

Please read the front page of the Daily Herald article from 5/15/2024 “Opposition to gas station plan mounts” by Russell Lissau

Our rebuttal to statements made by Village President Patrick Horcher of Wheeling to the Daily Herald

“Village President Horcher insists the company isn’t planning a truck stop. He also noted many of the services Gas N Wash wants to offer – including food, liquor and gasoline sales – were available on the corner when the shopping center and gas station were operating.”

Our reply:

President Horcher is ignoring a few pieces.

If you listen to the initial statements in their presentations, of March 20, 2023 and April 12, 2023 to the Village of Wheeling, you might think Gas N Wash is planning to replace the old 6 am-10pm small shopping center consisting of Garden Fresh grocery store, dry cleaners, liquor store, etc. and 3-pump gas station with exactly what was there before - with a few enhancements. After all, that’s what the Gas N Wash people said: replace what was there, with enhancements.

However, Gas N Wash plans to replace those smaller elements with larger ones. By adding high volume sales elements that will add traffic, large trucks, fuel vapors, vehicle emissions and night time lighting.

A 24 hour operation, in the middle of a residential area, and dwellings on all 4 sides:

- A convenient store
- A large car wash
- 2 drive through fast food restaurants
- 6-9 seats of video gaming
- Propane refilling
- Gas pumps for 14 cars
- 4 diesel pumps for cars, small trucks
- 2 diesel lanes with high flow pumps for large trucks

We anticipate Gas N Wash would need more traffic than the old Garden Fresh center. Each customer at Garden Fresh likely represented a higher spend per trip.

Instead of customers rolling full shopping carts of fresh food to their cars like they did at the old Garden Fresh, now customers at a Gas N Wash would drive in to purchase a tank of gas, pick up a Slim Jim or milk and leave. Maybe add a car wash, buy a few donuts and leave, or a lotto ticket a pack of cigarettes. Ever spend a few moments at a 7 Eleven? Did you notice what people buy? It’s whatever they can carry, just a few items. 7 Eleven doesn’t have shopping carts, will Gas N Wash? So how many cars and trucks per day will it take to pay off the Gas N Wash \$10 million investment and then turn a profit? They predict 1,000-1,500 vehicles per day.

Village President Horcher said Gas N Wash isn’t planning a truck stop. The Gas N Wash people don’t like the label truck stop either, they like gas station or fueling center. So what do they call it when they designed their site layout around selling 10,000 gallons of diesel fuel per month to truck drivers, all to get the classification of “truck stop” from the Illinois Gaming Board (IGB), and then install 6-9 video gaming terminals? Is it still a gas station?

It won’t have showers, a laundry or a parking area for truckers to stay overnight. However, if it sits on at least 3 acres, has a convenience store, is owned, leased or operated by the applicant, has diesel islands

separate from the auto fueling island, sells at least 10,000 gallons, has parking for commercial motor vehicles, is less than 3 miles from an interstate highway, it will fit the classification of a Truck Stop and be allowed to provide video gaming, according to the IGB.

Gas N Wash was asked by one of the Wheeling Plan Commissioners if 18-wheelers would fit into the large truck fueling lanes. Gas N Wash said yes, the high flow pump lanes are designed to fit bigger trucks, but they are looking for “day runners”, the medium size trucks with trailers like landscapers, delivery trucks, etc. Gas N Wash said they don’t expect 18-wheelers because most truckers work for companies that have contracts for fuel. But, would Gas N Wash turn 18-wheelers away?

Gas N Wash said they plan to use the existing traffic. Really? So their truck stop would not show up on a google map search? Would the Wheeling location be listed among the other 28 locations on their website? Would their truck stop show up on a trucker diesel fuel app? What if they cut their diesel price lower than other diesel fueling centers in the area? Would that show up on the app – and attract truckers who normally wouldn’t drive down Hintz Road?

Horcher called our complaints “a bunch of non-issues”.

Horcher said it’s a small group of people making it sound as dramatic as possible.

Our reply:

We would like to ask Mr. Horcher if he would live next to a Gas N Wash. Would he sell Leonard McEnery a 3 acre piece of property across from the Wheeling Walmart?

Inhaling diesel fumes from the fueling of large trucks, from the vents of underground tanks and emissions from the exhaust pipes of trucks driving onto the site, waiting, fueling, starting up, and driving off the site, all on one edge of the property less than 160 feet from apartments is not healthy. The path large diesel trucks take to get to the pumps are along the north and eastern edges of the property, adjacent to apartments. Pointing this out is not overly dramatic. They are going from the previous 3 pump gas station for 6 cars to gas pumps for 14 cars, 4 diesel pumps for cars or small trucks, and 2 diesel lanes with high flow pumps for large trucks. There is no safe level to inhale diesel vapors or emissions.

What about the pedestrian traffic coming from the adjacent properties? Open for 24/7 hours and you are adding loitering and possible crime to the mix. With gun violence, armed robbery, and car jackings a chronic problem in metro Chicago, we can’t assume Wheeling is immune to these issues. With at least 3 cash registers and increased traffic can we assume crime will not be a problem? How do you address that?

More than one Wheeling official said the Buffalo Grove Road/Hintz Road intersection is dangerous. What happens when 1,000 -1,500 vehicles, including large trucks, are entering and exiting that location? Is a traffic light part of the budget? Or, how many accidents have to occur before a traffic light is installed?