

Silva, Gabriela

From: Eve Rappoport
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 7:27 PM
To: McMorris, Yasmine; O'Brien, Dan; Eriksson, Goran; Puza, Freddy; Vera, Albert; Bocchino, Jeremy
Cc: Silva, Gabriela
Subject: Letter of Support for Appeal to Planning Commission
Attachments: support letter .docx

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Dear Mayor McMorris and Council Members O'Brien, Eriksson, Puza and Vera;

Attached is a letter of support for the appeal, which will be formally filed by Angel Law by the deadline tomorrow, of a decision by the Planning Commission made at a public hearing on July 24, 2024. The item (P2021-0135) requests that Costco be given a Conditional Use Permit in order to relocate and double the size of the Costco fueling station.

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of 12 neighbors and homeowners on or near Walnut Ave., the residential street which will be most impacted by this relocation. We are very much against the relocation of this project, for many reasons given in the letter.

Sincerely,

Eve Rappoport

August 7, 2024

Mayor Yasmine-Imani McMorris and City Council
City of Culver City, CA
Via City Clerk Jeremy Bocchino

**RE: Support for Letter of Appeal to the Planning Commission on Item PH-1
Public Hearing: Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit Modification
(P2021-0135), to allow the relocation and expansion of an existing fueling
station, surface parking, and associated project design features and site
improvements at 13531-13463 Washington Blvd. (project), i.e. Costco.**

Your Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council;

I am writing this letter of support for the appeal being filed by Angel Law on behalf of my neighbors and homeowners listed at the end of this letter, all of whom live on or near Walnut Ave., the mostly residential street adjacent to the west side of the Costco property, and the street intersecting with Washington Blvd., the corner where the new and expanded gas station is slated to be located. We are opposed to the relocation of the Costco gas station for the following reasons, and respectfully ask that you grant the appeal for this project:

1. Negative impact to neighborhood, including increased traffic, noise, toxic fumes, car accident risk and light pollution not adequately considered by consultants.
2. There are two pre-schools within 500 feet of the proposed site.
3. CUP based on an EIR that was completed **26** years ago.
4. Costco already relocated their loading dock to the west side of their property when they tore down Albertsons, creating noise and vibrations from trucks at all hours of the day and night, including when deliveries are prohibited.
5. Costco's arguments for expansion and relocation appear disingenuous based on comments made at the hearing.
6. Gasoline station relocation violates original concept and plan for the site.
7. Current Costco management stated in a public meeting that landscaping around the site is routinely thinned out to dissuade people experiencing homelessness from camping there. Using landscape as a buffer is therefore inadequate. Additionally, no buffer – sound or landscape - can be added where the emergency driveway is, so neighbors on the west side will have additional exposure.
8. Culver City's Washington Blvd. Stormwater and Urban Runoff Diversion Project, a collaboration with Costco, still has not been completed, even though it was a requirement which allowed Costco to tear down Albertsons and increase parking.

We request that Culver City mandate that Costco select a more suitable site to expand their gas station which avoids impacts to residences on the east, west, and north sides of the property, and keep the station solely on Washington Blvd. If your honorable body wishes Costco to move forward with the proposed location, we request that they be

required to do a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR), since the last one was done about 26 years ago.

According to the original plan for the site, written by the architects in about 1998, the rationale for site design was as follows: "The surrounding context and uses of the site were a major consideration in siting the various retail pads. The two major anchors Costco Wholesale (139,357 sq. ft.) and pad A (63,037 sq. ft) were located towards the rear of the project. This allowed orientation of the entries to Washington Blvd. and places the rear, or quieter side of the pad, towards the residential neighborhoods. This also provides a necessary barrier between the parking lot and neighborhoods. In order to create a strong retail frontage along Washington Blvd., the smaller pads..... and a Costco Wholesale gas station were located along Washington Blvd. "

During the hearing, the consultants for Costco stated that they explored other sites within the property to relocate the expanded gas station but said it would be too much of an impact to the neighbors on the east and north sides; no other details about pros and cons were shared. Since the retail businesses slated to be demolished for this project have been empty for several years, it seems that Costco only seriously considered the site at Walnut and Washington, as those were the only leases allowed to expire. One of the Commissioners asked many questions about why these buildings have remained empty for so long. Ironically Verizon, which took up the largest building, is in the process of reopening across the street to the corner of Lincoln and Washington.

To several community members listening to Costco and their consultants' presentation, some of the information presented seemed disingenuous. Although the consultants may have used best practices in their fields, some of what they presented just doesn't make sense. And when drilled further by Commissioners, there still seemed to be conflicting and non-realistic projections.

For example, it was stated that the only reason for this move and expansion is to make the customer experience more efficient, less time waiting in lines, etc. No increase in usage is expected. One of your Commissioners stated that he never uses the gas station because of the long lines; I don't either. If the process is more efficient, I would consider it, as he said he would. As I understand it, my trip to the gas station wouldn't be counted as additional because I was already shopping there. As I am sure you are aware, this area is seeing a boom in dense, new housing. Is it realistic to think the new residents won't want to become Costco members, who will want to pump gas too? The consultants said that they project the net impact will be zero, which was then contradicted by their example of a new gas station in Garden Grove that had a 20% increase in usage.

The consultants also stated that there will be fewer trips to the new station, which will be doubled in size, than if they had left the original businesses in place. Again, maybe based on modeling, but in reality, this makes no sense. There was a Verizon store, Starbucks, a small GNC, and Subway open during regular business hours. The expanded gas station will be open 107.5 hours per week, Monday through Sunday.

It also came up, through questioning by Commissioners, that each Costco location has an annual allotment of gas they are allowed to sell, and this Costco is not meeting the maximum. So the assumption is that the same number of cars will need twice as much gas? It seems obvious that Costco is expecting more gas customers.

Relocating the gas pumps will add more cars entering Costco at In and Out, which already backs up onto Washington Blvd. from their drive thru line, and it will dramatically increase the number of cars exiting onto Washington Blvd., which is constantly backed up past the In and out Intersection from Lincoln Blvd. There are already frequent auto accidents with injuries in this location. This safety issue will only get worse with the relocation of the gas pumps.

As neighbors, we are concerned about toxic fumes, noise from cars waiting in lines (even if their wait times are shorter, there are now twice as many cars), increased traffic cutting through Walnut, more congestion at the intersection with In n Out and risk for traffic accidents, opening hours for the gas station are very long, and light pollution from the gas station lights being on all night.

The EIR for this site was done prior to it being built, making it at least 26 years old. As you know, neighborhoods and thresholds change. We don't think it is right or responsible to relocate and double the size of a gas station closer to residences without, at least, doing a new EIR. And two of your Commissioners agree with us. (The vote was 3/2)

Thank you for your consideration of our request for appeal.

Sincerely,

Eve Rappoport
George Stone
Jim Muir
Eire Juarez
Noah and Alba Beller
Daniel Rumennik
Pam McCredie
Nacole Raphalian
Lacy and Nancy Newman
Pooya Goudarzi
Marjan Jazaery

Cc: Gabriela Silva, Planning Department

Silva, Gabriela

From: Jocelyn Finger
Sent: Wednesday, August 28, 2024 3:01 PM
To: McMorris, Yasmine; Puza, Freddy; O'Brien, Dan; Eriksson, Goran; Vera, Albert; Bocchino, Jeremy; Silva, Gabriela
Subject: Proposed Culver City Costco gas station relocation

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you confirm the content is safe.

Hello-

I am a resident of Mar Vista. I am writing today with concerns about the proposed Costco gas station relocation. Not only will this create a negative environmental impact to the citizens who live on Walnut Avenue, it will also bring added health risks to the children who attend nearby preschools (Sol Y Luna and Morning Glory).

The new and larger gas station will significantly add to air, noise, soil and water pollution. Costco gas stations are some of the largest and busiest in our community. Their prices are competitive, and there are ALWAYS long lines of cars waiting for gas.

There are currently 8 lanes for pumps, and each lane frequently holds 8-10 cars as people wait for gas. That means in the current gas station, there may be 80 cars worth of activity. The new site will be even larger!

Please take a moment to imagine all these cars idling and creating air pollution. Cars honking and revving loud engines. Imagine huge tanks of gas underground. Imagine runoff of car-related chemicals into the local street and sewers.

My children are alumni of the Sol Y Luna preschool, located on Walnut Ave—next to the Costco store and the proposed site of the new gas station. The preschool consists of a vibrant, respectful parent community. We were grateful to find a place where our children were cared for with such love.

Children aged 0-5 are our most vulnerable citizens. They have no voice. They cannot make their own decisions, vote, or write letters. But caring adults can and must work to protect them.

These preschool children deserve to have a safe environment.

I am tired of politicians claiming publicly to care about the needs of young families, while at the same time quietly making deals with huge corporations.

Sincerely,
Jocelyn Finger

Silva, Gabriela

From: Alyson Wilson
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 1:21 PM
To: McMorris, Yasmine; Puza, Freddy; O'Brien, Dan; Eriksson, Goran; Vera, Albert; Bocchino, Jeremy; Silva, Gabriela
Cc: Alba Beller
Subject: Costco gas service threat to preschoolers' health

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Hello, Culver City Council members,

Costco's plans to expand fueling operations to a degree will put the health of children at two adjacent neighborhood preschools at risk due to increased exposure to toxic fumes containing carcinogens, put simply, must be reconsidered by the city. The wellness and safety of our community's children should not be disregarded to benefit Costco's gas business expansion. My son attended one of these preschools for years, so this matter is close to my heart.

Please support a deeper environmental-effects analysis of the Costco fueling business expansion, requiring Costco to operate in alignment with the health and safety of the neighborhood children (and adults). The project, as currently approved, is unacceptably dangerous for the preschoolers, their teachers and the neighborhood residents.

Thank you for your consideration and for all that you do to support the best for our community members, big and small.

Sincerely,
Alyson Wilson

Silva, Gabriela

From: Carly Kenny
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 8:00 AM
To: McMorris, Yasmine; Puza, Freddy; O'Brien, Dan; Eriksson, Goran; Vera, Albert; Bocchino, Jeremy; Silva, Gabriela
Subject: Concern Regarding Culver City approved Costco Gas Station Relocation/ Class 32 CEQA exemption.

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Dear Council Members,

This letter is to state concern over the approved plan of Costco's gas station demo and relocation.

Gas stations are proven to emit harmful cancerous toxins and unfortunately the new proposed location would be within hundreds of feet of two preschools; Sol Y Luna Montessori at 2551 Walnut Ave, Venice, CA 90291 and Morning Glory Preschool at 2552 Lincoln Blvd, Venice, CA 90291.

This presents a major health and safety concern for the young children attending these schools as well as the surrounding neighbors who live in the area. As a parent of a young child attending one of these schools, I believe a second look at this plan is of utmost importance.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Carly

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Carly Gallagher (Kenny)