



CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL MARCH 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Approval of the **SECOND READING** of Text Amendment 18.306 to reclassify auto washes from Principal Permitted Uses to Special Land Uses in the B-3 District, and to add use standards to be met by new Auto Wash establishments.

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: Community Development, Planning

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Over the last few years, there has been an increased interest by the development community seeking approval to build new auto washes in Novi.
- The City Council's Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) met to review possible Zoning Ordinance text amendments related to auto washes, with an interest in allowing greater discretion by the Planning Commission through the Special Land Use process, and subject to a number of use standards that would need to be met by new Auto Wash establishments.
- The ORC made a recommendation that the draft ordinance be forwarded to the City Council for approval to send to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and recommendation back to the City Council.
- On September 10, Planning Commission held the public hearing and recommended approval of the text amendment to City Council. On February 23, 2026, the City Council approved the First Reading with no modifications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City Council's Ordinance Review Committee (ORC) met on April 21, 2025 and on June 23, 2025 to review possible text amendments to auto wash facilities as regulated by the Zoning Ordinance. During the April 21st ORC meeting, the Committee discussed the recent interest in the development of new auto washes. The current ordinance considers auto washes principal permitted uses only in the B-3, General Business District. The Committee asked staff and the City Attorney to work on an ordinance amendment and return to a subsequent ORC meeting.

At the June 23rd meeting, the Committee discussed a memo regarding trends and issues surrounding auto washes, a summary of the built and proposed auto wash facilities in the City of Novi, and draft ordinance language for consideration.

The Committee discussed the attached map that shows the locations of the existing and proposed auto washes in Novi. The white labels reference existing car washes, while the green labels note existing smaller car washes that are accessory to a gas station. The two yellow labels represent new auto washes that have been submitted for site plan review – both are on properties zoned B-3, so the use is currently principal permitted, or permitted as of right (*without* the discretion for approval that a Special Land Use would allow).

	Name	Location	Parcel size	Type	Status
1	Squeaky Shine	Novi Road	1.56 ac	Automatic tunnel	Opened 2020
2	Pure Wash	Meadowbrook /10 Mile	1.09 ac	Automatic tunnel	Opened 2024
3	Original \$6 Car Wash	Novi Road/Grand River	0.54 ac	Automatic tunnel	Proposed rebranding to El Car Wash in process – existing non-conforming in TC District
4	El Car Wash	Grand River/12 Mile	1.29 ac	Automatic tunnel	Under Construction
5	BP Gas Station	12 Mile/Novi Road	1.37 ac	Small automatic accessory use	Built 1991
6	Mobile Gas Station	Grand River/Haggerty	1.87 ac	Small automatic accessory use	Built 1987
7	Quick Pass	Novi Road/10 Mile	4.8 ac	Automatic tunnel	PC approved PSP
8	Grand/Beck Development	Grand River/Beck Road	3.7 ac	Automatic tunnel	PC approved Preliminary Site Plan

EXISTING ORDINANCE STANDARDS

In the City of Novi, Auto Washes are a principal permitted use only in the B-3 General Business District. There are no specific use standards in Section 4.32 except for the requirement that car washes shall be completely enclosed in a building. Otherwise,

car washes are expected to comply with the requirements of the B-3 District for building and parking setbacks, and building height (Section 3.1.12).

Section 3.10 contains Required Conditions for the B-1, B-2 and B-3 Districts, and states that overhead/service bay doors shall not face a major thoroughfare nor an abutting residential district. Car washes often must seek a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals for this condition because of the long tunnel design typical of car wash buildings with entrance and exit door make it difficult to avoid having one overhead door facing the road.

Modern car washes often have outdoor vacuum stations as an accessory use, which does require an outdoor component. This should be addressed in any proposed text amendment.

PROPOSED DRAFT ORDINANCE

The text amendment as recommended for approval by the Planning Commission would change the use from Principal Permitted Use to the more discretionary Special Land Use in the B-3 District. This would not impact the smaller accessory car washes that are sometimes found at gas stations. The specific use standards in Section 4.32 are included in the draft text amendment in this packet, and summarized here:

1. Minimum lot size of 2 acres.
2. A 40-foot minimum front yard setback.
3. Minimum 100-foot setback from residential properties (includes building, vacuums, vehicle stacking).
4. All wash facilities shall be within enclosed building.
5. Outdoor vacuum stations shall not be in front yard, with noise controlled by sound barriers to meet noise performance standards (Section 5.14).
6. Overhead doors shall not face residential-zoned properties, or must be screened by another building or wall.
7. Vehicle stacking spaces shall be outside the public right-of-way and meet the drive-through requirements of Section 5.3.11.
8. By-pass lane (10-feet) required.
9. Overhead doors shall be oriented to face away from residentially-zoned or -used properties within 100 feet, unless screening is provided.
10. Auto washes approved by the Planning Commission prior to the adoption of this ordinance amendment shall be considered permitted under the ordinance standards at the time of approval.
11. Applicants shall be required to submit a plan for decommissioning and removal of the auto wash if the use ceases for a period of two years.

The draft ordinance language may be further modified as the City Council completes its reviews and approvals.

NON-CONFORMITIES CREATED

If the proposed text amendment is adopted as proposed, all of the existing car washes will become non-conforming with the new standard for a minimum lot size of two acres. Only one is on a parcel less than 1 acre – however this is the existing non-conforming car wash in the Town Center District. However, condition ten (10) states

that those auto washes that have been approved by the Planning Commission prior to the adoption of this ordinance shall be considered permitted under the standards in place at the time of that approval.

	Name	Location	Parcel size Conformance	Setback Conformance	Other Conformance
1	Squeaky Shine	Novi Road	No	Yes	Across Novi Road from residential, but greater than 100 feet
2	Pure Wash	Meadowbrook/10 Mile	No	Yes	
3	Original \$6 Car Wash	Novi Road/Grand River	No	Yes	Non-conforming in TC District
4	El Car Wash	Grand River/12 Mile	No	Yes	
5	Quick Pass	Novi Road/10 Mile	Yes	Yes	
6	Grand/Beck Development	Grand River/Beck Road	Yes	Yes	

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment 18.306 to amend various sections of the Zoning Ordinance to reclassify auto washes from Principal Permitted Uses to Special Land Uses in the B-3 District, and to add use standards to be met by new Auto Wash establishments along with other minor changes, subject to further modifications as determined necessary by the City Manager's Office or City Attorney's Office. **SECOND READING**

This motion is made because the ordinance amendment addresses the increasing complexity of the features provided at auto wash facilities, and allows greater discretion by the Planning Commission because the use will be subject to Special Land Use consideration.