

TO: Planning & Zoning Commission

FROM: Alter & Pearson, LLC

DATE: June 10, 2024

RE: Site Plan Narrative for Proposed Vehicle Washing Facility (The Car Wash Center Groton) - 771 Long Hill Road (MTC Zoning District)

The Site is 44,763± s.f. (1.03± acres) and located on the south side of Long Hill Road (Route 1), midway between Drozdyk Drive and Poquonnock Road (the “Site”). The Site contains a 1-story, 7,868± s.f. commercial building containing the Northern Lights Smoke Shop. Currently, 40,387± s.f. (0.93± acres) or 90% of the Site is impervious. The Site is bounded to the north by Mattress Firm, the east by Long Hill Road (Route 1) and the Groton Shopping Plaza, to the south by a multi-tenant commercial (Extreme Tan, R.E.M. Boot Co., Naturali Home and Ron’s Guitar) and to the west by the Amtrak railroad tracks.

The Site located in the MTC (Mixed-Use Town Center) Zoning District and a vehicle washing facility is a permitted use in the zone with conditions as detailed in §6.4-9.D.7 (Vehicle Washing Facility). Wetlands are present on the southerly side of the Site and an Inland Wetlands Application for proposed work within the upland review area was submitted to the Inland Wetlands Agency on May 17, 2024 (#IWA24-0005). A twenty-five (25) foot right of way straddles the property line between 771 Long Hill Road and 775 Long Hill Road (Mattress Firm) with 12.5 feet of width on each property. The right of way has existed since 1957 and is recorded on the land records at Volume 158, Page 521 and Volume 324, Page 122.

The Applicant is proposing to raze the existing building and redevelop the Site with a 4,473± s.f. single tunnel conveyORIZED automatic carwash. The two existing curb cuts on Long Hill Road will remain, however, the western curb cut will be restricted to entering traffic only, and the eastern curb cut will be restricted to exiting traffic only. Vehicles accessing the carwash will use the one-way drive and circle the building in a counterclockwise direction. Payment is made at three kiosks on the west side of the building. The entrance to the carwash is in the rear/south of the building. High-efficiency, low-noise dryers are located inside the building and vehicles will exit on the front/north side of the building. The driveway directs vehicles to the free vacuum area on the side/east of the building. A total of 23 vacuum spaces are proposed, together with 2 ADA accessible parking spaces, 2 EV parking spaces and 4 employee parking spaces. The mechanical components of the central vacuum system are within the dumpster enclosure located in the southwest corner of the Site, with both the dumpster and vacuum system enclosed by an 8’ tall, solid vinyl fence.

The Site is located in the MTC Zoning District and complies with the applicable design standards in Section 3.3-2.D. The Applicant intentionally incorporated elements into the plan to increase pedestrian access to the Site. Within the DOT right-of-way, the Applicant is proposing to widen the existing sidewalk to 10 feet in width and will include stamped concrete at the two curb cuts. The public sidewalk along Long Hill Road will connect to the Site’s internal sidewalk network with access to the front door and around the building.

The proposed building meets the Building Form requirements in Section 3.3-2.10 using multiple materials including a split face concrete masonry block knee wall, prefinished ACM panels, metal

canopies, EFIS Dryvit insulation panels in a wood grain finish and a cornice with crown molding on the two elevated portions of the building. Glazing appears on all sides of the building and the front façade was designed to appear as the front of the building with a primary entrance consisting of a double door. Please see the Schematic Design Plan and Elevations (*Sheets PZD01-PZD03*) for additional information.

The existing free-standing sign will remain and be refaced. The Applicant is proposing two wall signs on both the front/north and side/west side of the building which will consist of back-lit channel letters. A detailed landscape plan is included in the submitted plan set (*See Sheet 04 Site Plan - Landscaping*) and is an enhancement to the Site's current condition. The landscape plan incorporates comments from the Inland Wetlands Agency to include native plants and shrubs, adjacent to the wetland and native seed mixes in the rain gardens. Additionally, the plan includes street trees along Long Hill Road and foundation plantings around the building.

Below please find a description of how the proposed site plan meets the site plan objectives of Section 9.5-4:

- A. **Town Plans.** The proposed plan is in general conformance with the intent of the Plan of Conservation and Development in the following ways:
 - Page 2-32: Low Impact Development (LID) incorporates best management practices to protect water quality...encouraging direct infiltration on site by decreasing the amount of impervious surfaces, stormwater does not run off the site to contribute to erosion, sedimentation, and pollution
 - Page 3-7: pedestrian friendly (Route 1 Downtown Groton Node)
 - Page 3-40: Increase focus of economic development efforts on small businesses
- B. **Public Safety.** The building and Site are readily accessible for fire and police protection.
- C. **Traffic Access.** The Applicant is maintaining the existing curb cuts which currently do not create any traffic hazards. The project will require an encroachment permit and will be reviewed by DOT.
- D. **Circulation and Parking.** The queuing requirements in Section 8.2-4.A for Automotive & Marine Facilities Item 19, are met with the proposed site plan with 10 vehicle stacking spaces at the carwash entrance and 2 stacking spaces at the carwash exit. The Applicant has been in the carwash industry for over thirty years, and the width of the drive aisles and vacuum spaces, and the site circulation are all adequately designed to provide for safe and convenient access to the building and the other uses on Site.
- E. **Landscaping and Screening.** The Site complies with Section 8.1, please see the Landscaping Requirement Chart on Sheet 1 of the plan set, together with the landscaping plan on Sheet 4 of the plan set, demonstrating compliance.
- F. **Lighting.** The Applicant is proposing dark-sky compliant Site and building lighting.
- G. **Public Health.** All utilities are available and adequate to serve the proposed carwash. The proposed use will not cause any adverse air, water, or land pollution.
- H. **Environmental Features.** Wetlands are present on the southerly portion of the Site and will not be impacted by the proposed development. The Applicant is proposing to remove trash from the wetlands and revegetate the area with native plantings to restore the area.
- I. **Neighborhood Character.** The proposed use is in general harmony with the character of the surrounding area as a carwash is a service that is typically located in a Town Center.
- J. **Long Island Sound.** The Applicant is reducing the impervious surface of the Site and increasing green space. Substantial landscaping improvements are proposed to include native plantings, together with stormwater enhancements.

The Application meets the conditions for Vehicle Washing Facilities within Section 5.1-13.E, as noted below:

1. The lot size for the Site is 44,763± s.f., when 35,000 s.f. is the minimum lot size required for automatic facilities.
2. Automobile access into the building is in the rear/south adjacent to the railroad tracks and is positioned so that it is not visible from Long Hill Road.
3. The building contains an open-loop wastewater reclaim system that recycles up to 50% of the water used in the carwash, depending on the season.
4. The minimum vehicle stacking spaces required for automatic washing facilities by the regulation are exceeded by the proposed plan.
5. Public water and sanitary sewers will service the proposed carwash.
6. The base of the proposed building contains a split face concrete masonry block knee wall, which is an impact resistant material.
7. Vacuums are proposed on the east side of the building and are not within the front yard setback.
8. The building contains indoor storage areas.
9. The proposed carwash is not a self-service facility; therefore, no waiting room is proposed.