

**LATE PUBLIC  
COMMENT/CORRESPONDENCE**

FOR COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER AGENDA POSTING

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2024**

-----Original Message-----

From: Kim Lewis <kim@coe-creek.com>

Sent: September 23, 2024 12:49 PM

To: List - Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@manhattanbeach.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] VEG comments - Johnathon Masi

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

A reason applicable to CEQA to deny this business would be increased late night through early morning traffic on 18th Street. This is the only time that this street gets relief from traffic. The City has already had to place new stop signs in the area for safety reasons. I realize that Manhattan Beach depends on tax revenues from its businesses; but I would hope that this location could contain a business that has normal operating hours. The stretch of 18th Street between Magnolia Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard already has enough traffic.

For a non-CEQA reason, I Googled VEG. They have a C- rating from the Better Business Bureau. From reading various review sites, it appears that their only concern seems to be making as much money as possible. This is probably why they want an office in Manhattan Beach. They use a lot of contract vets who have no real "skin in the game". Unfortunately, private equity groups are taking over the business of taking care of pets. VCA has already trashed Hermosa Animal Hospital. It's too bad our local vets don't band together to offer 24 hour care.

**From:** Todd Campbell <toddcubl@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** September 25, 2024 12:40 PM  
**To:** List - Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@manhattanbeach.gov>  
**Cc:** Heather O'Connor <hedylynnr@yahoo.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Supplemental Information for Agenda Item 09/25/24-2

**EXTERNAL EMAIL:** Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Chair Sistos and Members of the Planning Commission:

Please see the attached supplemental letter re the Union Pacific application to replace the station's canopy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Todd Campbell

September 25, 2024

Kristin Sistos, Chair  
Jim Dillavou, Member  
Rachel Hackett, Member  
Robert Tokashiki, Member  
Joseph Ungoco, Member

Manhattan Beach Planning Commission  
1400 Highland Avenue  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

**Re: STONGLY OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED TO 14' CLEARANCE: Project Location and File No.: 2121 Highland Avenue (PE-23-00142/CDP-23-00092)**

Dear Chair Sistos and Honorable Members of the Planning Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to file an appeal against United Pacific's proposed replacement canopy located at 2121 Highland Avenue for the "demolition and replacement of an existing gas station canopy".

I'll get straight to the point. We are here today to express strong concerns over the newly proposed height of the station's replacement canopy as it WILL have an impact on our views of the ocean and surrounding residential area of our homes on the third floor.

What we are not opposed to is the replacement of the canopy so that Union Pacific can get back to its operations, maintain its facility which has been neglected and in a poor state since November of last year.

We find it unfortunate that Union Pacific's station has been inoperable for this length of time BUT it should also be noted that this is due to the operator's decision to deceive the City of its true plans to replace the pre-existing canopy that stood at 13'2" in or around 2022.



Station Circa 2022

According to the staff report, when the City received a complaint of the missing canopy, “staff determined the business owner had begun work without permits. The applicant then submitted an application for a commercial building permit in January 2023. The scope of work included demolishing and replacing the canopy with the same dimensions and staff determined that a CDP was not required.

Fast forward to November 2023 when we filed a complaint that the replacement canopy was demonstrably taller than its predecessor because it was literally poking through our windows on our top floors, and that we had received no public notice of the newly proposed canopy design. Staff now made aware of the change in design determined that the structure was over the maximum allowable height for the zone and a CDP was required.

And that’s the problem with this applicant. They tried to pull a fast one. They got caught. And now we have had to deal with eyesore for almost a year now.

On July 22, we finally received public notice of the operator’s intended plans. From our understanding and in consultation with City Staff, the height of the canopy will now be set at 21.5 feet to comply with the 22’ height limit for a flat roofed structure in the CL Zone. Hence, the proposed replacement canopy height will go from 17 feet pre-existing to 21.5 feet, an increase of 4.5 feet.

Now, as neighbors purchasing our homes on 21<sup>st</sup> Place, we knew we were buying a home that is located next to a gas station. Again, we don’t have any issue with the use of the property. What we didn’t sign up for was for Union Pacific to raise the height profile of its canopy (which can be bright orange given the Union 76 logo) so that it is now fully visible over our sound walls on the third floor.

Union Pacific says it needs this exaggerated canopy height as a precaution to prevent future damage of the canopy. I will attest, having lived at this location for over 17 years, never once has the canopy been damaged. Further, we took a survey of numerous stations around the South Bay and we observed heights ranging from 13’2” to 13’6” (And the last station referenced is Costco on Hindry Avenue in Hawthorne).



According to conversations with staff, the canopy clearance will go from 13'2" to 14'7" on the west side of the canopy to 15' 8"

The Owners contractor claims in a letter submitted on July 29, 2024, that the previous canopy had a 13'9" clearance height and that 13'6" is California's minimum allowed canopy clearance height and similar clearance heights are usually only seen on older canopies which are prone to being damaged by trucks and trailers.

First of all, this operator did have a prior canopy with a clearance height of 13'9" in or around 2008 (and we would be thrilled with this height) but the canopy that is being replaced today was 13'2" and we have submitted the photographs to demonstrate this.



Station in circa 2008

Second, the operator provides no data and no source citation where it ever states that California's minimum allowed canopy clearance height is 13'6". Based on this operator's willingness to deceive staff in the past, I would ask for verification of this statement.

Additionally, based on the California Air Resources Board's and CAPCOA Gasoline Service Station Industrywide Risk Assessment Technical Guidance document published on February 18, 2022, the document on page 18 states that:

"Staff compared the canopy heights of over 70 gas stations in the state and determined that the average canopy height was four meters." Four meter is 13'1".

So that's the station data that we think the Planning Commission should work from.<sup>i</sup>

**Gasoline Service Station  
Industrywide Risk Assessment  
Technical Guidance**

February 18, 2022



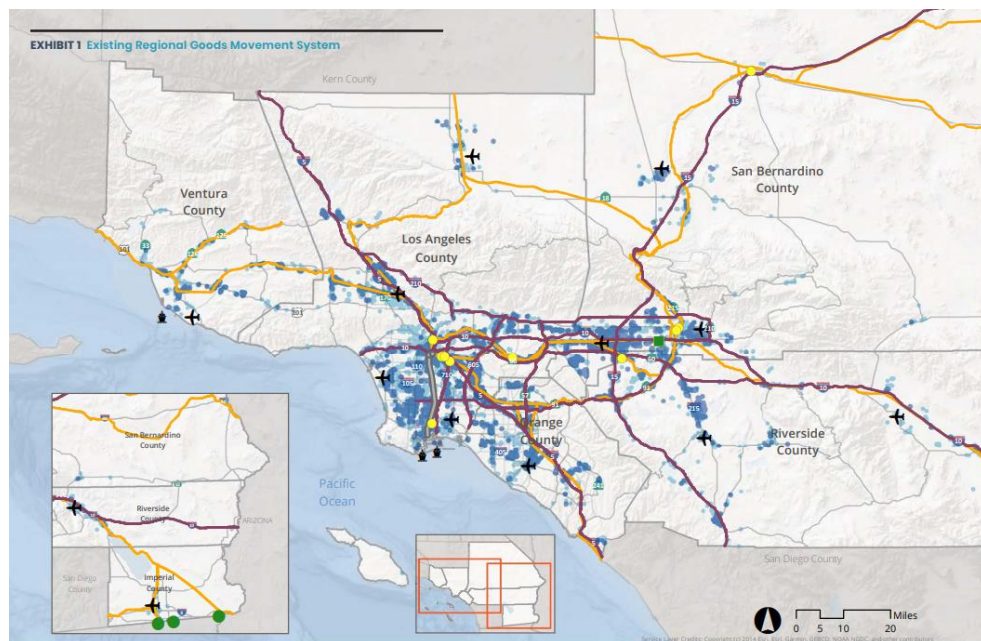
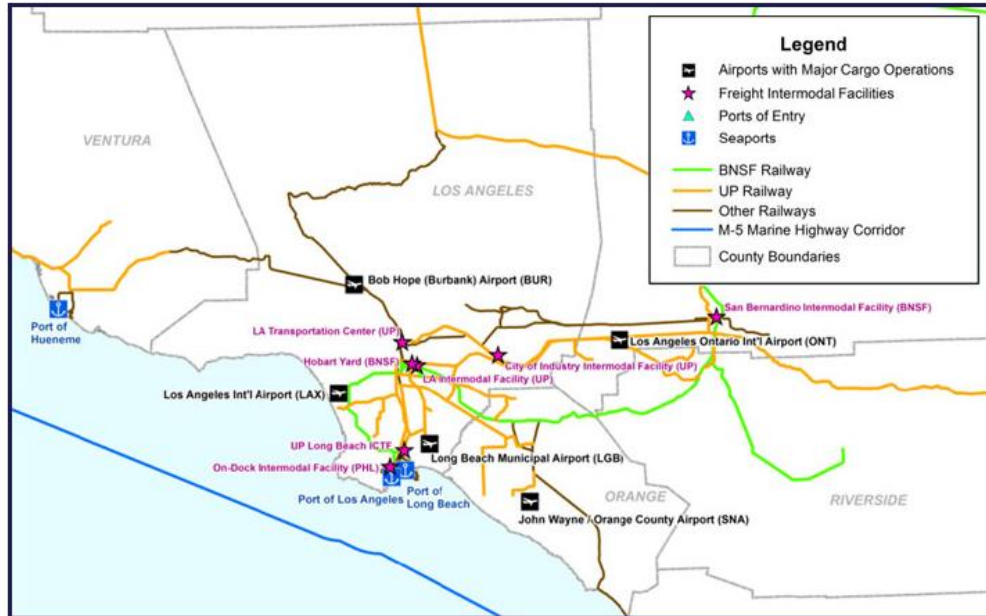
Additionally, according to Schneider Truck Leasing, semi-truck and trailer dimensions on average possess a standard height of 13' 6" when including the height of wind fairing equipment that a semi may use to improve fuel economy.<sup>ii</sup> Wind fairing equipment is typically used for goods movement trucks that travel long distances. Manhattan Beach is not located along any goods movement corridors within the South Coast Air Quality Air Basin. Again, this is predominantly a residential neighborhood. Further, return-to-base fleets do not fuel up at third-party fuel locations.



Example of wind-fairing equipment on top of a cab.

Finally, when you talk with gas station canopy design and construction companies, they will tell you that the height of the gas station canopy can vary widely, primarily based on the intended use and types of vehicles expected to frequent the station. Regarding gas station canopy design, architects and engineers must balance practicality with regulations and compliance, along with aesthetic appeal.

## Freight Facilities



- Airport
- Ports
- Ports of Entry
- Intermodal Facilities
- Classification Facilities
- Major Freight Highway Corridors
- Main Line Rail
- Alameda Corridor
- Warehouses
- ≥ 50,000 sq ft
- < 50,000 sq ft

Source: SCAG 2019, CoStar Realty Information Inc.

Here, in Manhattan Beach, ocean views are a premium. This Applicant knows this and also knows that passenger vehicles are this station's customer base. This station is not located along our region's goods movement corridors, inland warehouses or terminals, or regional ports. It's a neighborhood and they are proposing a station canopy that is bigger than Costco. Why? To be honest, the station's fuel pumps would be more at risk from a semi-truck hauling



a 40' container than the canopy height due to the property's small size, slope, and tight access dimensions.

**Conclusion:**

Considering all this, we ask the Planning Commission to deny Union Pacific's application to build a mega-canopy in our neighborhood that just barely meets City code. This proposal does not meet our residential "feel".

Short of that, we ask that the Planning Commission to place conditions on the CDP starting with the canopy color. The Planning Commission should require that the canopy color be neutral or grey as before to ensure we don't have to stare out of our windows to bright Union 76 orange.

Additionally, we would ask the Planning Commission to work with the Applicant to seek a max canopy clearance of 14' and a maximum height 20'.

To be blunt, we will see the canopy from our windows if this canopy is approved with a height set at 21.5". We have measured it. It will impact our views and our enjoyment of our homes which is why we are before you today. And if the operator is listening, it is the right thing to do to modify the proposal as it will result in a clear harm.

Thank you.

Todd R. Campbell  
Former Mayor, City of Burbank, Resident  
Resident, 228 21<sup>st</sup> Place  
Beach, CA 90266

Dr. Lori L. Campbell  
Dept. of Veterans Affairs  
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2101 Highland Avenue, Unit B  
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<sup>i</sup> [Gasoline Service Station Technical Guidance](#)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://schneiderjobs.com/blog/semi-truck-trailer-dimensions>