



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Meeting of August 20, 2026

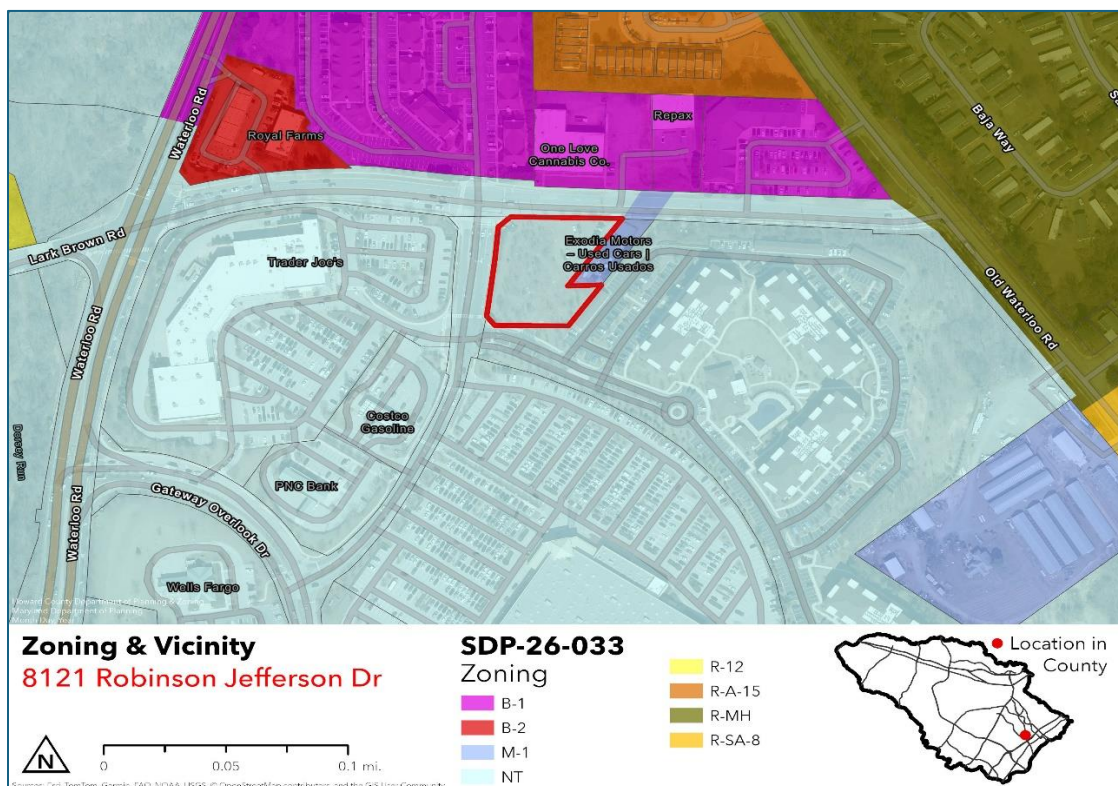
Case No./Petitioner: SDP-26-033, WLR Investment Group, Inc.

Project Name: Auto Spa Express

DPZ Planner: Derrick Jones
 djones@howardcountymd.gov

Request: A Site Development Plan (SDP-26-033) to construct a 4,145 square foot commercial car wash facility and related site improvements that include drive-through lanes, a car vacuuming station (that includes parking), landscaping and stormwater management facilities.

Location: The property is located at 8121 Robinson Jefferson Drive in the Gateway Overlook shopping center, directly south of Lark Brown Road in the ElkrIDGE area of Howard County. The property, also known as Tax Parcel E on Tax Map 37 in the 6th Election District of Howard County, MD, is zoned NT and lies within the Benson East commercial area, as documented on FDP-240-A-IV. The parcel contains 1.12 acres of land and consists of commercial land use area which permits car wash facilities.



SDP-26-033 Auto Spa Express

Vicinal Properties:

- To the North:** Lark Brown Road (a Howard County public road) abuts the property to the north. Beyond Lark Brown Road are B-1 zoned properties that consist of professional office uses.
- To the East:** A multi-family, residential apartment community that is within the Benson East apartment land use, known as Parcel F.
- To the South:** Robinson Jefferson Drive (a private road) abuts the property to the south.
- To the West:** Marie Curie Drive (a private road) abuts the property to the west. Retail commercial uses are on the opposite side of Marie Curie Drive.

General Comments:

A. Regulatory Compliance: This project is subject to compliance with Section 125.0.G.1. of the Zoning Regulations (effective October 6, 2013), *"If the Planning Board reserved for itself the authority to approve a Site Development Plan, no permit shall be issued for any use until the Site Development Plan is approved by the Planning Board. The Site Development Plan shall be considered at a public meeting. The Petitioner, two weeks prior to the meeting, shall post the property in a prominent location and provide electronic notification to all Columbia Village Boards, the Columbia Association, Howard County Council members and pre-submission meeting attendees who provided email addresses."*

This project is also subject to the development criteria listed in the Final Development Plan Phase 240-A-IV, the amended Fifth Edition of the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and the Howard County Design Manual.

B. Relevant DPZ Plan History:

- **FDP-240-A-IV:** An amended Final Development Plan and Criteria for the subject property, most recently recorded on March 26, 2024.
- **PB Case 360:** A Planning Board case for a comprehensive sketch plan (S-03-05) for Benson East. This case was heard and approved by the Planning Board on March 17, 2004 and the Decision and Order was signed by the Planning Board on April 14, 2004.
- **S-03-05:** A Sketch Plan for the Benson East property, Parcels A thru G and Open Space Lot 1 and public road right of way. This sketch plan contains a total of 122.8 acres. This sketch plan was approved by the Planning Board on March 17, 2004.
- **SDP-04-163:** A Site Development Plan for mass grading at the Benson East property. This SDP was approved on October 27, 2004.
- **F-05-058:** A Final Plan for the Benson East property, Parcels A thru M and Open Space Parcels N and O. This final plan contains a total of 122.8 acres and was recorded on December 12, 2005 as plat nos. 17872-17880. This is the plat that created Parcel E.
- **ECP-26-006:** Environmental Concept Plan for a commercial car wash facility named Auto Spa Express. The ECP received signature approval on October 9, 2025.

SDP-26-033 Auto Spa Express

- **SDP-26-033:** A Site Development Plan for a commercial car wash facility. This SDP is the subject of this staff report.

C. Existing Site Conditions:

- Access, Structures, and Uses: The subject property is Tax Parcel E and contains 1.12 acres of land. Access is at Robinson Jefferson Drive. There are no uses or structures on the parcel. The parcel is a vacant lot that consists of an overgrown field with several trees scattered through the property.
- Forest Cover: The Forest Stand Delineation Plan and report indicates that there is no forest cover (0.0 acres) on the property, however, there are some individual trees that are scattered through the property.
- Environmental Features: There are no steep slopes, wetlands, wetland buffers, streams, stream buffers or a floodplain located on the subject property, as certified by Eco-Science Professionals on August 6, 2025.

D. Proposed Development Plan/ Site Improvements: This SDP proposes a 4,145 square foot car wash facility to include paved driveway lanes, surface (paved) parking, vehicular vacuuming equipment (stations), landscaping, stormwater management and drainage devices.

E. Final Development Plan Analysis: The Site Development plan has been evaluated for compliance with FDP-240-A-IV. Where the Final Development Plan is silent, compliance with the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Regulations, and other applicable regulations are required.

Below is a summary of the major FDP criteria used in this evaluation:

1. **Permitted Land Uses:** In accordance with FDP-240-A-IV, car washing facility is a permitted use.
2. **Setback Requirements:** This project complies with applicable setbacks as required by the Site Development Plan and FDP-240-A-IV. The car wash facility complies with the 30-foot setback from a public right-of-way (Lark Brown Road).
3. **Height Requirement:** In accordance with FDP-240-A-IV, no height limitation is imposed upon structures constructed within this Final Development Plan provided improvements thereon are constructed in accordance with an SDP approved by the Howard County Planning Board. The proposed car wash facility structure will be at maximum building height of 28 feet.
4. **Coverage Requirements:** In accordance with FDP-240-A-IV, there is no coverage requirement upon land within this FDP devoted to commercial land use, except in accordance with a Site Development Plan approved by the Howard County Planning Board.
5. **Parking Requirements:** The FDP does not have a parking standard for car wash facilities. Therefore, this Department has imposed the required number of parking spaces as referenced in Section 133.0.D.4.c. of the Zoning Regulations. This Section required a total of 1 parking space per employee and 1 parking space per customer, with a minimum of 2 parking spaces. This SDP proposes a total of 20 parking spaces (15 spaces for the vacuum stations, 4 general parking spaces and 1 ADA compliant parking space).

Other Considerations:

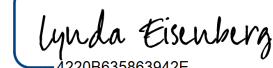
1. **Forest Conservation:** This development is subject to the Forest Conservation Act and program. A total of 0.20 acres (or 8,712 square feet) of afforestation (forest planting) is required. This development

SDP-26-033 Auto Spa Express

shall fulfill this obligation through the purchase of forest credits from a County approved forest mitigation bank, in accordance with Section 16.1208 of the County Code.

2. **Landscaping:** In accordance with Section 16.124 of the Land Development Regulations and the 2026 Landscape Manual, this project shall provide an assortment of landscaped trees and ground cover plantings in those areas where the proposed site improvements are planned, including within the parking area.
3. **Stormwater Management:** This site is located within the Little Patuxent River Watershed and is required to manage the 10-year storm event. Stormwater management will be provided in accordance with Howard County specifications. Water quality volume will be provided by two (2) micro-bioretenention facilities and one (1) Contech modular wetland. The owner will own and maintain its on-site stormwater management facilities and assume maintenance responsibilities should the occupant vacate the parcel.

DocuSigned by:



8/5/2026

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Lynda Eisenberg, AICP, Director

Date

Please note that this file is available for public review by appointment at the Department of Planning and Zoning's public service counter, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.