



Hamburg Township Public Safety Department

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RICHARD DUFFANY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY



TO: Hamburg Township Board

FROM: Chief Richard Duffany

DATE: November 17, 2023

RE: Agenda Item Topic: **Public Safety Assessment – Proposed Car Wash**

General Ledger #:

Number of Supporting Documents: N/A

NEW/OLD BUSINESS: **XXX** New Business

_____ Old Business – Previous Agenda #:

Background

A car wash has been proposed to be constructed on a vacant parcel of land on the south side of M-36 west of Chilson Commons Circle (west of and adjacent to the current Kroger gas station). The site development plans for this proposed car wash contemplate the construction (curb cut) of a driveway for ingress and egress to the car wash from M-36. Hamburg Township Zoning & Planning Director David Rohr requested that I conduct a review of the plans to assess the impact upon public safety specifically as they relate to the proposed driveway and traffic safety.

Assessment

In reviewing the plans, including the proposed driveway on M-36, I have identified two areas of concern relating to traffic safety. The first issue involves vehicles exiting the car wash onto M-36. The proposed car wash driveway would be located directly across from the east driveway of the Hamburg Village Shopping Center. Another driveway is located approximately 150 feet east of the shopping center driveway and primarily serves two businesses (A&J's Quick Lube and the BP gas station).

Motorists attempting to exit the car wash and make a left-hand turn onto westbound M-36 would not only have to negotiate the turn while ensuring that the roadway is sufficiently clear of vehicles traveling on both eastbound and westbound M-36 but would have to contend with vehicles entering the roadway at that location from additional directions (from the two aforementioned business driveways).

Additionally, and more significantly, when vehicles traveling eastbound on M-36 are either in the left turn lane awaiting to proceed north on Chilson Road or are stopped for a red signal at Chilson Road, a driver attempting to make a left-hand turn out of the car wash will have a reduced line of sight of westbound traveling vehicles increasing the chances of a traffic mishap.



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This first area of concern can be mitigated with the installation of a traffic control device prohibiting vehicles exiting the car wash from turning left out of the lot and requiring them to turn right onto M-36. Pursuant to MCL 257.71, this would require that a traffic control order be obtained from the Michigan Department of Transportation as M-36 is a state trunkline highway.

Also to note, while the traffic control device would help reduce the traffic hazards associated with vehicles attempting to turn left out of the car wash, there may be unforeseen issues which arise as patrons of the car wash wishing to go west on M-36 find alternate means to “turn around” after being forced to turn right. It would be reasonable to assume that they would use the private property open to the general public in that area (to wit: Chilson Commons, BP gas station and the Hamburg Village Shopping Center).

The second area of concern involves usage of the center turn lane near the proposed driveway. Vehicles travelling westbound on M-36 wishing to make a left turn into the carwash will be entering the turn lane as eastbound vehicles may be entering/present in that lane to turn left into the gas station or onto northbound Chilson Road. In short, vehicles travelling in opposite directions will be vying for the same portion of the center turn lane substantially increasing the risk of a traffic crash. This increased risk is not only created by the potential for the opposite traveling vehicles striking each other but from the potential for rear-end crashes as these vehicles slow/stop in the travel lane awaiting for the center turn lane to clear. I would note that this stretch of M-36 is a posted 45mph zone.

Recommendation

Based upon my review I have serious reservations with the proposed car wash driveway as it relates to traffic safety. It would be my recommendation that the Township Board not approve the curb cut driveway as currently proposed in the site development plans and that an alternate point of ingress/egress to the car wash be identified if possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Duffany".

Chief Richard Duffany
Director of Public Safety