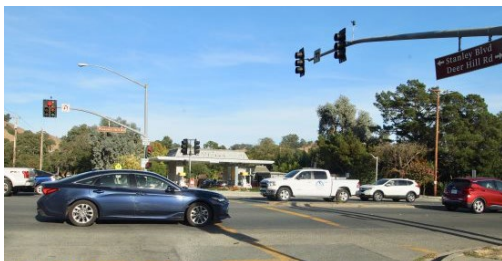


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## Safety and circulation issues cited as car wash proposal is nixed

By Pippa Fisher



The car wash, which was denied Nov. 18, was proposed near one of the worst traffic intersections in Lafayette. Photo Pippa Fisher

Neighbors Jon and Lisa Williams, whose property shares a fence along which the proposed car wash would be located, were appealing the planning commission's decision to approve it, based on noise, pollution, safety and potential lowered property values.

The council listened to city staff, and then to the applicant's attorney David Bowie together with the project architect, as they addressed the various concerns raised during the last meeting. Such concerns included the hours of operation, parking, noise and most notably the amount of space available, looking at turning radii and the implications for on-site circulation affecting the already congested intersection.

City staff acknowledged that although cars would be able to maneuver between the gas pumps to the car wash in theory, it could become "challenging" if other cars were present.

Of great concern to the council - and to the 23 speakers who made their voices heard during public comment, along with multiple written comments against the project - was the issue of safety for the Acalanes High School students who already jaywalk across Stanley Boulevard to get to the shop for snacks. A couple of residents, including one police officer expressed concern about a bigger retail store staying open 24 hours and the potential for attracting crime.

Council Member Steven Bliss noted his very serious concerns about health and safety, saying that with the city's goal of encouraging safe routes to school for children, "This takes us very much in the wrong direction on that broader goal for our city," and he said he had secondary concerns about nuisance and enforcement.

Mayor Mike Anderson acknowledged that there were many very valid issues but said that for him, "My biggest problem is really the onsite circulation which then has effect on offsite circulation and congestion," noting they hadn't even considered how delivery trucks would manage.

"It's pretty obvious that when you have a site whose internal circulation doesn't work, it does back up onto adjacent streets," said Anderson, noting that there are other similar situations in the city.

Many members of the public stayed until late into the night to the end of the meeting and showed their appreciation for the decision with a round of applause, reflecting the overwhelming sentiment in the room that this neighborhood was not the right location for a car wash.

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