heard on Facebook that an application for a car wash to replace the dental office behind Aldi is being considered. Please do not approve! While I don't live in the neighborhood, that neighborhood and intersection do not need the additional traffic a car wash would entail. It is already a dangerous traffic area. Additionally, CH does not need more car washes.

-Gerri Moeller
5000 Johnson St NE

P.S. If this is a rumor, please disregard and my apologies. :)

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Andrew Boucher

From: Jennifer DeWester <jenniferdewester@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 1:13 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: Re: Planned Car Wash on 50th Ave

If I understand the stacking and queuing the concern is cars backing up into road and blocking traffic as they attempt to access the business. I also have concerns about vehicles exiting business assuming they dump onto 50th. Vehicles seem to fight each other and block traffic trying to make left onto Central coming from Aldi and going right on Central coming from bakery road. I think any increase in traffic volume would make this problem even worse. That intersection is just not built as is to handle that volume of traffic especially considering long waits for green light onto Central. Also I think people turn left from Aldi to avoid intersection. I think that path would be blocked by traffic backed up waiting at light with addition of car wash.

Thanks,
Jennifer DeWester

On Aug 23, 2024, at 12:33 PM, Andrew Boucher <ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov> wrote:

Jennifer and Dirk,

Thank you for reaching out to discuss the proposed project at 999 50th Avenue NE, I am aware of the Facebook group and had a fairly in-depth conversation in-person with the person who posted it and they shared similar concerns to yours. I appreciate that you're taking the time to put your comments and concerns in writing as this allows me to maximize the leverage in my position when negotiating with applicants and developers by setting specific metrics for them to reach, which includes several of the components you've raised in your comments, but I also want to address what the existing zoning allows and how the Site Plan Review process works.

The car wash use is currently a permitted use in the district, so the City is legally obligated to consider their proposal. The proposal must adhere to all applicable zoning standards, and if so, it is approved by right. If the City wanted to consider limiting car wash uses in the district in the future, a code amendment would be required. In the case of the car wash being proposed, the only land-use action needed is a site plan approval. According to City Code, site plan approvals stop at the Planning Commission level and are not reviewed by City Council. The public hearing on this matter is scheduled to take place at the September 4th Planning Commission meeting.

Staff shares the same concerns that have been consistent with the feedback and comments we are receiving from residents, like yourself, and they are related to what we expected, predominantly, noise, safety, and traffic. To address these concerns, staff are requiring the completion of a 3rd party sound study to ensure compliance with required sound levels designated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and a 3rd party traffic/queuing analysis to ensure that there is adequate on-site vehicle stacking to accommodate peak demands. The City cannot approve any proposal or project that causes a decrease in the levels of service for public infrastructure, specifically streets. As far as the vehicle stacking goes, here is the City Code section identifying stacking requirements for uses that typically experience stacking:

<image001.png>

Just to put this review into context for how the City reviewed a similar use in the same area. Earlier this summer, the City processed, reviewed, and approved a minor subdivision and site plan review for a Chase Bank location on a portion of La Casita's parking lot that was subdivided in preparation for new construction of a banking facility. The bank was able to meet the City Code stacking requirements and the use, even with a drive-through component, because the anticipated business traffic and vehicle stacking did not rise to the level where there was concern regarding whether this proposed project would diminish levels of service for the streets servicing that property. The car wash is similar in the case that the vehicle stacking meets City Code and provides 8 stacking spaces for the one service bay, but staff shares the concerns that the public, including yourself, have expressed. With the level of business the car wash is anticipating, the applicant needs to show through an independent 3rd party what the peak demand hours of the business operation are, how many vehicles they would expect to be queued at the greatest peak demand, and that the vehicle stacking will not spill over into the street because that would be considered to diminish the levels of service for that street.

The City is taking the position that the sound study and vehicle queue length analysis need to be provided prior to the public meeting on September 4, 2024. If those items are still pending by next Thursday, then I have consulted with the City Manager and staff would recommend tabling the item and/or continuing the public meeting until the October 1, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.

I wanted to provide the full application package to discuss this further in case you had other concerns, but will also share the sound study and vehicle queue analysis with you as soon as I receive them because I think those are two critical components that will actually quantify what the potential noise/sound and traffic/safety impacts are in a way that would significantly impact whether the project meets City Code requirements.

Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further,

Thanks,
Andrew

Andrew Boucher, AICP | City Planner (he/him)

[City of Columbia Heights](#) | Community Development Department

<image002.png> 3989 Central Avenue NE | Columbia Heights, MN 55421

aboucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Direct: 763-706-3673 | Main: 763-706-3670

-----Original Message-----

From: Jennifer DeWester <jenniferdewester@yahoo.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 8:26 PM

To: Andrew Boucher <ABoucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov>

Subject: Planned Car Wash on 50th Ave

Hello,

I saw the Facebook post regarding the planned car wash. We are strongly against building a car wash at this location. We have lived at 1200 50th Ave NE for the last 30 years (top of hill up from 50th). We

have seen how much worse the traffic has gotten at this corner since Aldi was added. It was already awkward with access to bakery, but this corner is a real problem spot. Additional traffic that a business like a car wash would bring would result in a chaotic dangerous mess. Every week we are either involved or witness near misses or actual accidents. The near misses are not just vehicles, but often the pedestrians as there are many including school kids.

I also would mention we hear the noise from the speedway gas station very clearly at our house. The noise seems to run right up the hill. I think the noise from a car wash would adversely impact a large number of houses in the neighborhood.

Please do not authorize the construction of a car wash at this location!

Thanks,

Jennifer and Dirk DeWester

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

763-233-9217

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<24289 - TSUNAMI EXPRESS CAR WASH - COLUMBIA HEIGHTS - CITY SUBMITTAL - 8-5-24 (1).pdf>

Andrew Boucher

From: jpagliolo@comcast.net
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:13 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: proposed car wash at 50th and Central

We are home owners on 50th Ave NE up the hill from Central Ave.
The traffic congestion at this intersection is already a problem (heights strip mall, jimmy johns, and ALDI).
Adding a car wash, if it's even practical, would make the situation much worse.
Please don't approve the car wash!

Joe Pagliolo, Margaret Hare
1180 50th Ave NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

Andrew Boucher

From: Mark Colombo <markcolombo55421@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2024 8:42 AM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: site plan,Tsunami Express

Sir,I reside at 1105 50th Ave NE, My concern concerning the proposed car wash at 999 50th Av NE is primarily about the effect on an already congested intersection . Not only is the turn lane very narrow,with Aldi,, Jimmy Johns ,and a strip mall at the intersection. But when school starts ,50th Av is a main route to the High School. Living here for 30 years ,I have seen many potential accidents almost happen with people pulling in and out of these busienesses.
also,there is many a time that traffic entering and leaving the intersection is backed up.
please voice my concerns at the hearing ,since I will not be able to attend.

Thank you,
Mark Colombo

Andrew Boucher

From: Samantha Koshiol <samkosho@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 10:01 AM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: 50th and Central Development

Hello!

I'm writing you as a neighbor of this area (we live on Lincoln Terrace) and witness numerous close call accidents at the 50th and Central intersection already.

With the strip mall on the south end, and Aldi on the north end, that intersection can not currently support the vehicle traffic there.

Not to mention, during the school year, there's an even bigger increase in those close calls. I don't believe adding a business that will add that much vehicle traffic is a smart idea. I believe it will decrease property value, add unnecessary noise to the neighborhood and most importantly, lead to many traffic accidents.

Personally, I'd like to see a business that isn't based on cars in that space. With it being so close to Central, it does not have to be a "destination". It's so accessible and this idea actually decreases accessibility of the neighborhood.

Thanks for considering my thoughts.

Andrew Boucher

From: Steven Ess <steveess1958@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 1:01 AM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: 50th and Central Carwash

Dear Andrew,

My family has lived at 5030 Mulcare Drive for over 30 years.

Every day we currently deal with heavy traffic trying to get onto Central Ave and 50th Street. Traffic coming in and out of Aldi's is super crazy. Plus all the traffic from Jimmy Johns, and the rest of the strip mall on the east side.

A car wash at this intersection is just asking for more trouble.

Otherwise, I'm very happy with the city of Columbia Heights.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve and Janine Ess

Proposed Tsunami Express Car Wash

Public hearing: 6:00 pm Wednesday, Sept 4, 2024 – Site Plan Review

Available online via Microsoft Teams Meeting:

Meeting ID 252 58 988 371 **Passcode** ugquG3 **dial-in** +1-312-626-6799

You can submit your own comments to CH City Planner, Andrew Boucher
aboucher@columbiaheightsmn.gov

Introduction. I am Tom Kehrwald. My wife, Cathy, and I bought our house on 50th Ave NE in July of 1975. During the time since then we have seen many changes in the area and we have stayed, not least because of our wonderful neighbors. About a week ago we learned of plans to tear down the brick building at 999 50th Ave NE and build a car wash there. This note collects some of our thoughts on the issue.

Besides 49 years of experience on 50th, Cathy and I frequently deal with the intersection of 50th Ave NE and Central Ave as motorists, as pedestrians and myself as a bike rider. We have a lot of first-hand experience.

This note is divided into two sections: comments on the site plan for the proposed Tsunami Car Wash and comments on how the proposed car wash will affect (mainly worsen) existing problems with the stretch of 50th Ave NE between Central and Polk Place NE.

The Proposed Site Plan: The existing building at 999 will be torn down and the site leveled and prepared. Tsunami proposes to build on the site an express car wash and 10 vacuums serving 18 parking stalls. Regular business hours are 7 am to 8 pm daily. “Tsunami expects to service 200-400 customers per day.” “Vacuums are available for free regardless of whether they go through the car wash.”

The express car wash building would be built toward the back of the lot, roughly parallel to 50th, so cars enter on the east and exit the tunnel at the west side. A parking lot between the building and the street would contain 18 parking stalls with 10 vacuums, each vacuum serving 2 cars.

Two curb cuts would handle entry and exit to/from 50th Ave. The curb cuts would be close to the edges of the lot, especially on the east. Cars would enter from 50th through the east curb cut where two cars could come in side by side. After the pay station there is room for 8 cars (2 columns of 4 cars each) before entrance to the tunnel. All cars exit to 50th via the west curb cut. In addition, the west curb cut allows entrance to cars only using the vacuums.

A sidewalk would extend the existing walk from Aldi’s lot, up to the east edge of the lot.

Comments on the site plan. (These comments are based on a copy of the official site plan) The comments in both sections here are grouped into four sections: Safety, Traffic, Noise Pollution and Light Pollution.

Safety:

- An increasing number of pedestrians walk 50th (to go to school, to ride buses, to shop at Aldi, etc). The site plan includes a partial sidewalk but it is not adequate to protect walkers, and does not provide access for wheelchairs or mobility devices.
 - The sidewalk ends at the beginning of the east entrance. At an absolute minimum there needs to be a space to get safely out of the way of cars BEFORE and AFTER walking past the driveways.
 - Does a sidewalk that ends mid-block require ADA access? My reading of the guidance says yes, since otherwise one must step up on a curb. See section F of <https://archive.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap6toolkit.htm>
 - The sidewalk really needs to go to the corner at Polk Place, but this is covered in the next set of comments.
 - It goes without saying that the sidewalk must be kept clear of snow, ice and debris at all times. Since cars drip water in winter, special care is needed then. Why not bury heating cables for winter use?

Traffic:

- It is reasonable to expect that most cars will approach the car wash from Central Ave, just as the majority of cars enter Aldi from there. But unlike Aldi, there is no alternative entrance. Such cars will have to make left turns to enter the car wash – by Tsunami’s numbers 150 to 300 cars per day, assuming 3 of 4 come via Central.
- If my visualization is correct, the left turns will occur right where Tyler enters 50th. Trying to make a left turn from Tyler will be like trying to make a left turn exiting from Jimmy John.
- Presumably parking on 50th in front of 1000 50th will have to be prohibited?
- If Tsunami is a successful business, customers, frustrated by congestion at 50th and Central, will look for ways to approach it easier. The only two that exist are then via Tyler or via 50th down the hill.

Sound Pollution:

- Sound pollution from car washes is an industry issue. When a car wash is sited with people’s homes on two sides the potential problems become worse. The two major sources of noise are the dryers and the vacuums. For a good overview see this industry article: <https://www.carwash.com/reducing-carwash-noise/>
- Tsunami’s proposal twice claims it is presenting a “state-of-the-art facility”. Information, like the article above, point to the best available sound containment. Tsunami must present details on exactly which equipment they will use for dryers and vacuums and what additional construction for sound muffling they will include (e.g. sound-deadening spray on walls).
- Tsunami offers “free vacuums”. Perhaps they view that as a marketing advantage. But for nearby residents that will only make a noise problem worse!

- “A sound study is planned [to] be conducted for this site specifically to show the car wash’s noise impact on the adjacent properties.” The quote is from the site plan. This kind of sound study is important and must show conformance to regulations. But it is at best a projection of what might happen. Residents need sound readings to be taken after a car wash is in operation to record what really happens and to enforce sound containment where it is merited.
- An excellent reference for residents is **A Guide to Noise Control in Minnesota**, <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-gen6-01.pdf> Some key points which might pertain to this case:
 - MN Pollution Control Agency has set state-wide standards and requires local enforcement.
 - Local jurisdictions may have additional or more restrictive standards.
 - “They [Local Agencies] are also responsible for not allowing land uses that would immediately violate the state noise standard.”
 - Noise limits are set for levels as heard in “noise area classification”, (NAC), not by limits recorded at the noise source. Residential NAC is 1, the lowest allowed noise.
 - “For residential locations (NAC 1), the limits are L10 = 65 dBA and L50 = 60 dBA during the daytime (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.) and L10 = 55 dBA and L50 = 50 dBA during the nighttime (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.) (Minn. R. 7030.0040). This means that during a one-hour period of monitoring, daytime noise levels cannot exceed 65 dBA for more than 10 percent of the time (six minutes) and cannot exceed 60 dBA more than 50 percent of the time (30 minutes).”
 - dBA levels are not linear. 70 dBA is twice as loud as 60 dBA; +/- 10 is double (half) the sound.
 - P8 has a chart showing 60-65 dBA as normal speech volume at 1 meter, whereas a vacuum cleaner at 3 meters (10 feet) is 70 dBA.
 - If one vacuum at the car wash produces 70 dBA, then 10 operating together produce 79+ dBA. Doubling the number of noise producers of the same type produces 3 dBA more sound.

Light Pollutions:

- The site plan creates a large open asphalt ground. The site plan identifies in detail horizontal lighting and wall mounted lighting. It also talks about downward facing pole lighting. That seems appropriate, although I cannot see what is intended as “general pole lighting”.
- There is a huge hole in the site plan. “A full signage package complying with all code standards will be submitted for approval.” Surely we can see this before the site plan might be approved?

Comments on existing problems worsened by the 999 site plan:

Safety:

- All 4 crosswalks at 50th and Central are dangerous for pedestrians and bikes now. This is already recognized by MN Dot and by the City of CH. Adding traffic, especially turning vehicles, will only make a bad scene worse.
 - In our opinion the white poles and street markings help pedestrians by making them more visible to drivers.
 - Nevertheless, right turners on red concentrate on looking over their left shoulders for oncoming cars, and do not notice that the pedestrian walk signal has come on.
 - Right turners who approach the intersection showing a green light do not look hard enough to spot pedestrians partway across.
 - Left turners try to beat the pedestrian by driving in front of them or behind them while the pedestrian is in the crosswalk.
 - Left turners are so glad to finally get a green light that they fail to look for pedestrians.
 - We have experienced ALL of these and more.
- There is only one sidewalk along the congested part of 50th. It needs to be extended to Polk Place to give minimum safety to pedestrians and others who need it. This must include a safe ADA access.

Traffic:

- I don't have numbers but my feeling is that most drivers on 50th who approach the intersection want to turn right or left. The exception is when parents are taking kids to school or bringing them home. Turning left is chaotic.
- 50th is striped for three lanes, and barely wide enough for that.
- Cars in the center lane of 50th face each other head-on across Central. When they get a green light, left turners have to judge whether the car coming at them wants to go straight or turn left – plus the car behind that one. This is accident-prone and time consuming.
- Green lights on 50th are short and far between during rush hours.
- It's harder to turn right from Central onto 50th going east with the white poles (but safer for walkers).
- There are cars coming from all directions in the first hundred yards of 50th now.
- ALL of the above will be more problematic with more traffic and 2 more driveways. Winters ice add to the chaos.
- Tsunami's range of 200-400 cars serviced per day is a way to specify a "normal" range. On a rainy day or when it's too cold, the number may be zero. A peak day may be 600 or more.
- There is no obvious way to add separate left and right turn lanes without total re-design of the intersection. Will the car volume of the 999 plan force the city into major collateral costs?

Noise Pollution:

- While studying the 999 site plan, my wife and I were made aware of a lot of discontent over noise in residential areas near the other CH car wash. What methods do residents have to obtain sound measurement data for their own property case? This data can then document when noise pollution violations occur and substantiate corrective action. Section 3.1 of A Guide to Noise Control in Minnesota, contains standards for gathering such data. The equipment required is only moderately costly. Is there a city employee who already does this service? It is needed.

Andrew Boucher

From: Tom Kehrwald <t.kehrwald@live.com>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 1:03 PM
To: Aaron Chirpich; Andrew Boucher; Mitchell Forney
Cc: Cathy Kehrwald; 'Tom Kehrwald'
Subject: Comments on site plan proposed for 999 50th Ave NE
Attachments: Comments on 999 50th site plan.pdf

To: Aaron Chirpich, City Manager

8/26/2024

Mitchell Forney, Community Development Director

Andrew Boucher, City Planner

Here are my comments on the proposed Tsunami site plan at 999 50th Ave NE. Neither my wife nor I believe the plan's conclusion. Rather, we feel strongly that it will NOT be a valuable addition to the Columbia Heights community if built at that location.

Our thinking about the site proposal made us realize that some of the issues of our street are broader than just the site proposal. So the attachment has a site-specific section and a section on problems it would worsen.

SAFETY has the highest priority, but NOISE is likely to be the most aggravating issue long term for residents.

Next to safety, my key input for the site review is this: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

- **Noise Producer.** Tsunami's site proposal is based on the fact that 999 50th is zoned for general business and that includes car washes. Car washes make noise from dryers [think giant leaf blowers], pumps, vacuums and general machinery. They are allowed to make this noise up to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) limits.
- **Noise Receivers.** Residential zoning begins across the fence (east) and across the street (south). By my guesses from the site plan, that is 45 feet from 2 vacuums (east) and as little as 57 feet from the first row of vacuums (south). At the borders of residential land, MPCA residential noise pollution limits apply.
- **Officials in charge** of the proposed site review have a legal obligation, (**Minn. R. 7030.0030**), "to take reasonable measures to prevent the approval of land use activities that will violate the state noise standard immediately upon establishment of the land use." I believe that a sound study by a professional 3rd party is necessary for the site review, but remains only an educated guess, unless supplemented by actual readings and experiences. Tsunami has two car washes in operation in the Twin Cities and there is experience from the other car wash on Central.

If the site plan were to be approved, it raises questions about monitoring, enforcement and balance of power.

1. What burden of time, cost and disturbance of peace is being laid upon residents? For example, someone who likes to sleep in on Sunday might be surprised to learn that even a sound as loud as that of TV in the other room or a dog barking down the block could be allowed after 7 a.m,

2. Who monitors the business/residential sound border? Is this responsibility dumped on residents? Would it be a requirement on Tsunami? Does the city do this?
3. PCA clearly defines methods for collecting data and reporting monitoring sessions.
4. Local law enforcement agencies are empowered to enforce Minnesota state rules and laws relating to the prevention and control of pollution (**Minn. Stat. 115.071**).
5. If noise pollution is detected at the residential border, what is the legal remedy?

The attachment contains details and is intended also for neighbors; ignore what is clearly just background for them.

Thank you for your attention.

Tom Kehrwald 1060 50th Ave NE 763-572-040

Andrew Boucher

From: Cathy Kehrwald <cathy.kehrwald@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2024 10:39 AM
To: Andrew Boucher
Cc: Amáda Márquez Simula; Aaron Chirpich
Subject: Here are my two primary concerns with a car wash being built on 999...

Here are my two primary concerns with a car wash being built on 999 50th Ave. N.E. : **Safety** and **Noise**.

Safety

As a resident who lives in close proximity to the proposed car wash on 50th Ave. N.E. I have daily experience with the existing traffic/pedestrian/biking congestion around the proposed site. I walk that stretch of 50th Ave. to shop at the strip mall, the liquor store and also Target. I take the southbound #10 bus several days a week. I confront the lack space for a pedestrian on the south side of 50th and am forced to walk in the Jimmy John drive-through lane. In spite of the barriers protecting pedestrians on the corners of 50th and Central , the crosswalk is hazardous. Drivers are looking for other cars, not for pedestrians, when they enter that intersection. (I wear bright clothes and wave an orange bag to get their attention when I cross.) Tsunami would be adding several hundred more cars to the mix. To make a profit, it would try to attract as many as 500/day. In addition, I would think the congestion entering and exiting the car wash would be a deterrent for Tsunami to choose this site.

Noise

The car wash would border residential homes which would be affected by noise from increased traffic and and noise from the pump house, dryer, the machinery and the vacuums. I know Tsunami has to respect the amount of noise permitted by the city but for any resident within 350 feet, the accumulative noises even in those guidelines would be intolerable and detrimental to physical and emotional health. I would hope the car wash will find a more suitable site. The other two Tsunami sites in the Twin Cities are not in as invasive a spot as this one would be.

Thank you Andrew for listening attentively to my husband and I for nearly an hour last week and for clearly explaining the issues. We will be at the public hearing and I have and will continue to alert residents about this proposal. Hopefully you have heard from some of them.

Cathy Kehrwald
1060 50th Ave NE
763 572 0407

Andrew Boucher

From: Tyler Whitney <mrtylewhitney@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 4:00 PM
To: Andrew Boucher
Cc: Aaron Chirpich; Mitchell Forney
Subject: Concerns about Car Wash on 50th

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Andrew Boucher, I live at 4922 Tyler St NE and I have several questions/concerns about the proposed car wash that may be built on 50th Ave.

1. Our main concern is the additional traffic that will be generated. Living on Tyler St NE, our residential street seems to be a major "shortcut" for many people driving to Aldi's, Jimmy Johns, Savers, the schools, etc. The through traffic on our street is concerning already, considering there are many families with young children living on our street (including my family). Building a car wash with the entrance very near to the intersection of Tyler St NE & 50th Ave will generate even more through traffic than already! I realize that building a new business is good for tax revenue, but would it be possible to change this section of Tyler St NE into an "exit only" type of street (blocking the entrance route on our street from 49th & 50th, and only allowing entrance from Lincoln Terrace)? This would help ensure the residential zoned neighborhood's traffic safety would not be burdened by the additional traffic generated by the adjacent commercially zoned properties.

2. I understand there is the possibility of a sound barrier wall being constructed on the east side of the proposed property, but all the residents on Tyler St NE are on the south side of the proposed car wash. Would there also be a sound barrier wall constructed on the south side of the carwash for our neighborhood also? We currently have a "sound barrier wall" on the west side of our property between the Jerusalem Market and it is simply a dilapidated wooden fence that does (almost) nothing to deter noise pollution. Additionally, there seems to be no requirement for the commercial property to provide any upkeep or maintenance of the "sound barrier" fence, as the wall is literally falling apart and is a major safety concern. What is the proposed construction method of the carwash sound barrier wall? Would the wall have any periodic inspections to ensure safety, effectiveness, and maintenance are upheld?

I look forward to your response, thanks,

Tyler Whitney
4922 Tyler St NE
316-227-9622

Andrew Boucher

From: Ardell Schmidt <ardellschmidt@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 27, 2024 8:49 AM
To: Andrew Boucher
Subject: Car Wash Proposal

I was informed that there is a proposal to demolish the office building next to Aldi's and construct a car wash. In my opinion, this does not make sense. In the Winter cars will be coming down the street dripping water which will turn into ice on the slope. Exiting from Central Avenue to 50th is awfully slow. That intersection is already VERY BUSY with our bakery, Jimmy Johns and Aldi's. We live on Polk Place. Coming off Central Avenue the traffic flow is most often at a standstill waiting for cars to enter or exit that intersection's busy businesses. I am a neighborhood walker and the cars coming down 50th are fast and do not watch who is at the side of the road. Will you be widening the street? 2. Make it more safe for walkers 2. Will you allow for a vehicle to have more room to occupy the sides of 50th? 3. Or, do you plan on having Aldi's MOVE their 'in and out' driveway elsewhere? 4. Why aren't the businesses informed of this proposal?

Please reconsider this business adventure. Wouldn't it be more realistic to have a car wash down central like on 40th?

I hope to see you at the meeting.

Ardell & Jon Schmidt
1105 Polk Place NE
Columbia Heights, MN 55421
763-571-4224

Andrew Boucher

From: Nancy Sartor <nancy.sartor@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 1, 2024 3:46 PM
To: Mitchell Forney; Andrew Boucher
Subject: Proposed car wash on 50th & Central

Good afternoon,

I'm not sure if you are the right recipients for this email, but I wanted to share my thoughts on the car wash development being proposed at 50th and Central Ave NE, behind the Aldi supermarket.

My husband and I bought a house in the Malthaire neighborhood in 2009, and have loved living in Columbia Heights. We've watched the area come alive with young families, new leadership in the city council and school board, and diverse businesses that have added value to our community.

But when we heard about the possibility of a car wash at 50th & Central, our hearts sank and our ire swelled for what we believe will be a disaster for our neighborhood. Firstly, there are multiple car washes located nearby--including one just six blocks away at 44th & Central, one at Bobby & Steve's at 37th & Central, and others north along Central and University Aves. Do we really need another one? Like the over-abundance of car parts stores, a car wash seems like more of what is already part of our business community.

More importantly, the area behind Aldi is all residential, so adding a car wash on that parcel is a terrible idea! Not only will it increase what is already a highly congested traffic intersection, but it will decrease the safety of neighbors, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. At present, getting into Aldi, or worse, the strip mall across 50th, is a mess. A car wash would exponentially increase noise and exhaust pollution--from idling cars, the car wash itself, vacuums, etc; and will decrease property values at nearby residences.

I will attend the city council meeting tonight to learn more, but I hope this isn't a done deal. We love Columbia Heights and want to see it thrive.

Thank you for the work you do serving Columbia Heights.

Regards,
Nancy