



January 8, 2024

To: Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair
City of Los Angeles Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CC: Councilmembers Mr. John Lee, Ms. Katy Yaroslavsky, Ms. Imelda Padilla and
Ms. Heather Hutt

Re: Proposed Home Depot at 16830 Devonshire St, Granada Hills
L.A. City Planning Case Number: CPC-2022-1981-CU-DRB-SPP-SPR

Dear Councilmember Harris-Dawson:

I am writing this letter to you as a mother, nearby resident of the development in question, and candidate for the 12th District of the Los Angeles City Council. The Los Angeles City Planning Department is now considering case number CPC-2022-1981-CU-DRB-SPP-SPR, the construction of 136,009 sq. feet for a newly built Home Depot.

I share the concerns others have in our community about this proposed project and want to reiterate my call for an open and transparent process to weigh the impacts, which should include real-time data collection to understand traffic, health and safety implications, and a full-scale needs assessment for the district.

I fully support a thorough Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that will hold the development process accountable to our community. CEQA is a critical tool for the protection of all Californians to promote environmental justice and mitigate the public health impacts of potentially unsafe projects near homes and schools.

This project - and any development - should be built to enhance the quality of life, access to resources, affordable housing, upward mobility, and opportunity for local residents and the overall community. However, there are indications that these intended outcomes were not taken into account as this project has been pursued. LAUSD Board Member Scott Schmerlson recently wrote about “significant concerns” the district has about this proposed project, including that “placing a light-industrial facility in close proximity to four public schools with students and

their families crossing twice-daily through truck-centric traffic creates a potentially lethal point-specific problem.”

It is imperative that we weigh traffic impacts and safety concerns. While the intersection abutting the proposed development, Balboa/Devonshire, is among the most dangerous in the San Fernando Valley resulting in traffic related injuries, the entire stretch of Balboa Boulevard and Devonshire Street that borders the current shopping center is part of the City’s High Injury Network, [according to the Los Angeles Dept of Transportation](#). How will adding in a superstore contribute or detract to these already high rates of injury?

We are among areas of the city most in need of affordable and mixed use housing. Building such housing at this site should be examined. Instead of expediting the building of a big box superstore, our community’s voices should be considered in what the North Hills Shopping Center could be.

While the safety concerns are paramount, a superstore in the middle of our neighborhood could also have deleterious consequences for small business. Over the last several years, CD12 has watched our small business owners suffer, including family-owned restaurants and other stores close, forced to compete with box store companies or conglomerate food chains. Many neighbors can testify that we need to do more to encourage small business of all facets, including hardware stores. This proposed development could gut at least one such small business, DIY, which is exactly two miles from the North Hills Shopping Center. DIY, which was founded by two Marines in Van Nuys in 1948, could be existentially harmed by this development. They’ve employed people who have made their livelihood from the good paying jobs and treatment from their employers. Meanwhile, Home Depot has settled tens of millions of dollars in lawsuits due to labor violation lawsuits.

I am heartened by the diligence many Councilmembers have shown in the past on other projects and trust that the same diligence will be given to this project. It’s also important that the community speak as one voice in letting our leaders know we demand safety and community input before we rush into a process without understanding the full scale consequences that will potentially have resounding implications for generations.

Thank you,

Serena Oberstein