

From: [Eris Weaver](#)
To: [PLANCOM - Planning Commission](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Agenda item 16.1 - DENY APPEAL OF PLANNING COMMISSION DECISION ON ELM TREE STATION
Date: Friday, August 8, 2025 1:08:45 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, I'm adding our voices to the groundswell of opposition to the proposed gas station on Wright Road.

- As other commenters have already stated,
 - The City has already passed a ban on new gas stations.
 - The City has declared a Climate Emergency and enacted a Climate Plan.
 - The City and the State are moving away from fossil fuels toward more sustainable transportation options.
- That intersection is already problematic for cyclists, and adding more vehicles entering and exiting the station right will only make Wright Road more dangerous. Even with the path being re-routed around the development and away from the driveway, JRT users will still have to travel on the sidewalk and cross Wright Road.
- I don't doubt that a market would be useful for neighborhood residents, but I find the applicant's claim that the attached small park will become "a destination for cyclists" somewhat specious. Who goes out of their way to visit a park next to a gas station?
-

I urge you to uphold the Planning Commission ruling.

Eris Weaver



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[Book time to meet with me](#)



SEPTEMBER 12
5:00-8:00 PM
SOMO VILLAGE
EVENT CENTER



SONOMA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION & LAND-USE COALITION

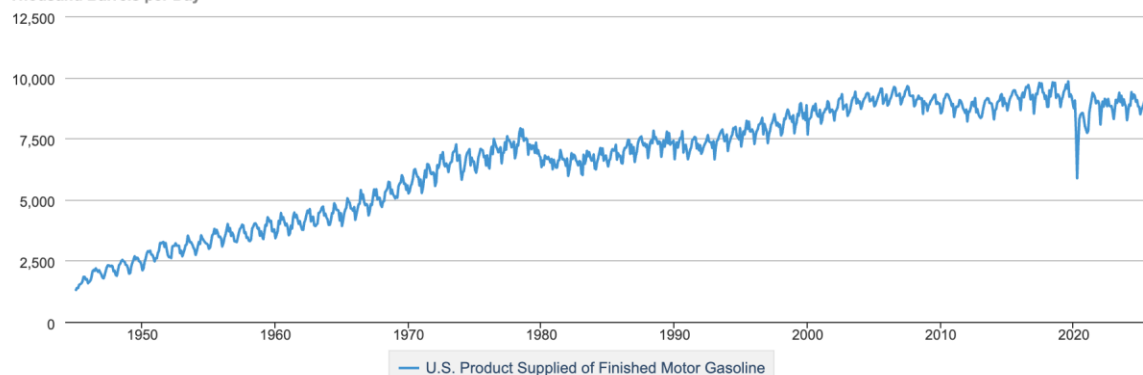
To: Each Santa Rosa City Council Member
From: Stephen Birdlebough, Chair, Sonoma County Transportation & Land-use Coalition
Date: August. 12, 2025
Re: Denial of a New Wright Rd. Gas Station Permit – Aug. 23 Agenda

The City of Santa Rosa stopped permitting the construction of new gas stations in January of 2020.¹ The City Council's Climate Emergency Declaration has a goal of carbon neutrality by 2030, and the demand for gasoline is already declining. It would be unfair and unwise to add competition to existing gas stations as demand for gasoline declines:

U.S. Product Supplied of Finished Motor Gasoline

DOWNLOAD

Thousand Barrels per Day



Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Rather than enabling a project that's already obsolete, the City Council can suggest that the applicant shift to solar electric charging stations, where workers, shoppers, students, and visitors can park their bicycles and their electric cars in the shade of solar panels. Such a project would serve electric bicycles along the Joe Rodota Trail as well as electric cars. The number of gasoline-powered cars is declining, and it is neither

¹ See the City Council's Resolution 2020-002:

<https://www.srcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/28039/Climate-Emergency-Resolution>

necessary to provide more gasoline, nor is it fair to the existing owners of gas stations to create more competition by building another gas station.

The environmental risks posed by gas stations are well-documented. Leaks from underground fuel storage tanks contaminate soil and groundwater, posing long-term hazards that are difficult and costly to remediate. Even with modern technology, no system is infallible, and spills—both large and small—remain a persistent threat to water resources and ecosystems. Considering that Wright Road is in proximity to sensitive wetlands and residential neighborhoods, the potential for environmental harm is unacceptable.²

Gas stations emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter, and benzene, all of which pose serious health risks, especially to children, seniors, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Numerous studies have highlighted correlations between gas station proximity and increased rates of asthma, cancer, and other health problems.

The proposed location on Wright Road is near schools, parks, and homes, meaning that many residents, including young families and vulnerable populations, would be exposed to increased air pollution. Approving a new gas station would be a direct contradiction to the city's stated commitment to public health.

A new gas station inevitably brings increased vehicle traffic, congestion, and noise to the area. Wright Road is already a busy corridor, and adding commercial operation that adds traffic will further strain local infrastructure, increase the risk of accidents, and diminish the quality of life for nearby residents. Increased traffic means more emissions, more risk to pedestrians and cyclists, and more difficulty for emergency vehicles to access the area efficiently.

Gas stations are also magnets for late-night activity, sometimes resulting in loitering, petty crime, and safety concerns for the neighborhood. This type of development should not be allowed when there are so many alternative commercial uses that could better serve residents without compromising safety and well-being.

The argument that a new gas station will create jobs and generate tax revenue is, at best, short-sighted. The economic impact of a single gas station is minimal compared to the long-term costs associated with environmental clean-up, public health burdens, and reduced property values. There are already numerous gas stations serving the Santa Rosa area; another gas station is unlikely to provide meaningful economic, or convenience benefits.

² <https://insurecstore.com/blogs/common-risks-faced-by-gas-stations/>
<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/electric-vehicles/chart-gas-powered-cars-are-losing-market-share-to-evs-and-hybrids>,