



## **CITY OF NOVI CITY COUNCIL**

### **AUGUST 11, 2025**

**SUBJECT:** Approval of the Ordinance Review Committee's recommendation to refer Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment 18.306 to the Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation back to the City Council to modify the B-3, General Business District 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.

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Committee discussed the attached ORC packet providing the Committee with additional background information 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 contained in the ORC packet that shows the locations of the existing and proposed auto washes in Novi. The white labels reference

|   | 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              | Preliminary Site Plan submitted                                                        |

## 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 they are completely enclosed in a building. Otherwise, they 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 an 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 proposed by Staff and the City Attorney's office would change the use from Principal Permitted 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 would include:

1. Minimum lot size – 1 acre (*ALTERNATIVE- could consider 2 acre minimum*). At the June 23, 2025 Ordinance Review Committee meeting, it was recommended that the **2-acre minimum lot size be included in a revised text amendment**. The draft ordinance has been modified to address this concern.
2. 40-foot minimum front yard setback
3. Minimum 100-foot setback from residential properties (includes building, vacuums, vehicle stacking)
4. Outdoor vacuum stations shall not be in front yard, with noise controlled by sound barriers to meet noise performance standards (Section 5.14)
5. Overhead doors shall not face residential-zoned properties, or must be screened by another building or wall.
6. Vehicle stacking spaces shall be outside the public right-of-way and meet the drive-through requirements of Section 5.3.11
7. By-pass lane (10-feet) required
8. The Committee recommended that the ordinance amendment include the provision that, due to the unique nature of auto wash buildings, that the ordinance provide that **a vacant or abandoned auto wash building be demolished within a reasonable time if there is no indication that the building will be reused for this purpose**. The draft ordinance has been modified to address this concern.
9. The Committee recommended that the ordinance address non-conforming existing and proposed auto washes, **indicating that any new auto wash proposal that is through the final site plan phase should be considered grandfathered-in, or allowed an exemption from the proposed ordinance standards**. Alternatively, those uses that have not received Final Site Plan approval may need to return to the Planning Commission prior to Final Site Plan approval being granted.

The draft ordinance language may be modified as the Planning Commission and City Council complete their reviews and approvals.

## NON-CONFORMITIES CREATED

If the proposed text amendment is adopted as proposed, some of the existing car washes will become non-conforming with the new standards. Only one is on a parcel less than 1 acre – however this is the existing non-conforming car wash in the Town Center District, so a new non-conformity is not created.

|   | Name                   | Location              | Parcel size Conformance | Setback Conformance | Other Conformance                                            |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Squeaky Shine          | Novi Road             | Yes                     | Yes                 | Across Novi Road from residential, but greater than 100 feet |
| 2 | Pure Wash              | Meadowbrook/10 Mile   | Yes                     | 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   | Yes                     | Yes                 |                                                              |
| 5 | Quick Pass             | Novi Road/10 Mile     | Yes                     | Yes                 |                                                              |
| 6 | Grand/Beck Development | Grand River/Beck Road | Yes                     | Yes                 |                                                              |

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Approval of the Ordinance Review Committee's recommendation to refer Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment 18.306 to the Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation back to the City Council to modify the B-3, General Business District 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.