

**PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 17, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Hamerly at the Donahue Council Chambers, 27215 Base Line, Highland, California.

|          |              |                 |
|----------|--------------|-----------------|
| Present: | Chair        | Randall Hamerly |
|          | Vice Chair   | Chandra Thomas  |
|          | Commissioner | Jarrold Miller  |
|          | Commissioner | David Saran     |
|          | Commissioner | Vacant          |

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director  
Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director  
Matt Bennett, Assistant Public Works Director  
Matt Wirz, Building Official  
Scott Rice, City Landscape Architect  
Camille Duarte, Administrative Assistant III

Chair Hamerly led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**COMMUNITY INPUT (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)**

None.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. Minutes from the September 19, 2023 Regular Meeting.

**A MOTION** was made by Vice Chair Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Miller to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried, 3-1, Commissioner Saran abstained.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

2. Development of an approximately 160,951 square foot Costco Wholesale warehouse, inclusive of a big-box retail store and related site improvements, Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) License, optical store, pharmacy and tire shop, and ancillary 15-pump vehicle fueling station with 30 fueling positions and building mounted signage. File/Index Numbers: Design Review Application (DRA 23-011), Conditional Use Permits (CUP 22-013 and CUP 23-012), and Sign Review (ASR 23-003). (On the north side of Greenspot Road midblock between State Route 210 and Boulder Avenue. Future addresses will be 28000 Greenspot Road for the wholesale warehouse and 27980 Greenspot Road for the Vehicle Fueling Station. Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 1201-341-36 & 37, 1201-341-40 through -53 and -58.) (Applicant: Costco Wholesale Corporation.

Chair Hamerly recused himself because of a conflict of interest (with Costco) and left the Council Chambers.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater presented the staff report.

Commissioner Miller asked are access A and Calhoun going to be constructed with this project?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater yes.

Vice Chair Thomas asked will the signal be constructed at a later time?

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated over at Calhoun, there is a requirement for Rexco, San Carlo 1 to construct that signal. They mentioned last time they were hoping to have occupancy sometime towards the end of the year. That signal should be in place by that time well in advance of the Costco project.

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated that is correct.

Commissioner Miller asked has the city looked at traffic circulation as it relates to the interchange at the 210-freeway given an interim condition that is going to exist from the time that this project gets built until those interchange improvements are completed? Do you have any idea what that is going to look like?

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated the original study with the EIR completed by Urban Crossroads, the evaluation of the outward streets, on ramp, and off ramp location you will see in the mitigation measures listed. Many of those on ramp and off ramp kind of configurations are attributed to the Greenspot Village Marketplace as a whole and they are paying their fair share to those improvements. The city is planning for the future 5th Street interchange and that will be some time out. There is an interim time where certain improvements that are frontage to TREH development will increase the capacity to the on ramp.

Commissioner Miller asked can the city provide us a quick update on the storm drain extension?

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated Engineering Condition 25 has this and the PA 2 project, both are discharging at West Road access A into the city storm drain system provided lateral T that has been studied and shows the capacity of 100 CFS. Both PA 2 and Costco have been noticed as far as the cumulative discharge and they are both designing towards that. There was an Engineer looking at the overall study to try and determine if there's greater capacity for that access A. For the main line, the storm drain was constructed in 2012.

Vice Chair Thomas stated it was mentioned there were additional lanes for traffic out. You said 4 versus 2 in.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated that is on Calhoun, two in and four out on Calhoun.

Applicant Pari Holiday stated I am the Development Director for Costco assigned to this project here in Highland, CA. I want to say thank you very much for introducing us here tonight, we are very excited to be here as the project has been in the works for quite some time now. I also want to thank staff very much for all their help in getting us here, it has been a process. I want to tell you a little bit about why we are here and why we are looking at this site here. We are a membership-based retailer and so we know where our members shop, and we are always looking to provide our members with the best shopping experience. We find that there are warehouses in the area that are maxing out our customers and are not getting the best experience with shortage of parking and overcrowded warehouses so we typically start to look for another locations in the general proximity. We also think it will also benefit the community with retail synergy with Lowe's across the street and other retailers that might also follow suit. I am going to introduce my technical team; they are here to answer any questions. Kimley Horn, our civil engineer, MG2 is our architect. Kittleson is our traffic consultant, and Rambles are not in attendance, however, they have done some air quality studies on this property. A Costco warehouse will employ between 250 and 300 employees and that is what we are looking to have here in Highland. We are a very highly sought after employer and we treat our employees very well. We promote from within, we are very focused on enrichment and company culture. These are great job opportunities that we would be bringing to Highland, and we typically hire locally. We typically donate 1% of our sales to local charities and organizations. We usually set up a relationship with those organizations. Once we have a project that is pretty far along before we open so we have a great community outreach program where we support local charities. We are a big sales tax contributor, so we do believe that Highland will benefit from significant tax revenue increase when our project is up and running. This map shown on the screen is where our existing warehouses are located and the red color is our proposed location, and just to the south of that is our San Bernardino Costco. It is technically Redlands, but we call it San Bernardino and that is only 8 miles from this site. We have our next closest in Fontana, which is 17 miles, these stores are very busy. This proposed Highland location makes sense, we have a great demographic based on our proprietary data that we have of our Members and know that they will support this store and definitely be shopping here.

Commissioner Miller stated since you have so many Costco locations, have there been any lessons learned from any of those other projects and have you implemented solutions in this project to address those problems?

Applicant Pari Holiday stated yes, absolutely. I do not know how old the warehouses are that are on this map, but we typically learn from our older stores, and we are actually in the process companywide to figure out how to solve all those problems. What we are finding is a lot of our older warehouses have smaller fuel stations and if you have shopped at a Costco in recent months, you will see the queuing for those fuel stations are pretty significant. We now build our fueling stations based what we expect the demand to be. So, in this case, we are building out 15 dispensers with 30 handles, and we have done a study with the help of Kittleson, our traffic consultant, to confirm and make sure that we have sufficient queuing. We conduct a queue management plan where we have studied where we can run the queue should the queuing availability at this location not be sufficient, which this is about 90 vehicles, which is significant. Traffic is important for us, and we look for sites where we can get five entry points onto our parcels just because of traffic alone. We have achieved that here with some

significant widenings to the original specific plan driveways and a very thorough several-month process with our traffic consultant making sure that traffic can flow in and out.

Vice Chair Thomas asked will someone discuss the flow of how a vehicle is going to come into the property, enter into the gas fueling area?

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated we did a study of six other Costco fuel facilities in California and data was collected fairly recently in 2021-2022 when we had some pretty high fuel prices in the area. The maximum observed we saw at fuel stations with 30 or more positions like this one will have 41 vehicles behind the pumps. That is indicated on this diagram in the red. So during your normal PM peak hour or some of the typical times at the fuel facility, we do not even expect that the queues will back out beyond the fuel pad. If you're coming up the road you have a lot of distance before you even are entering the fuel facility, so we do not expect queues to back out onto the public street. This plan was put together in the event of unusual circumstances, like a holiday or people shopping a lot before long weekends. In addition to what we expect the queue will be which all fits down here [pointing at the map on the Power Point] we could use these parking aisles to store some additional vehicles. In that case we would use cones and signs to block off this driveway and redirect the traffic up here to just have some extra space.

Vice Chair Thomas asked would you be blocking off those parking spaces if that was utilized?

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated as much could be done, it depends on what is currently happening at the fuel station. If customers are already parked there, they will have to have a way to get out, but if any are open, they could be closed off.

Vice Chair Thomas stated where you have the entry point with that red circle, when cars come in, would someone wanting to fill their vehicle is it presumed that they are going to take those first two spots to drive into? Will there be an attendant that guides people to some of the others?

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated I think there will be at least one attendant there guiding customers. There will also be a red light green light system and each of these rows it shows which positions are available and taken. That encourages customers to spread out.

Vice Chair Thomas stated why was the fueling station put on the southwest corner of the property?

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated generally speaking for Costco we try to keep the fuel facility from being right at the access to the entrance to the warehouse. This side provided that greatest distance so there was no parking that a pedestrian would have to walk from parking through a fuel station to get there or you don't have pedestrians having to park so far away from the warehouse entrance.

Applicant Pari Holiday stated what drives the location of the fuel station is our sensitivity to the residential housing surrounding Costco.

Vice Chair Thomas asked could we discuss the median that was the change for tonight that we received along the West Road?

Applicant Pari Holiday stated there is a proposed curb cut here on the future development to the west of us. There is currently a road agreement that predicates a left turn movement onto this west development. We do not know what is going on here quite yet, but we had a discussion with this property owner earlier today and we have been working through how that would function for them and for us to make sure that this works well for traffic flow. The agreement that has been signed by the property owner predicates that there is going to be a left turn here.

Vice Chair Thomas asked have you read the conditions of approval and agree with them?

Applicant Pari Holiday stated yes, we do agree.

Vice Chair Thomas asked do you have other locations of the same design and how do they perform for the traffic?

Applicant Pari Holiday stated in many cases in our smaller fuel stations with our attendants and discussion with our traffic consultants for the older locations produce these queue management plans where we have directed our fuel station attendants to cone off certain lanes and direct traffic in a specific direction. My understanding is we will do the same thing here if we have that issue in Highland. We have done some studies on our other locations where we find that our maximum queuing is significantly lower than that. I do not know if we have other locations that are similar.

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated I cannot think of a specific location, but this is a configuration with the entry at a 90 degree to the direction of the fueling positions. Since the queues are not expected to block that driveway, we do think this is going to operate pretty well. I do not know if you are thinking of another location that has fewer positions and longer queues, which might be where you see access being blocked.

Commissioner Saran asked what do you anticipate the exit flow of traffic to be from the fueling station?

Applicant's Representative Christine Conolley stated a lot of customers fuel but then also go to the warehouse are typically doing that fueling before the going into the warehouse. So, we would expect they will either loop around here and make a right out at this driveway or they may go up this road and exit to use the signal here.

Applicant's Representative Stephen Orosco stated regarding the San Bernardino's Costco fueling station it is 4 wide, three deep and the queuing line is a lot shorter.

Vice Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

Public Speaker Glenn Elssmann stated I am with Greenspot Village and Marketplace, we are the current property owner and who developed the Specific Plan. We have been working with Costco and the neighbor to the left, if we could just ask for a brief recess because of the

documents, we just want to make sure that the documents that you are looking at and the ones we have are the same thing.

Community Development Director Mainez stated since you opened up the public comment already, it is appropriate to flush out all the comments first before we take a recess.

Public Speaker John Soma stated I am an Attorney, I represent Greenspot Development Corporation. My client owns the six parcels that are contiguous to this parcel to the west side, they own the property that will go to the center line of what you call access A and also the West Road. In the original development we have a lot of private agreements, access and development, and infrastructure agreements that provide for two left hand turns into my client's property from that access road. There was some confusion here because in condition 16 that we saw originally, it actually referenced a July 6th, 2023 West Road plan by Madok and Associates and that has two breaks to the median to the left. The condition that we saw today, and we were starting to see and what the city was talking about was that they wanted to extend the median, the entire length of that road, thereby blocking off those left turns. We have right as that property owner to not consent to that and we do not consent to that. We want to make sure that's part of the record. It looks like we are trying to work this out, but we want to make sure that when you do the conditions of approval that all of you are looking at the same thing that we are thinking about. So that we have something that is enforceable in terms of those two left turns through the brakes in the median because that is important to us, and we do not want our property rights abrogated by that being blocked off.

Public Speaker Alex Mucino stated we do not oppose the project; however, we have differences regarding that West Road and the differences starting with the city. As we received as the conditions of approval, and it references that street improvement plans provided. The second revision condition B does not even reference Madole and Associates anymore. Why was it taken out?

Vice Chair Thomas stated staff can answer the question once we go through all public comments.

Public Speaker Aysar Helo stated I have always liked projects coming to Highland, I did not matter if it is competition or not. I have a gas station here in Highland and it's going to affect me, but I think it's the right thing for the community. It is the right thing for the city and obviously there are some design issues that would have to be worked out. I wanted to say this because no matter what it is because at the end of the day, I am going to get my own business even if my price is \$2.00 lower or higher. It will affect everybody in the area, there is too many gas stations. In the past meeting we spoke about limiting how many stations should be going into Highland. I think if I am not mistaken, I had an approved gas station across the street from Costco. I own land across the street from Costco. I personally am a Costco member; they are the best retailers out there and I think it would be sad not to see them come in.

Vice Chair Thomas closed the public hearing. I would just like to note to the gentlemen who have already spoken, staff is available, we are going to have a slight recess. You can still ask your questions to staff to get further clarification if needed. We will take a 7-minute recess, we will return at 7:39 p.m.

Vice Chair Thomas opened the meeting back to order at 7:39 p.m.

Assistant Community Development Director Stater stated there will be an additional revision to the conditions of approval. Assistant Public Works Director is working on the language right now.

Commissioner Miller asked does the applicant have somebody that can speak to the plan for mitigation of the 0.15 acres taking of City Creek?

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated you are referring to the TREH development property.

Commissioner Miller stated table 3.1 on page 104.

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated I did not see it come up on the TREH development, they had the LOMAR to be processed this was part of the PA 2 development conditions. I do not recall the specific condition or the modification that excluded that. There is a drainage system that flood control has connected to the Creek.

Vice Chair Thomas stated any comments on the site plan? My comment still remains I still have some slight heartache with the queuing on the site plan for where the cars will enter the gas fueling station. I am hopeful that staff will be present to put the cones there and bring the queuing up to the top.

Commissioner Miller asked to speak to the Applicant's Civil Engineer on the project. From a drainage standpoint it looks like the plan is to primarily use an underground chamber system for infiltration.

Applicant's Representative Jacob Glaze stated the site itself does not perk as well as we would like. The plan itself has a sump condition across the site, water will flow into those sump conditions. Each one of those sump conditions per the WQMP manual have a water treatment device. We are speced out right now on Modular Wetlands which is a third party, but we could leave it open to anything else. The water will go through a sand filter. That sand filter will remove the oils, treat the water, and from there it will go through a storm drain system into the underground detention system. That underground detention system does allow for some through the perforated holes on it, but based on the perk rates, it is not ideal. From there then it will get a rear wall which will detain the water based on the Q100 as Matt alluded to earlier, and then from there will get discharged out into the main that will connect down the way.

Commissioner Miller stated on the DMA exhibit here, I see delineation on the site, but I had asked earlier if the two adjacent streets were part of the project and the answer that I got was yes, so why have we not also included the adjacent streets? Is the plan to include treatment?

Applicant's Representative Jacob Glaze stated what is presented to you is the Costco on sites, but in terms of the actual offsites, those will have their own underground system. They will have their own treatment system as well as storm drain system. There's agreements with the neighbors to the east and to the west. We do not want to take their water and put it our onsite system so they will have their own independent systems which will be managed through this

agreement and that agreement will have like an HOA, and then they'll maintain those storm drain systems.

Commissioner Miller asked are you going to be able to get an outlet out of that system that then will be able to drain to the adjacent storm drain?

Applicant's Representative Jacob Glaze stated yes, as part of the project and we worked with engineering staff on it, we put together a hydrology report, a WQMP report, as well as one sheet of the grading plan, but all of our falls across the site did work and promoted positive drainage.

Commissioner Miller asked were you provided a flow rate that you needed to hit for the 100-year storm event from this project?

Applicant's Representative Jacob Glaze stated yes, there's agreement between PA 2 as well as Costco it is the Q100. So based on the land areas between the two that is where we are able to figure out how much actual water is allocated to Costco site, PA 2, and the overall street.

Applicants Representative Matt Durham stated regarding the landscape we have quite a bit of trees on the perimeter that go around the site. A lot of it plays off of the pallet that was at the Rexco site. We have tall trees, and canopy trees. As you transition into the parking lot, there are also other canopy trees that are evergreen, so there is going to be a layering from the street that you see. When you do get to the building, there are one single row, but there is a lot of layering that is going on before that, that we worked out with the landscape architects for the city as well.

City Landscape Architect Rice stated the condition that was mentioned about the facade and the screening of it is a living condition. It is something that we have been working on with the applicant and their team. Earlier iterations of the plan did not have as much screening, and it is progressing toward the solution. We will continue collaborating with the applicant and team to reach a solution that is amenable to all parties. We understand the limitations of the site, especially with all the things that have to happen on such a small site when you are talking about something like Costco.

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated the Engineering Condition 16A last sentence to read "At the westerly access entry within city right away, an 11-foot-wide landscape median with two medium breaks as shown by the conceptual site plan, dated 9/21/23, prepared by Kimley Horn." Engineering Condition 16B where we previously came in with the "per West Road plan." I would change that to "per the conceptual site plan dated 9/21/23 prepared by Kimley Horn." With those changes, I would just want to ask that both GDC and Costco see that as agreeable language to be offered.

Applicant Pari Holiday stated I accept the condition change. My understanding of the change is that we are going to proceed with the current plan as we've shown it with two left turn pockets on the west access road onto the property to the west of us with the understanding that at some future date when there is an application made for that property that a traffic analysis is done at that time.



Public Speaker John Soma stated what was read was acceptable. It needs to be clear that the median breaks are for the purpose of allowing your left turn through those medians.

Assistant Public Works Director Bennett stated I would point to the exhibit that shows left turn movements intersect at those intersections, and that is the intent of the exhibit to provide for a left turn movement. Costco acknowledged that as well and we talked briefly about when the development does come through with an application that there will be additional studies, drainage, traffic analysis and that was also agreeable.

Public Speaker John Soma stated that is clear now. We appreciate it.

**A MOTION** was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Saran to:

- 1) Find under Public Resources Code Section 21166 and the corresponding CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 that there are no substantial changes or new information of substantial importance that would trigger the preparation of a subsequent EIR and further finding that the project is exempt from further environmental review;
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. 2023 – 48, approving Design Review Application (DRA No. 23-011) for the development of a Costco Wholesale store, approximately 160,951 square feet, subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact as amended;
- 3) Adopt Resolution No. 2023 – 49 approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP No. 22-013) for the development of a vehicle fueling station with fifteen (15) fuel pumps with 30 fueling positions associated with the Costco Wholesale store, subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact;
- 4) Adopt Resolution No. 2023 – 50, approving Conditional Use Permit (CUP No. 23-012) for a Type 21 Alcoholic Beverage Control license associated with the Costco store, subject to the Conditions of Approval and Findings of Fact;
- 5) Adopt Resolution No. 2023 – 51, approving Sign Review (ASR 23-003) for building mounted signs. Motion carried 3-1, with Chair Hamerly abstaining. Motion carried, 3-1, Chair Hamerly abstained.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-048**

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION (DRA 23-011) FOR A 160,951 SQUARE FOOT “COSTCO WHOLESALE” BIG-BOX RETAIL STORE WITH VEHICLE FUELING STATION AND RELATED ON-SITE IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING SITE PLAN, BUILDING ELEVATIONS, CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE PLAN AND CONCEPTUAL GRADING PLAN ON 19.74 ACRES LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF GREENSPOT ROAD, APPROXIMATELY 1,700 FEET EAST OF STATE ROUTE 210. 28000 GREENSPOT

ROAD, HIGHLAND, CA. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS 1201-341-36, -37, -40 THROUGH -53, AND -58

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-049

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP 22-013) FOR A 15-PUMP VEHICLE FUELING STATION WITH 30 FUELING POSITIONS ANCILLARY TO A 160,951 SQUARE FOOT "COSTCO WHOLESALE" BIG-BOX RETAIL STORE ON 19.74 ACRES LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF GREENSPOT ROAD, APPROXIMATELY 1,300 FEET EAST OF STATE ROUTE 210. 27980 GREENSPOT ROAD, HIGHLAND, CA. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS 1201-341-36, -37, -40 THROUGH -53, AND -58

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-050

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 22-013 TO ESTABLISH A TYPE 21 (OFF-SALE GENERAL) ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL LICENSE AT A PROPOSED "COSTCO WHOLESALE" WAREHOUSE STORE LOCATED AT 28000 GREENSPOT ROAD, HIGHLAND, CA. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS 1201-341-36, -37, -40 THROUGH -53, AND -58

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-051

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, SIGN REVIEW APPLICATION (ASR 23-003) FOR BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNS RELATED TO A PROPOSED 160,951 SQUARE FOOT "COSTCO WHOLESALE" BIG-BOX RETAIL STORE AND VEHICLE FUELING STATION ON 19.74 ACRES LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF GREENSPOT ROAD, APPROXIMATELY 1,700 FEET EAST OF STATE ROUTE 210. 28000 and 27980 GREENSPOT ROAD, HIGHLAND, CA. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS 1201-341-36, -37, -40 THROUGH -53, AND -58

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Planning Commissions next regular meeting is scheduled December 5, 2023.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly declared the meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

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Camille Duarte, Administrative Assistant III  
Community Development Department

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Randall Hamerly, Chair  
Planning Commission



