

Barreras, Gabriel

From: Barreras, Gabriel
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 2:33 PM
To: JimEllis0@ca.rr.com
Subject: RE: In & Out

Hi James,

Thank you for your email below. It was recently routed to me, and I'll be sure to include it in the public comments section for the Planning Commission and City Council case files.

I will be the assigned Planner for this case going forward. Note, there will be another Community Meeting to be organized by the applicant in the next month or so. I'll be sure to send you the notice when they determine the date.

Regards,

Gabriel Barreras, AICP
Senior Planner | Planning & Development Department
310.253.5776 | gabriel.barreras@culvercity.gov



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From: JimEllis0@ca.rr.com <JimEllis0@ca.rr.com>
Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 1:18 PM
To: Culver City Advance Planning Division <advance.planning@culvercity.org>
Subject: In & Out

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

You don't often get email from jimellis0@ca.rr.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

I am writing to express my formal opposition to the proposed In-N-Out Burger development at the northeast corner of Sepulveda Boulevard and Sawtelle Boulevard, as outlined on the project page and in related outreach. While proponents may cite economic benefits, I and many residents have significant concerns about the public health, environmental, and land-use impacts of this project that outweigh its potential benefits.

In addition to the traffic, land-use, and quality-of-life issues raised by other community members, I want to emphasize a major public health concern:

Childhood Obesity and Local Food Environment

The United States is currently facing a serious childhood obesity challenge: approximately 1 in 5 children and adolescents has obesity.¹ National health data indicate that nearly 19.7 percent of youths aged 2–19 years meet the clinical definition of obesity, a condition linked to future chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and liver disease.

The local built environment — and particularly the accessibility of fast food outlets — has been studied as part of broader efforts to understand influences on children’s dietary habits and weight status. Research suggests that closer proximity to fast-food restaurants is associated with higher rates of overweight and obesity among children. Studies in major urban areas have found that children living near fast-food outlets are more likely to be overweight or obese compared to those living further away, and that easier access to unhealthy food may influence consumption patterns. The proposed site is on the same block as El Rincon Elementary and is adjacent to Blanco Park.

Culver City’s land-use decisions have long reflected a commitment to public health, active transportation, sustainable development, and quality of life. Approving another auto-oriented, high-traffic, calorie-dense food outlet in a neighborhood that already supports multiple fast-food establishments would further normalize unhealthy food options and reduce incentives for families to adopt healthier diet patterns. From a planning perspective, decisions that increase fast-food density may inadvertently contribute to environments that are obesogenic rather than supportive of healthy lifestyles.

Additional Key Concerns with the Proposed In-N-Out Project

Traffic Congestion and Safety: The projected traffic impacts and drive-thru circulation will worsen congestion at a critical intersection and threaten pedestrian safety.

Late-Night Noise and Community Impact: Extended hours increase noise and disturbance for nearby residents.

Inconsistent with Long-Term Urban Vision: This project occupies land that would be better suited for mixed-use, walkable, and healthy community-oriented uses, consistent with Culver City’s Mobility and Land Use goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Planning and Development Department deny approval of the Conditional Use Permit and associated entitlements for the In-N-Out Burger project as currently proposed. If the City considers future applications, I urge it to require comprehensive public health impact assessments, traffic analyses, and alignment with Culver City’s climate action and active transportation plans.

Thank you for your consideration of this community concern. I welcome opportunities to provide further input at public hearings.

Respectfully, James Ellis
Hannum Ave
Culver City, ca 90230

Morgan Schwartz
11260 Overland Avenue #11E
Culver City, CA 90230
310.384.2967

January 7, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Along with my wife and several neighbors, I attended in-person last night's first community meeting regarding the proposed In-N-Out at Sepulveda/Jefferson and Sawtelle. There was no meaningful opportunity to voice my concerns about this project and I am very concerned.

I have enjoyed In-N-Out burgers for close to 50 years and really appreciate their products. The following letter focuses on the negative impact of the proposed location on the neighborhood in which we have been proud homeowners and community members for 35 years.

Air Quality*

One of the finest qualities of where we live is the near constant ocean breeze that comes directly from the west. The proposed location guarantees that we will be bathed in a plume of grilled beef, French fries, and onion odor mixed with idling auto exhaust for 15 hours a day, each and every day. In-N-Out uses natural gas for their grills which further contributes to the exhaust profile. We will no longer be able to leave our windows and doors open without smelling this business throughout our entire waking hours. Our community outdoor spaces (pool, tennis courts, and playground) will be similarly impacted. The aroma is a brand signature for In-N-Out and cannot be eliminated by filtration. The scent from the grill is amplified at peak times such as lunch. We live at the Beverlywood West Townhomes located 1400 feet downwind from the proposed site.

*See Auto Emissions Information below.

Children's Health*

El Rincon Elementary School is approximately 1,000 ft due east and downwind of the proposed location. They also have no way to filter out the strongly distracting aromas from the In-N-Out grill. Imagine trying to educate and maintain children's focus while this business is pumping out fumes from burgers, fries and onions. How will this impact them inside the classroom or outside on the playground? And that's not all: these heavy cooking odors are not just scents; they are often accompanied by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and fine particulate matter. Chronic exposure to high concentrations of cooking fumes has been linked to increased respiratory symptoms like wheezing, chronic cough and reduced lung capacity in kitchen workers. Imagine what it does to the developing lungs of 6-12-year-old children. Now add to this kitchen exhaust the tail-pipe emissions of hundreds of idling cars per day. This is a sure-fire recipe to damage the educational mission of this lovely school and negatively impact its student body. Further imagine being a hungry child trying to focus while smelling the enticing aromas of burgers and fries. This is a predictably cruel and unhealthy situation prioritizing profit over children's health and welfare.

There is evidence that constant exposure to “symbols of impatience” like fast food can undermine a person’s ability to savor pleasurable experiences, potentially leading to increased impatience. Further, the scent can act as a non-conscious “prime,” increasing the likelihood of choosing fatty or sweet foods over healthier options. While pleasant smells can sometimes aid memory, persistent odors – especially if perceived as “foul” or overwhelming- can negatively impact learning and concentration in schools.

*See Auto Emissions Information below.

Traffic

Because the proposed location will be very popular and heavily subscribed, it will impact and complicate an already busy intersection. This intersection contains bike paths and sidewalks used by the nearby community and which provides direct access to the adjacent El Rincon Elementary School and Blanco Park. The proposal only makes use of the existing ingress/egress points. The main entrance/exit along Sawtelle severely impacts the neighborhood to the south of Sawtelle by forcing them to navigate across the lineup of cars entering the In-N-Out queue. Cars exiting the property and turning east on Sawtelle will have to cross the paths of cars entering the property and whose presence creates a blind lane and a very dangerous situation which often takes place while looking toward the setting sun to the west.

Weekday afternoon traffic on Overland Avenue is often at a standstill for hours. Adding a nearby destination like In-N-Out would surely overburden and further clog this important thoroughfare. Overland is heavily used by all emergency departments as a critical north-south access route. The same is true for Sepulveda. Delays in response time can be the difference between life and death.

Safety

In-N-Out generates high, continuous volumes of car trips throughout the day and into late evening. Blanco Park and El Rincon Elementary are on the same block along Sawtelle, used heavily for school access and children’s recreation, so increased turning movements, queuing, and driveway crossings raise collision risk for kids walking or biking to school and the park. Patrons are sometimes distracted while arriving or leaving the restaurant which further adds to the risks inherent in this location.

Noise, Hours, Neighborhood Character

While Jack-in-the-Box is open 24 hours a day, it cannot serve as a group gathering magnet in the way In-N-Out will.

Evening and late-night activity including car clubs, loitering, parking spillover into residential streets is a negative factor for the community. Drive-thru headlight glare, speaker noise, and idling cars, all of which are inconsistent with a block anchored by a neighborhood elementary school and small park that function as quiet community spaces outside school hours.

Community Needs & Land Use Priorities

There is no need whatsoever for another drive-thru in this area. There is a Jack-in-the-Box at the same intersection, McDonalds, Taco Bell and El Pollo Loco also on Sepulveda. Del Taco around the corner along with Chick-fill-A. There's a Wendy's on Venice and another one on La Tijera. There are two In-N-Out's on Sepulveda near LAX as well as one on Washington and another on Venice. Clearly there is no shortage of drive-thru options for this community.

Locating a regional traffic draw in the same block as an elementary school and park sets a precedent that automotive convenience is being prioritized over child-focused land uses and could complicate future efforts to keep schools buffered from major commercial drive-thru uses.

Economic Considerations

I appreciate the employment opportunities as well as the tax revenue that a new In-N-Out would provide. However, I want to point out that the increased traffic, increased safety issues, and incessant odor and air pollution would have a greater detrimental effect on property values.

Professional appraisers have indicated that visible nuisances or lingering odors from adjacent uses can reduce nearby home values on the order of several percentage points, with 5–10 percent cited as a possible range in some cases, especially when buyers can readily detect the problem during showings.

Any modest upside from being near a popular brand like In-N-Out (perceived amenity, area “vibrancy”) would almost certainly be outweighed by the constant odor, noise, and traffic problems in a residential neighborhood, so the net effect on that community is strongly negative.

***Auto Emissions Information**

Chemical Components (Emissions)

When an engine idles, the combustion process is often less efficient than at cruising speeds, leading to the following emissions:

- **Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)** : A greenhouse gas and a standard byproduct of fuel combustion.
- **Water Vapor (H₂O)**: Often visible as steam or condensation from the tailpipe during cold starts.
- **Carbon Monoxide (CO)**: A colorless, odorless, and toxic gas produced by incomplete combustion.
- **Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x)**: Harmful gases that contribute to ground-level ozone and smog.
- **Hydrocarbons (HC)**: Unburnt fuel particles that can be toxic or carcinogenic, such as benzene.
- **Particulate Matter (PM)**: Tiny particles of soot and metals, particularly prevalent in diesel engines.

Immediate (Short-Term) Health Effects: Exposure to high concentrations or even “quick whiffs” in congested areas can cause:

- **Neurological Distress:** Headaches, dizziness, nausea, confusion, and fatigue.
- **Respiratory Irritation:** Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat.
- **Acute Cardiovascular Stress:** Chest tightness, rapid or irregular heartbeat, and increased blood pressure, especially in older adults.
- **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:** High levels can lead to unconsciousness, seizures, and death within minutes in unventilated spaces.

Long-Term Chronic Health Risks: Repeated exposure over time is linked to serious systemic diseases:

- **Respiratory Disease:** Development or worsening of asthma, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema. *In children, high exposure can permanently stunt lung growth.*
- **Cardiovascular Issues:** Increased risk of heart attacks, stroke, congestive heart failure, and permanent vascular injury.
- **Cancer:** Long-term inhalation is linked to lung cancer and other forms, such as leukemia and lymphoma, due to carcinogens like benzene and formaldehyde.
- **Neurological & Developmental Damage:** *Chronic exposure is associated with cognitive decline, memory loss, dementia, and behavioral conditions like ADHD in children.*
- **Premature Death:** Significant evidence links prolonged exposure to fine particulate matter (*PM2.5*) and other gases to increased mortality from heart and lung diseases.

Specific Pollutant Impacts

- **Carbon Monoxide (CO):** Binds to hemoglobin 200–250 times more effectively than oxygen, starving vital organs of oxygen.
- **Nitrogen Oxides (NOx):** Intensifies allergic responses and lowers resistance to respiratory infections.
- **Particulate Matter (PM):** Fine particles (*PM2.5*) are small enough to pass from the lungs directly into the bloodstream, where they can cause systemic inflammation and blood clots.

I trust that the city of Culver City will do what’s best for our local neighborhood given the overwhelming concerns noted above. The welfare of our community and its children are at stake. I welcome further conversations about this disastrous proposal.

Sincerely,

Morgan Schwartz

OPPOSE THE PROPOSED IN-N-OUT NEAR EL RINCON

What's being proposed?

An In-N-Out drive thru on the corner of Sepulveda, Sawtelle and Jefferson

Why is this a bad idea?

1. Increased traffic congestion, in an already congested area
2. The environmental impact of rows of idling cars
3. Safety – for children walking home from El Rincon and El Marino elementary schools

We support responsible development

We support thoughtful development that reflects the values of Culver City, encourages local business, and enhances our community.

Sign the petition (see QR code). Email the City Council and the School Board. MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD!

Join us in opposing the In-N-Out development and advocating for a plan that will enhance, rather than hinder, our community's future.
Sign this petition to stand with us in shaping a better Culver City.



Community Meeting 1 – January 6, 2026

11046 Jefferson – In-N-Out Burger Drive Thru

On Tuesday the 1st Community Meeting for a proposed In-N-Out drive-thru restaurant at 11046 Jefferson Boulevard (MU-HD zone) was held at the Julian Dixon Library from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Due to the limited meeting time, the City is requiring the applicant team to hold a make-up Community Meeting.

Attendance:

- Public: 50 in person, 80 online
- Applicant Team: Sara Houghton, Max Frey, Cristina Morales, Thee6ixty; Peter Kulmaticki, In-N-Out Burger
- City Staff: Gabriel Barreras (online) and William Kavadas (in person)

Project Details:

- Proposed drive-thru restaurant includes 61 automobile parking spaces, 84 indoor seats, 44 outdoor seats, and 26 vehicular queuing slots. The project site is located in the Mixed-Use High Density (MU-HD) zone and drive-thru restaurants are subject to Conditional Use Permit review by the Planning Commission.

Key Community Concerns & Applicant Responses:

- Hours of operation and late-night incidents [Hours of operation are standard for all In-N-Outs to cater to late night workers and associates are trained to handle incidents as appropriate]
- Traffic concerns including additional roadway congestion, turning movements, and queuing capacity [Traffic has not been studied yet but would be considered as part of project studies. Queueing capacity for 26 cars, consistent with In-N-Out studies on 95th percentile of average automobiles in drive-thru at any one time]
- Not consistent with MU-HD zone goals to provide high density housing projects
- Air quality impacts due to smell [Newer equipment reduces smell impacts]
- Air quality impacts due to idling cars
- Number of jobs provided and if local hiring will be prioritized [50 to 60 associate positions. Hiring will be done per HR guidelines but local community is welcome to apply]
- Pedestrian improvements and safety [Applicant will look into]

Community Meeting 2 – February 3, 2026

11046 Jefferson – In-N-Out Burger Drive Thru

On Tuesday the continuation of the 1st Community Meeting for a proposed In-N-Out drive-thru restaurant at 11046 Jefferson Boulevard (MU-HD zone) was held at Rotunda Room at Veterans Memorial Building from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Applicant Team gave a brief introduction to the proposal but primarily used this meeting as a listening session to better understand what concerns need to be addressed at the next meeting.

Attendance:

- Public: 42 in person, 35 online
- Applicant Team (in person): Sara Houghton, Max Frey, Dana Sales, Cristina Morales, Thee6ixty; Michelle Bennett, Peter Kulmaticki, In-N-Out Burger
- City Staff: Emily Stadnicki (online) and William Kavadas (in person)

Project Details:

- Proposed drive-thru restaurant includes 61 automobile parking spaces, 84 indoor seats, 44 outdoor seats, and 26 vehicular queuing slots. The project site is located in the Mixed-Use High Density (MU-HD) zone and drive-thru restaurants are subject to Conditional Use Permit review by the Planning Commission.

Key Community Concerns:

- Hours of operation and late-night activity/incidents
- Traffic concerns including additional roadway congestion, turning movements, and queuing capacity
- Cumulative impacts of other projects in the area including 11111 Jefferson and Sepulveda and Overland Traffic Improvement projects
- Lack of representation from the Property Owner and from El Rincon Elementary at Meeting
- Pest control impacts including rodents in neighborhood or rodent poisons being introduced to the environment
- Not consistent with MU-HD zone goals to provide high density housing and pedestrian oriented uses
- Student productivity impacts due to smell
- Air quality impacts due to smell
- Air quality impacts due to idling cars
- Air fryer emissions cause cancer
- Pedestrian safety especially for students
- Peak hours of operation conflict with afterschool and weekend park activities
- More outdoor dining and trees should be provided

