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Whole Foods Market Project

This document summarizes the findings and recommendations of the SOHA Land Use Committee concerning the proposed Whole Foods Market to be located at 14311 Ventura Boulevard in Sherman Oaks. The comments are organized into categories: Traffic and Transportation, Noise, and Operating Hours.

Project Description

The project proposes to construct a 52,433-square-foot supermarket located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Tyrone Avenue and Ventura Boulevard in Sherman Oaks, as shown in *Figure A*. The project would demolish a 6,648-square-foot carwash, a 10,910-square-foot car care center, a 300-square-foot restaurant, and 5,822 square feet of specialty retail. Most of the demolition has been completed. The project is expected to be completed by 2018.

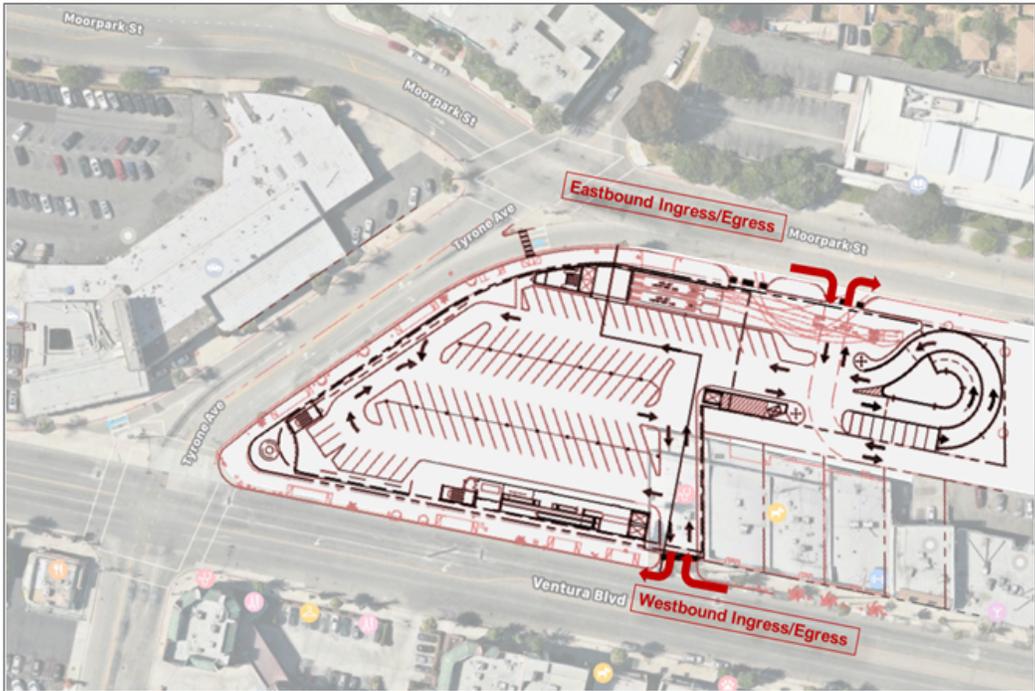


Figure A: Whole Foods Market Site Showing Entrance/Exit Points

Traffic and Transportation

Automobile Related Issues

Our primary concerns are maintaining unfettered access to the market and protecting against traffic hazards that would be caused by eastbound cars turning left across oncoming traffic on Ventura Boulevard. *Figure B* and *Figure C* illustrate a potential traffic hazard caused by customers and employees potentially accessing the parking lot by making a left turn across traffic on both Ventura Boulevard and Moorpark Street. To ensure that cars cannot dangerously cross this busy traffic, SOHA recommends new safety barriers, as shown by dark lines in the figures.

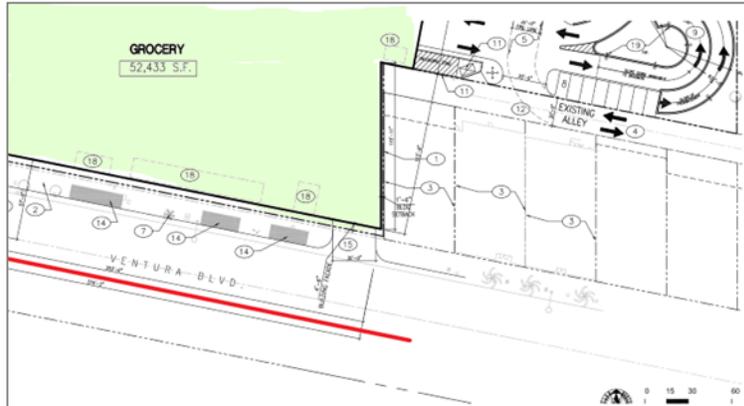


Figure B: Ventura Boulevard’s new parking entrance (entrance at point 15) with a dark line indicating a proposed barrier

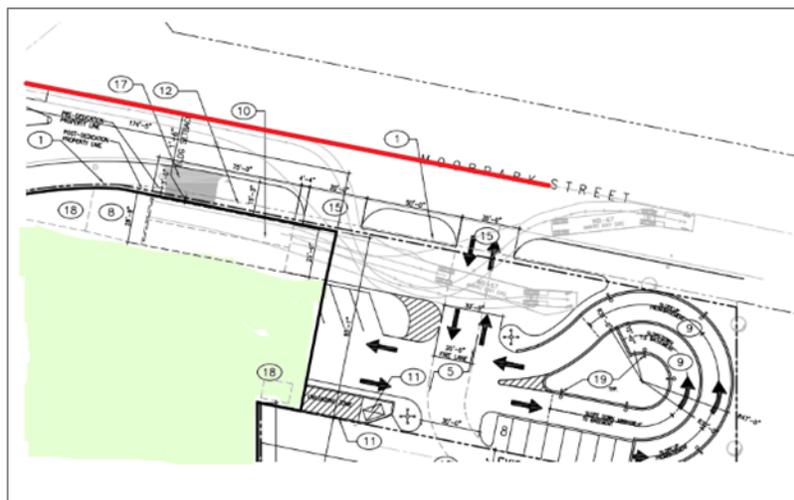


Figure C: Moorpark Street’s new parking entrance (entrance at point 15) with a dark line indicating a proposed barrier

There are alternative traffic routes and flows that may materialize when the market becomes operational. One such possibility is the existing east-west alley that parallels Ventura Boulevard and Moorpark Street, and connects the market’s parking lot to Calhoun Avenue. This alley will become an alternative entrance and exit to the market. The alley is narrow and will become dangerous without some sort of traffic mitigation. It is not wide enough for trucks to pass in each direction.

Another possibility could occur in the alley behind the north side of the Sherman Oaks Library or even thru the library parking lot. It is highly likely that drivers will use these alternative routes to circumvent no-left-turn restrictions from Moorpark Street westbound. We recommend one-way eastbound restrictions on the alley, as shown in *Figure D*. This will discourage cars from travelling westbound to make a left turn on Tyrone and another left on Moorpark. Traffic humps in the parking lot may be necessary.

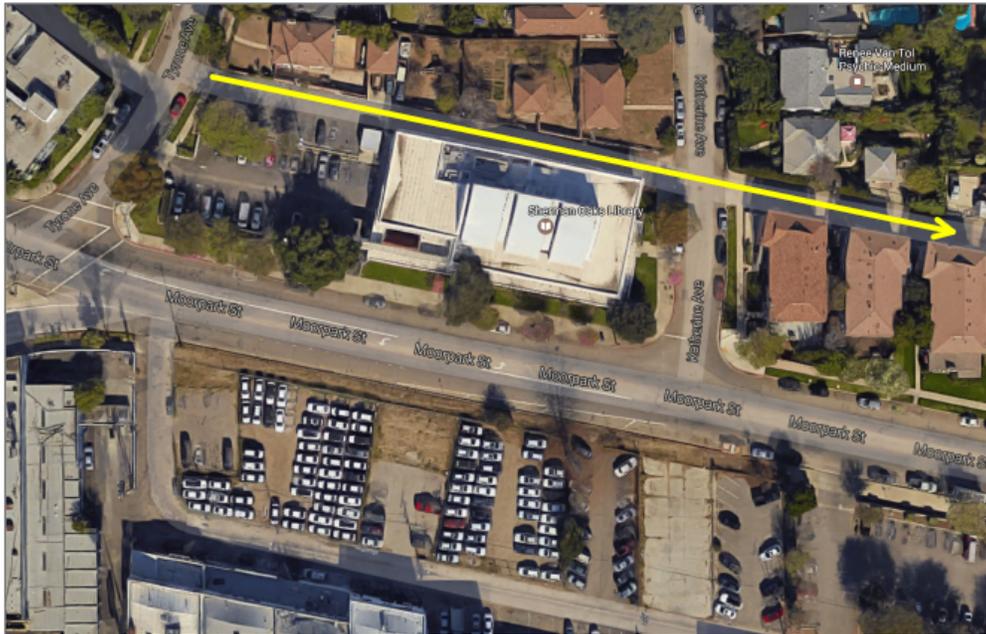


Figure D: Alley behind the Sherman Oaks Library, depicting the preferred one-way traffic flow

Truck Related Issues

The truck unloading areas are on the north side of the proposed Whole Foods store adjacent to Moorpark Street. The docks are shown in *Figure E*. The entry for trucks is the westernmost drive from Moorpark. Trucks will approach from the west, possibly after queuing up on Moorpark Street in the area between Van Nuys Boulevard and Tyrone Avenue. To enter the delivery area, trucks must make a right turn into the entry, which would take them across traffic making a right turn on Tyrone. This presents several potential difficulties.

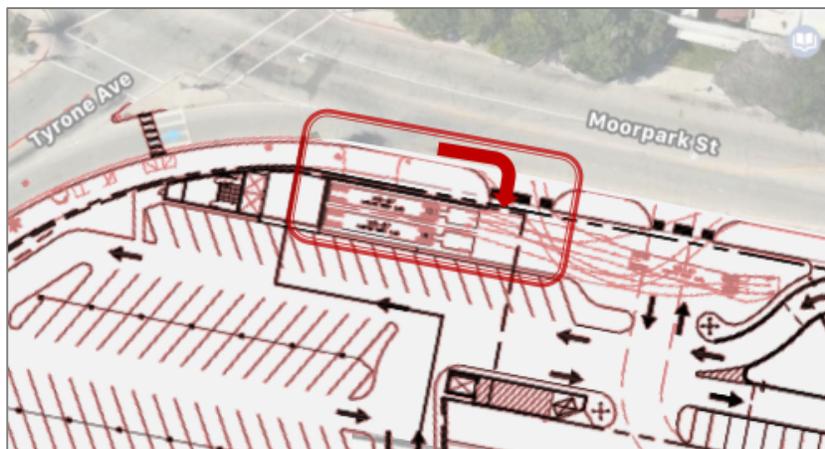


Figure E: Truck loading dock area adjacent to Moorpark Street. Trucks enter through the west driveway and pull forward before backing into the loading area.

To reduce the possibility of accidents between trucks traveling eastbound on Moorpark Street (making a right turn across traffic into the store’s truck loading area) and northbound traffic on Tyrone Avenue (making a right turn to merge onto Moorpark Street), we propose an additional traffic signal at the northeast corner of Tyrone Avenue at Moorpark Street to regulate right turning traffic. This signal would coordinate with the signals at Beverly Glen Boulevard and Ventura Boulevard and timed to allow the northbound traffic on Tyrone Avenue to clear.

We recommend that there be signalized left-turn arrows on Ventura Boulevard both eastbound and westbound at Beverly Glen Boulevard, and that the west truck entrance to the proposed market be widened. When trucks exit the loading area they take the east driveway onto Moorpark Street and could travel east to Woodman Avenue to access the 101 freeway.

Pedestrian Traffic

Sherman Oaks is an urban environment with an average population of 6,687 people per square mile. Approximately 35 to 50 percent of all trips made in this area (and most of Sherman Oaks in general) are less than three miles in total. The Sherman Oaks has a 62 Walk Score, making it the 58th most walkable neighborhood in Los Angeles. The Subject Property is located within a Pedestrian Development District and, as such, requires special attention to promote walkability and reduce the use of the automobile and enhance the economic vitality of the neighborhood.

This property has three main pedestrian access points as shown in *Figure F*. According to the Los Angeles Commercial Citywide Design Guidelines, there must be direct paths of travel for pedestrian destinations within large developments, especially near transit lines, and the primary entrances for pedestrians must be safe and easily accessible. The Whole Foods project contains three different neighborhood focus points and, to promote walkability, all three access points need pedestrian and bicycle access. *Figure F* highlights the pedestrian/bicycle access points.

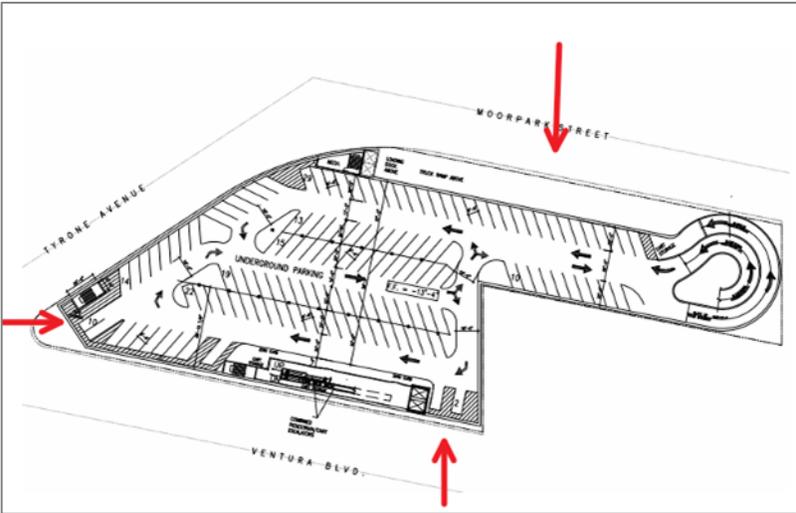


Figure F: Pedestrian/Bicycle Access Points

Sidewalks are included on Moorpark Street and Tyrone Avenue as well as on Ventura Boulevard. There should be adequate signage that reminds drivers to watch out for pedestrians. The Ralph’s grocery store entrance/exit on Hazeltine Avenue and Ventura Boulevard is an example of a poorly designed entrance/exit. The entrance/exit has walls blocking the driver’s view. Thus, drivers frequently fail to see pedestrians entering the area. There should also be clearly marked pedestrian walkways within the parking areas.

Bike Rack Locations

It is unclear in the Whole Foods market plans where bicycle racks will be placed, and the type of racks to be employed. Pursuant to the Los Angeles Commercial Citywide Design Guidelines, the installation of bicycle racks should be in places where bike routes are existing or planned, and should be “placed in safe, convenient, and well-lit locations to encourage alternative modes of transport for employees and consumers”. Moorpark Street currently has a bike lane and therefore the bike racks should be placed near Moorpark Street, with easy access to the market property. The impact of the entries on the bicycle lane on Moorpark Street needs to be clarified.

Conclusion – Traffic and Transportation

Based on the issues presented in this report, SOHA seeks further input and clarification from Whole Foods on the company’s plans concerning their other two stores in the Sherman Oaks area (one at Sepulveda Boulevard and Greenleaf Street; one at Coldwater Canyon Boulevard and Riverside Drive). The closure of these two stores could increase traffic to this market.

Since the Revised Traffic Assessment (2016) indicates that the applicant is to contact the Bureau of Engineering, Department of Public Works (BOE) to determine exact dedication and widening standards, and to determine any other required street improvements “before the issuance of any building permit”. SOHA requests a set of the Applicant’s documents and/or records, and the BOE’s specification requirements, prior to the issuance of the permit, sixty days prior to issuance of any permits.

Noise

Delivery Truck Noise

Noise will be generated by tractor trailer vehicles delivering goods to the proposed market. The noise sources include the truck tractors as well as refrigeration units mounted on the trailers to keep the produce cool.

A diesel truck tractor at idle produces about 96 dBA sound power level, which generates a sound pressure level of 61.5 dBA at 50 feet. A typical refrigeration unit such as the Thermo King super 11 TC trailer diesel refrigeration unit at high idle produces 104 dBA sound power level, which translates to 69.5 dBA at 50 feet. The State of California limits truck generated noise to 95 dBA at the exhaust or 61.5 dBA at 50 feet on public roadways. Cities can only regulate noise from sources on private property, not sources operating on streets and highways.

The nearest residential structure to the truck loading area is approximately 115 feet to the northwest. At this distance, a single refrigeration unit would generate about 62 dBA and two generation units operating simultaneously about 65 dBA. This can be compared to the City of Los Angeles nighttime residential limit of 45 dBA or five dB over the ambient, whichever is higher. Since trucks will potentially be unloading after 10 pm, it is probable that there would be times when the ambient levels would be below 40 dBA. Thus, a sound enclosure around the loading area will be mandatory to bring the delivery trucks into compliance with the city noise standards. This can be constructed as a stucco tunnel enclosure lined with a 2-inch-thick absorptive blanket on the interior walls and ceiling.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining and entertainment are proposed in the second-floor seating area at the tip of the triangular structure (at the corner of Ventura Boulevard and Tyrone Avenue). Entertainment including crowd-generated noise during sports events as well as noise from patrons could generate noise levels of 80 dBA in the dining area. There is an increasing awareness of the importance of noise in restaurants. Michael Bauer, the food editor for the San Francisco Chronicle, publishes a guide to the 100 top restaurants in the Bay Area. Reviewers were outfitted with sound level meters to measure the background levels and a noise

level rating is included in their reviews (one bell for <65 dBA, two for 65 to 70, three for 70 to 75, four for 75 to 80, and a “bomb” for levels above 80 dBA). These ratings can be found online by going to the www.sfgate.com site and following the links to food and dining. Sadly, only one restaurant on the list received a one-bell rating.

Assuming that patron-generated noise is a midrange 70 to 75 dBA, then the entertainment level for the proposed Whole Food restaurant area would have to be set to 75 to 80 dBA at 20 feet. This would generate about 56 dBA at the nearest residences, which could exceed the nighttime standard. A mitigation measure consisting of an 8-foot-high barrier of glass or other similar material could protect the neighbors and the patrons from intrusive noise.

Operating Hours

Whole Foods has applied to stay open 24 hours a day. It is not unusual for markets to ask for extended hours, even when they do not expect to get them. Other stores in the area are restricted to hours between 7 am and 11 pm. The bar and restaurant with outdoor seating at the corner of Tyrone Avenue and Ventura Boulevard is a potential late-night problem. At present, Whole Foods has indicated that the area will be open until 11 pm and potentially later during “special events”, which Whole Foods has not defined; it could remain open to as late as 2 am. Since it is difficult to enforce the 11 pm closing time in a restaurant, we recommend that food orders not be taken after 10:00 pm and beverage orders after 10:30 pm. The apartment dwellers at Tyrone Avenue and Moorpark Street, and homeowners on Tyrone Avenue will be particularly impacted by the late hour usage.

Thank you.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Bob Anderson at 213-364-7470 or BobHillsideOrdinance@roadrunner.com , or Marshall Long at 818-981-8005 or mlacoustics@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted,
SOHA Whole Foods Committee



Bob Anderson, PE



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