



[EXTERNAL] Elm Tree Station gas station -- File No. PRJ21-033

From Dee Swanhuysen <pdswan@comcast.net>

Date Mon 10/14/2024 10:01 AM

To McKay, Conor <CTMcKay@srcity.org>

Dear Santa Rosa Council, Planning Commission and staff, There is no need any more gas stations in Sonoma County, including Santa Rosa. Here are my points in opposing the Elm Tree gas station:

There are already 10+ operating gas stations within a 5-mile radius.

Governor's Executive Order - no new gas-powered cars to be sold in CA beyond 2035 so this project won't be economically viable longterm.

Proposal runs counter to SR's 2020 climate emergency declaration — don't expand FF infrastructure in a climate crisis.

The public needs time to review the CEQA documents. The CEQA documents aren't available to the public to review before your hearing or not enough time has been given to us to do a proper review. This hampers our ability to send you critical comments based on the CEQA document. The public needs time to review the CEQA documents.

The County and six cities Petaluma, Sebastopol, Cotati, **Santa Rosa**, Rohnert Park, Windsor stopped permitting and construction of new gas stations. You - **Santa Rosa** - have already stopped new gas stations. Why allow this project to go forward based on a timeline rather than a real need of our county to have another gas station?

Regards,
Dee Swanhuysen
1800 Jonive Rd.
Sebastopol, CA



Outlook

[EXTERNAL] Planning Commission, Oct. 24: 874 N. Wright Road gas station proposal

From Jenny Blaker <jennyb2323@sonic.net>

Date Tue 10/15/2024 3:41 PM

To Weeks, Karen <KWeeks@srcity.org>; Duggan, Vicki <VDuggan@srcity.org>; Carter, Charles <CCarter@srcity.org>; Cisco, Patti <PCisco@srcity.org>; Sanders, Terrence <tsanders@srcity.org>; Peterson, Julian <jpeterson@srcity.org>; Pardo, Aaron <APardo@srcity.org>

Cc McKay, Conor <CTMcKay@srcity.org>; Woody Hastings <congas.contact@gmail.com>

To: City of Santa Rosa Planning Commissioners

Re: Planning Commission, Oct. 24, 2024: 874 N. Wright Road gas station proposal

Dear Santa Rosa Planning Commissioners

As Co-coordinator of the Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS), I've been following the proposal to build a new gas station at 874 North Wright Road since I first heard about it in December 2019. It turns out it has been in the works on and off since 2013, always rejected or delayed for one reason or another. Perhaps it is time to finally say NO to this project!

CONGAS has been instrumental since 2019 in bringing to public awareness the inappropriateness of building new gas stations. Three individual gas station proposals were withdrawn by the proponents in the face of public opposition. CONGAS then began working with the cities of Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Cotati, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Rohnert Park, and with the County of Sonoma, to encourage them to enact ordinances prohibiting the construction of new gas stations. This movement has spread to other counties and other states.

The [City of Santa Rosa passed an ordinance](#) prohibiting new gas stations in August, 2022.

The 874 N. Wright Road proposal was already in process, so it was not covered by the ordinance which applied only to new proposals. Those already in process were to be considered individually on their own merits or otherwise. However, this one is just as problematic as any other new gas station proposal, for many reasons including some specific to this site.

There are good reasons why these cities and the County passed these ordinances, and the reasons not only still apply but are more relevant than ever.

We have not yet been able to review any updated CEQA documents, as explained below, but in the meantime we can offer some general comments:

- There are already about 10-14 existing gas stations within a 5-mile range. A new one is not needed.
- It makes no sense to build a new gas station now in the face of the climate crisis, evidence of which is mounting daily.
- In 2020 Santa Rosa passed a climate emergency resolution. Approving a new gas station now conflicts with this and with the City's [Climate Action Plan](#)
- It makes no sense to build a new gas station now given Governor Newsom's Executive Order to cease registering new gasoline-powered cars beginning in 2035.
- Gas stations, even the newest ones, inevitably create leaks and spills from underground storage tanks and pipes. These [pollute surface and groundwater](#) and are dangerous for human health. The county is riddled

with leaking underground storage tanks, which often end up becoming undevelopable toxic sites. They are an expensive liability.

- Gas stations are a source of toxic [air pollution](#).
- [Sales of gasoline are declining](#) so this is not a good long-term economic proposition.
- This site is inappropriate being on an undeveloped greenfield site with wetlands and vernal pools; on Highway 12 between Santa Rosa and Sebastopol which is a designated Scenic Highway. The site is adjacent to the Joe Rodota trail.
- According to the FBI, [4.5% of all reported violent crime in 2022 took place at a gas station](#) or convenience store.
- This is an environmental justice issue because gasoline stations have a disproportionate impact on low-income communities, particularly indigenous and frontline communities, all over the world, from the point of extraction through the processing, refining, and transportation, and then the inequitable impacts of the climate crisis on already overburdened populations.

CONGAS has been hearing from staff for the past two years that they were reviewing the CEQA documents for this project, but we have so far not been able to get access to these to be able to comment on any specific new detail. In September 2021 CONGAS was informed by staff (Adam Ross) that this proposal had been withdrawn. In August 2022 we were alerted to a notice of a public hearing. In November 2022 we were told by staff (Mike Wixon) both that there would be “no public hearing or any form of public input” and also in the same email that staff were assessing the project to ensure compliance with CEQA and that he would be happy to send us any documents when ready for public review. We’re still waiting! – and I’m wondering what is so problematic about this project that has taken so many twists and turns for over 10 years in the process and why it is now so difficult for the public to access the planning documents.

We encourage the Planning Commission to continue to build upon the City’s climate action planning efforts, urban planning that encourages active transportation, making it safer for people to walk, roll, and bicycle, reducing vehicle miles traveled. We support safe, clean, accessible, affordable public transit, and charging facilities for electric vehicles in locations where people already live, work, and spend time (not at gas stations!) We urge the Planning Commission to promote a clean, green, and just energy and transportation system, rather than permitting an outdated and hazardous liability. If it was inappropriate in 2013 and 2019 it is even more inappropriate now.

Please do the right thing and reject this proposal. There are many good reasons to oppose it and none to support it.

Sincerely

Jenny Blaker

Co-coordinator, Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS)