#2026-010
5111 East Terra Cotta Avenue
Car Wash Conceptual PUD
Project Review for Planning and Zoning Commission

Date:	January 21, 2026
Request:	Conceptual Planned Unit Development review for a car wash
Location:	5111 E Terra Cotta Ave
Acreage:	Approximately 2.2 acres
Zoning:	B-2 General Commercial
Surrounding Properties:	North: M-L Manufacturing Limited South: R-1 Single-Family Residential East: B-2 General Commercial West: B-2 General Commercial
Staff Contact:	Darrell Moore (815.356.3612)

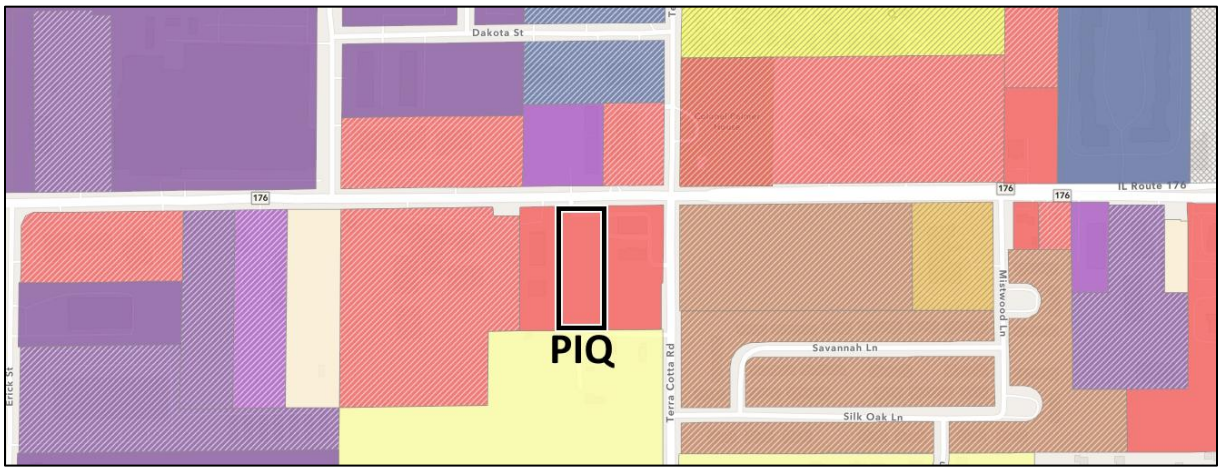
Background:

- The property was the former Crystal Lake Rib House. In 2016, a Special Use Permit and Final Plat of Subdivision was approved, which resulted in the creation of two lots with a common access off of Route 176 (East Terra Cotta Avenue) and a Casey's gas station at the corner.
- The parcel in question has been vacant since the property was redeveloped.

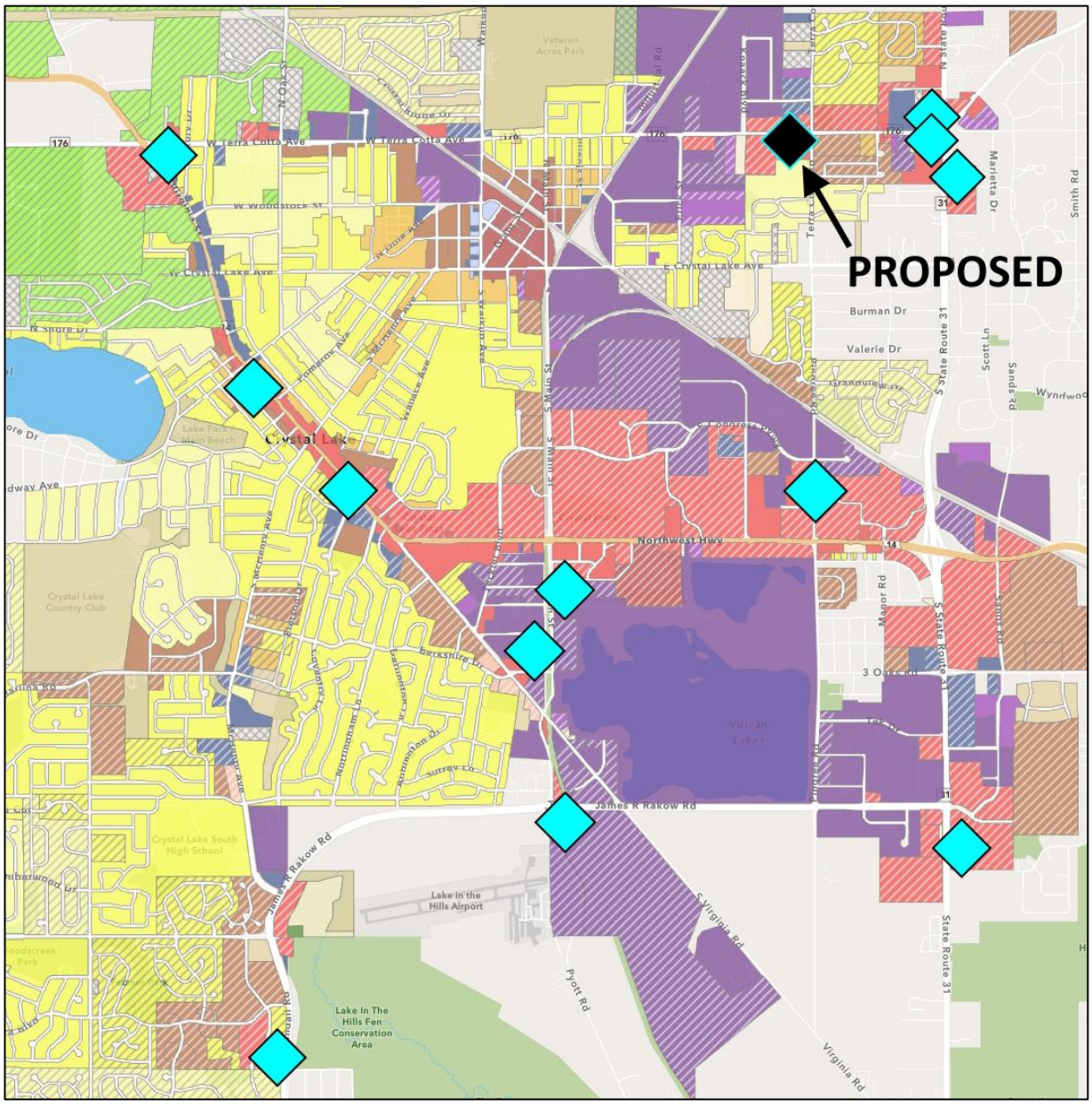
Development Analysis:

CAR WASH USES

- A car wash is a Special Use in the B-2 zoning district. The Special Use criteria sets standards that help determine if a location is appropriate.
- A recent car wash conceptual request on Route 14 was not viewed favorably for several reasons including the location, the demand on the utilities, the saturation of the market, and the loss of potential sales tax revenue.
- The location of this proposed car wash is on Route 176, which, compared to Route 14, features a greater mix of office and manufacturing uses rather than retail and restaurants.



- Car washes produce no sales tax. The City of Crystal Lake primarily relies on sales tax for general operations, unlike most communities that levy a larger property tax. In speaking with the petitioner, they contend that the car wash could help draw more sales to the Casey's convenience store. The City would receive approximately $120.00 in property taxes annually from a car wash at this location.
- Car washes use approximately 400,000-600,000 gallons of potable water each month. This greatly exceeds the amount used by other commercial uses (fast casual restaurant uses approximately 30,000 gallons/month).
- There are 11 existing car washes and one with zoning approval as illustrated on the following map by the blue diamonds.



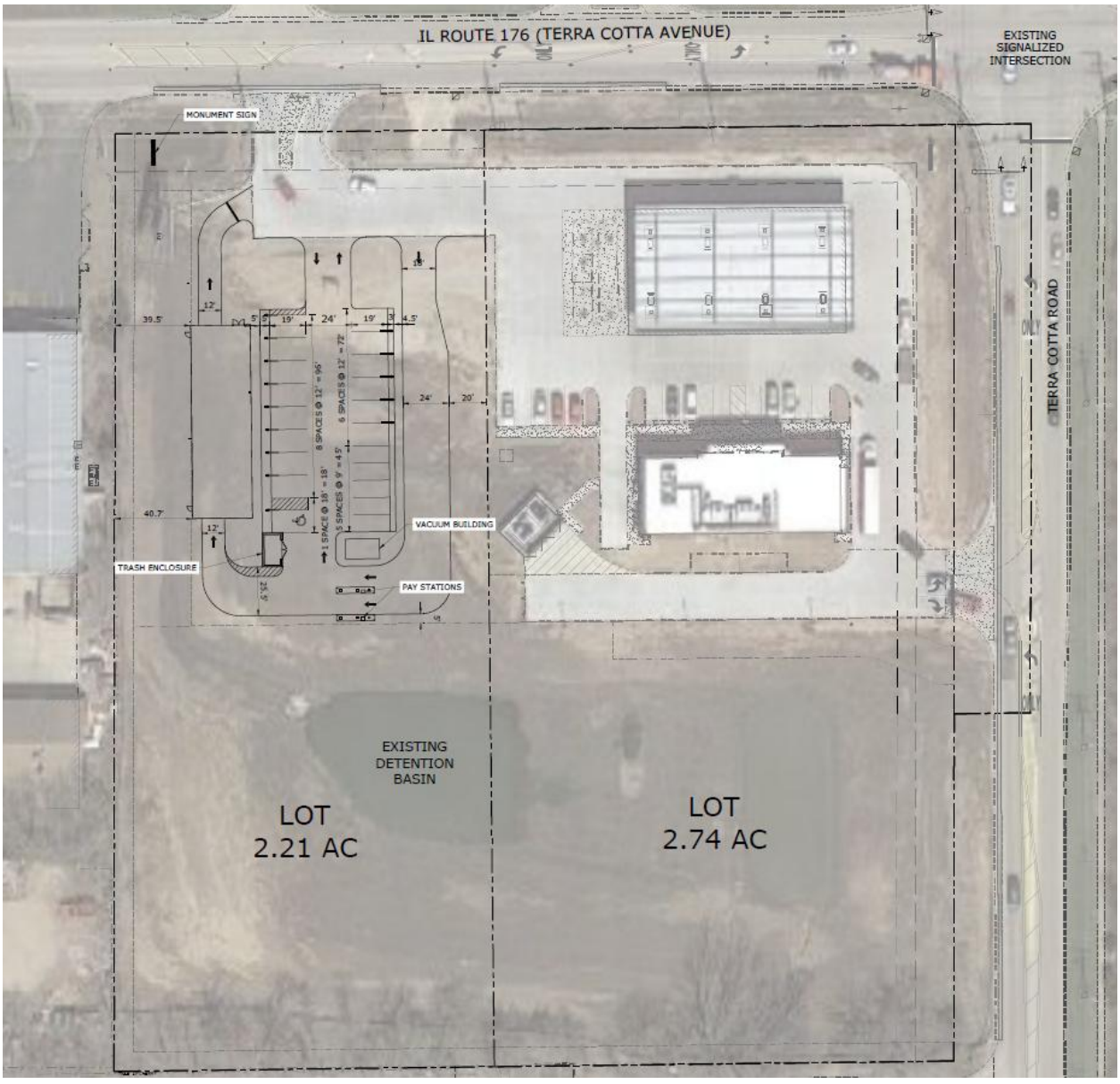
ZONING / LAND USE

- The site is currently zoned B-2 General Commercial. A car wash requires a special use permit in this zoning district.
- The land use is Commerce, which supports a variety of retail, restaurant and service uses.

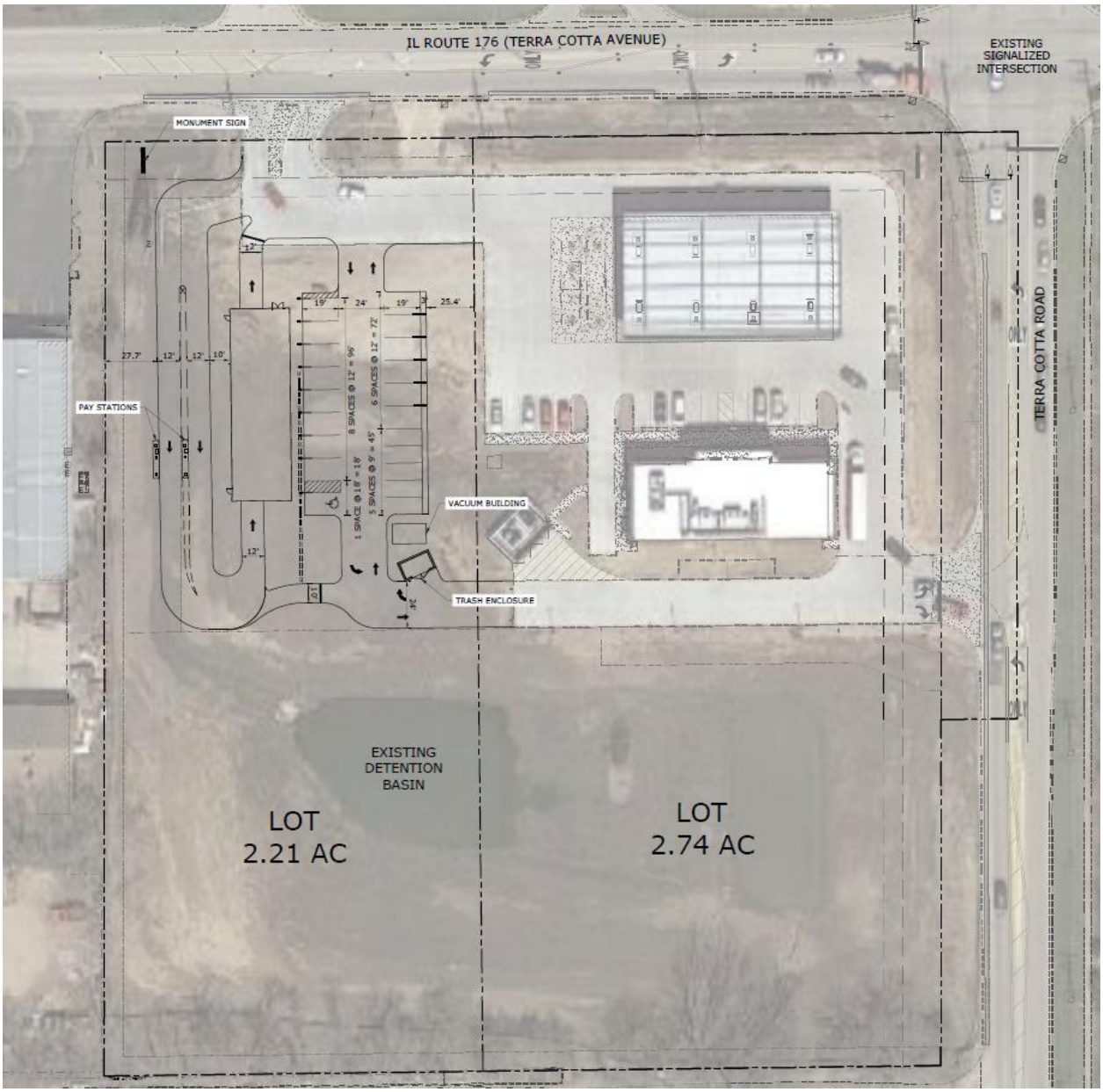
SITE LAYOUT

- The site is immediately west of the Casey's gas station located at the corner of E. Terra Cotta Avenue and Terra Cotta Road. By way of a cross-access easement, both properties share access to each street.

- The petitioner has proposed two options for the site layout:
    - **OPTION 1:** The setback of the building and vacuums from E. Terra Cotta Avenue (right-of-way) is about 95 feet. The western setback is about 45 feet. The back half of the property and a 30-foot strip on the west side of the property are reserved for stormwater management. Traffic will move through the site in a clockwise pattern. Vehicles exiting the car wash will have about 50 feet of stacking space that terminates at a "stop" sign before entering into the cross-access easement. The city engineer has reviewed the conceptual plan and has no concerns.



- **OPTION 2:** The setback of the building and vacuums from E. Terra Cotta Avenue (right-of-way) is about 85 feet. The western setback is about 28 feet to the stacking lanes and more than 60 feet to the building. Unlike option 1, only the back half of the property is reserved for stormwater management, which the applicant says will be sufficient. Traffic will flow through the site is an "S" pattern from west to east. An access drive on an easement behind Casey's will connect the car wash to Terra Cotta Road. This will provide customers with more flexibility on entering and exiting the site, including for a proposed bail-out lane.



BUILDING/SITE DESIGN

The pictures below were provided by the applicant and show examples of car washes they might seek to emulate. No elevations or renderings have been provided thus far for the proposed location. The applicant is seeking conceptual review feedback before proceeding specific designs.





Planning and Zoning Commission Discussion:

The following comments are for discussion and consideration:

1. Would you support a Special Use Permit in this location?

2. Site Design: What aspects of the site layout that you prefer or want to encourage in order to create a well-designed and functional site?

   Comments: _____

3. Brand Design: What architecture elements and/or features from the sample images provided would you encourage or discourage?

   Comments: _____

Below are the Special Use Permit criteria for reference:

1. That the proposed use is necessary or desirable, at the location involved, to provide a service or facility which will further the public convenience and contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood or community.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

2. That the proposed use will not be detrimental to the value of other properties or improvements in the vicinity.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

3. That the proposed use will comply with the regulations of the zoning district in which it is located and this Ordinance generally, including, but not limited to, all applicable yard and bulk regulations, parking and loading regulations, sign control regulations, watershed, wetlands, and flood plain regulations, Building and Fire Codes and all other applicable City Ordinances.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

4. That the proposed use will not negatively impact the existing off-site traffic circulation; will adequately address on-site traffic circulation; will provide adequate on-site parking facilities; and, if required, will contribute financially, in proportion to its impact, to upgrading roadway and parking systems.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

5. That the proposed use will not negatively impact existing public utilities and municipal service delivery systems and, if required, will contribute financially, in proportion to its impact, to the upgrading of public utility systems and municipal service delivery systems.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

6. That the proposed use will not impact negatively on the environment by creating air, noise, or water pollution; ground contamination; or unsightly views.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

7. That the proposed use will maintain, where possible, existing mature vegetation; provide adequate screening to residential properties; provide landscaping in forms of ground covers, trees and shrubs; and provide architecture, which is aesthetically appealing, compatible or complementary to surrounding properties and acceptable by community standards, as further detailed in Article 4, Development and Design Standards.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

8. That the proposed use will meet standards and requirements established by jurisdictions other than the City such as Federal, State or County statutes requiring licensing procedures or health/safety inspections, and submit written evidence thereof.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

9. That the proposed use shall conform to any stipulations or conditions approved as part of a Special Use Permit issued for such use.

   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

10. That the proposed use shall conform to the standards established for specific special uses as provided in this section.

    ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

Car Wash Criteria – Full service and automatic vehicle wash uses must comply with the following standards:

1. Drive-through criteria: The use must comply with applicable drive-through standards established in Section 203C-7.
   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

2. Equipment: Details for all automatic car wash equipment to be installed within the building must be provided.
   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

3. Towel drying area: An adequately large, outdoor or indoor, paved, hand-towel drying area must be provided. The hand-towel drying area must be exclusive of drive-aisles which carry cross-traffic and parking spaces for employees or different users.
   ☐ *Meets* ☐ *Does not meet*

PARCEL IN QUESTION

