

From: Ralph Propper <rpropper47@icloud.com>

Sent: Friday, December 31, 2021 7:29 PM

To: lmontes@cityofsacramento.org; jjschenirer@cityofsacramento.org; Angelique Ashby <aashby@cityofsacramento.org>; sloloe@cityofsacramento.org; jsharris@cityofsacramento.org; kvalenzuela@cityofsacramento.org; rjennings@cityofsacramento.org; myvang@cityofsacramento.org; eguerra@cityofsacramento.org

Cc: madams@cityofsacramento.org; Susan Herre <susanherre@gmail.com>; John Mathews <jmathews@ulink.net>

Subject: Curtis Park Village Fuel Center (City Council Rehearing Jan 4, 2022; agenda item 20)

Dear Mayor Steinberg and Sacramento City Councilmembers:

The Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) works to achieve regional and community sustainability and a healthy environment for existing and future residents. For over fifty years, ECOS has worked proactively with our members, member organizations, local government, and community groups, to energize and bring positive change to the Sacramento region as we strive to develop thriving communities. Here are our overarching policy objectives:

1. Promote and reinforce Smart Growth principles
2. Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow climate change
3. Establish a regionally coordinated conservation strategy
4. Establish a sustainable regional water supply for ecological and municipal needs
5. Achieve equity in housing, public health, and economic opportunity

In 2015, the Sacramento City Council voted to deny the application to construct a 16-nozzle fuel center in what is now called Crocker Village. The Council noted that a fuel center would be inconsistent with City policy priorities to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and curb the impacts of climate change, and to support transit-oriented development.

These goals are even more important now. Notably, the unanimous June 2020 recommendations of the Mayors' Commission on Climate Change call for the City to prioritize active transportation and transit over fossil-fueled transportation. The siting of a fuel center here is in contravention to these recommendations.

In 2018, the Council unanimously passed a Transit Oriented Development Ordinance that prohibits fuel centers on parcels that are: (1) near a light rail stop, (2) more than 500 feet from a freeway interchange, or (3) not on a six-lane street. Under this Ordinance, the application would be prohibited.

The applicant secured major funding by promoting this development as transit friendly: The City helped secure a \$9 million grant from the State Transit Oriented Development Housing Infrastructure Grant Program to support infrastructure in Crocker Village, as well as a \$7 million grant through SACOG from federal transportation funds to construct the pedestrian/bike bridge to the light-rail station. The City made assurances that the project would promote transit and active transportation. Approval of this application would jeopardize future funding for projects important to the City, as state and federal authorities realize that their funds helped facilitate a development with the largest fossil-fuel station in City.

In 2020, regulations pursuant to SB 743 (Steinberg, 2013) took effect. This updates the way transportation impacts are measured in California for new development projects, making sure they are built in a way that allows Californians more options to drive less. This change will help us achieve our climate commitments, preserve our environment, improve our health and safety--particularly for our most vulnerable residents--and boost our economy by prioritizing co-located jobs, services, and housing. It calls for new development to demonstrate reductions in VMT – the opposite of what a mega-gas station would facilitate.

Also in 2020, Governor Newsom issued an executive order to phase out gasoline-powered cars and drastically reduce demand for fossil fuel in California's fight against climate change; and the Air Resources Board now mandates that all vehicle sales must be zero-emission by 2035. The California Mobility Center (by CSUS) projects thousands of new jobs in Sacramento for such vehicles, with the help of high-tech companies. We can attract more such industry, but only if we can show that Sacramento is a leader rather than a laggard in fighting climate change.

Gas stations are major emitters of benzene, a potent carcinogen. Even though the applicant moved the planned location to be further from residences, exposure to benzene will harm the health of those who work there, and of those who frequent the area. Also, the gas station will emit volatile organic compounds, which lead to ozone. Based on our climate and topography, Sacramento's potential for high ozone is the highest in the nation, and we are already in the "top 10" for unhealthy ozone levels.

On a personal note: I ride my bike over the new bridge between Curtis Park and City College, 5 times a week. The plans for the gas station show far more traffic on 10th Avenue, which I need to take. This will make me – and other bike commuters – worried about riding a bike on such a busy street. This should be analyzed and mitigated.

ECOS requests that the City Council deny this application.

Ralph Propper, President,
Environmental Council of Sacramento