



Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council

From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, ICMA-CM, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: October 31, 2025

Subject: Vehicle Accidents Related to Tsunami Car Wash – 8301 University Avenue

City staff has been informed of three vehicle accidents since June 2024 involving motorists exiting the Tsunami Car Wash at 8301 University Avenue. In all three cases, police determined that driver error was a primary factor. Each crash resulted in property damage at the Hi-Stakes Café (Monte's), located directly across 83rd Avenue at 8299 University Avenue. While no serious injuries occurred, the incidents have caused repeated damage and underscore an ongoing safety concern. A graphic showing the accident locations is included with this memorandum.

The car wash uses a conveyor system that moves vehicles through at approximately 1 mph. Police reports consistently note that drivers pressed the accelerator while the vehicle was still in neutral and then shifted into drive, causing an unexpected and rapid forward movement.

Although these incidents stemmed from individual driver mistakes, the pattern of crashes, the recurring damage to Monte's property, and the potential risk to pedestrians and customers warrant continued attention. The direct alignment of the car wash exit with Monte's frontage contributes to occasional unsafe turning and acceleration movements. However, given that the accidents occurred among roughly 67,000 car washes during the same period—a very low incident rate—staff does not believe there is a practical or legal basis for significant measures such as closing access to 83rd Avenue NE.

In response, the car wash operator has agreed to install a temporary speed bump and a flashing LED stop sign at the exit to better alert drivers and reduce speeds. These steps are constructive initial improvements. Additional measures could be considered if needed, including enhanced signage, pavement markings, or periodic monitoring by the Police Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes over time.

Staff is seeking Council direction on next steps. Based on Council guidance, staff will continue working with the affected property owners to implement and assess safety improvements or explore other remedies should the issue persist.

