

Darien owners of automated car wash Cloud 10 move bus stop after safety concerns

By [Mollie Hersh](#), Staff Writer Sep 15, 2024



A rendering of the proposed Cloud 10 Car Wash site at 54 Boston Post Road in Darien, the former site of Bertucci's Italian Restaurant.

Beinfield Architecture / Contributed Photo

DARIEN — Automated car wash company Cloud 10 is hoping its modifications and community endorsements will get the business a long-awaited OK to move into Darien.

Following concerns for pedestrian safety, Cloud 10 Car Wash — [hoping to move onto Boston Post Road](#) — returned to Darien's Planning and Zoning Commission on Sept. 10 with some key endorsements and approvals.

The car wash company, owned by Darien residents, is looking to move into the location previously occupied by Bertucci's Italian Restaurant, which [closed its doors without warning](#) two years ago.

Following an initial public hearing in July, the car wash has since made some changes to its design including widening its driveway and putting more sustainable practices into its landscaping plan.

One of the biggest design changes is the relocation of the bus stop from in front of the building to about 300 feet east, closer to the crosswalk by the Interstate 95 northbound offramp. The Department of Transportation approved the move on Sept. 10, according to emails included in the application.

There were some safety concerns during the previous public hearing in July over how best to fit both the bus stop and the entrance and exit point for the car wash.

"They have the crosswalk, they have the light there," said attorney Jay Klein, who is representing Cloud 10. "It's ideal for everyone, and (I'm) glad that we can see that progress before we even put a shovel in the ground."

The updated plans received positive endorsements from the Darien Land Trust and the Darien Chamber of Commerce, which emphasized the local ties the developers have to the town.

In the letter of support submitted by the Darien Land Trust, Executive Director Elizabeth Mathus said the Cloud 10 developers adapted all of the organization's requests into its updated landscaping plan, including swapping in native plants over the originally proposed non-natives, using organic repellents and long-term maintenance of green infrastructure like a rain garden.

"We believe the conservation value of this project has been increased and that the conscientious attitude toward conservation by this developer will be upheld over time," Mathus wrote. "The Land Trust applauds this development team for prioritizing the environment and thereby setting the bar higher for other developers in town."

Klein also highlighted that the car wash would limit building coverage on the property to preserve the existing green space, joking "I don't think [Chloë Sevigny](#) knows about the trees we're proposing here, but that's OK, we're still doing our part."

One potential condition for approval, suggested by Klein, would be to relocate the car wash's curb cut to align with West Norwalk Road should developers get the traffic light they requested from the Department of Transportation.

Cloud 10 previously requested the traffic light to accommodate safety concerns around potential traffic accidents and unsafe pedestrian crossings, but the proposal was rejected by the state. However, Klein said the developers remain committed to accommodating a traffic light should the department change its mind.

Even without the traffic stop, Cloud 10's application did get positive traffic assessments from the Darien Police Commission — the town's local traffic authority — and from a peer reviewer, engineering consultant company Hardesty and Hanover.

"We have the original traffic study that says it works well with the traffic signal, and now we have a new traffic study that says it works well without the signal," Hardesty and Hanover head of traffic engineering Greg Del Rio said. "I think it's more of a safety thing than operational or queuing."

Other potential Planning and Zoning concerns Cloud 10 addressed included noise from the 34 self-service vacuums that will be onsite and lighting after hours, which will be on but dimmed during the night for security purposes.

According to Cloud 10's Executive Vice President of Development Steve Sause, the noise from the vacuums is mitigated by the way the vacuums are engineered as well as the walls that house the vacuum producers, saying Cloud 10's other locations passed acoustical reports with "flying colors."

"They're quiet, they're powerful, you're not really going to hear them," Sause said. "The design is to keep the noise inside the property."