

Communication from Public

Name: Adelene Bertha

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Council File No: 19-1048

Comments for Public Posting: November 1, 2019 Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee 200 N. Spring St., Room 340 Los Angeles, CA, 90012 Re: Case: VTT-74568-2A; ENV-2016-3991-EIR; SCH No. 2017051068;CPC-2016-3990-GPA-VZC-HD-MCUP-SPr Project Site: 709-765 South Wall Street; 306-326 East 7th Street; 750-752 South Maple Avenue Council File: 19-1048-S1 Non-support Dear Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee, I work for United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP) in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles and am writing to express our concerns pursuant Case: VTT-74568-2A; ENV-2016-3991-EIR; SCH No. 2017051068; CPC-2016-3990-GPA-VZC-HD-MCUP-SPr. Project Site: 709-765 South Wall Street; 306-326 East 7th Street; 750-752 South Maple Avenue), an Approval of Plans to allow Master Conditional permit of the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption; in conjunction with two proposed restaurants, event space and residential space. A primary tenet of UCEPP is our commitment to change environments in order to discourage alcohol related problems. Additionally, we have worked hard to promote understanding of the link between the environment and health. One of the clearest manifestations of that link is the impact to health that occurs when a neighborhood is saturated with alcohol serving establishments. Addiction, auto crashes, violence, especially domestic violence, and public intoxication are just a few of the consequences likely to result. There are currently 74 active alcohol licenses in zip code 90014 and 21 on-sale licenses in Census Tract 2260.02 (1 on-sale license is allowed in this census tract). We are very concerned about numerous alcohol requests in and around Skid Row, which is a long-established recovery community. This alcohol-fueled redevelopment threatens the numerous existing uses centered on recovery, wellness, and treatment. Current community efforts are underway to give input to the downtown community plan (DTLA 2040) to place prohibitions on new alcohol licenses in our neighborhood. The proposed project is in Skid Row and will not contribute to community health and wellness by increasing access to alcohol. On behalf of our coalition members, we ask that you not approve this request. Please see attachment of letter submitted.



UNITED COALITION EAST

November 1, 2019

Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee
200 N. Spring St., Room 340
Los Angeles, CA, 90012

Re: Case: VTT-74568-2A; ENV-2016-3991-EIR; SCH No. 2017051068; CPC-2016-3990-GPA-VZC-HD-MCUP-SPr
Project Site: 709-765 South Wall Street; 306-326 East 7th Street; 750-752 South Maple Avenue
Council File: 19-1048-S1
Non-support

Dear Planning Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee,

I work for United Coalition East Prevention Project (UCEPP) in the Skid Row area of downtown Los Angeles and am writing to express our concerns pursuant Case: VTT-74568-2A; ENV-2016-3991-EIR; SCH No. 2017051068; CPC-2016-3990-GPA-VZC-HD-MCUP-SPr. Project Site: 709-765 South Wall Street; 306-326 East 7th Street; 750-752 South Maple Avenue), an Approval of Plans to allow Master Conditional permit of the sale and dispensing of a full line of alcoholic beverages for on-site consumption; in conjunction with two proposed restaurants, event space and residential space.

A primary tenet of UCEPP is our commitment to change environments in order to discourage alcohol-related problems. Additionally, we have worked hard to promote understanding of the link between the environment and health. One of the clearest manifestations of that link is the impact to health that occurs when a neighborhood is saturated with alcohol serving establishments. Addiction, auto crashes, violence, especially domestic violence, and public intoxication are just a few of the consequences likely to result. There are currently 74 active alcohol licenses in zip code 90014 and 21 on-sale licenses in Census Tract 2260.02 (1 on-sale license is allowed in this census tract). We are very concerned about numerous alcohol requests in and around Skid Row, which is a long-established recovery community. This alcohol-fueled redevelopment threatens the numerous existing uses centered on recovery, wellness, and treatment. Current community efforts are underway to give input to the downtown community plan (DTLA 2040) to place prohibitions on new alcohol licenses in our neighborhood.

The proposed project is in Skid Row and will not contribute to community health and wellness by increasing access to alcohol. On behalf of our coalition members, we ask that you not approve this request. Please consider these additional causes for concern:

Alcohol is a product that poses serious threats and has caused significant harm to people and places in Los Angeles. This community is already saturated with alcohol outlets, and our experience in doing nuisance abatement over the past 20 years has shown that it takes many years to address one problematic alcohol establishments. Excessive alcohol sales have been shown to discourage other retail uses. Moreover, increasing the number of alcohol outlets poses a threat to neighborhood health and safety. Research has shown that the density of alcohol outlets is related to increased crime and violence¹ including drunk driving, domestic violence and assault, public drinking and urination, panhandling, and loitering. Further, an excessive number of outlets can spur alcohol and drug addiction² and heighten the risk of relapse for those in recovery from addiction.

¹ The Association between Density of Alcohol Establishments and Violent Crime within Urban Neighborhoods
Traci L. Toomey, Darin J. Frickson, Bradley P. Carlin, Kathleen M. Lenk, Harrison S. Quick, Ale M. Jones, Eileen M. Harwood

² <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/factsheets/prevention.htm>

We must take into account what other uses are already operating in the vicinity, including alcohol density, as well as, the presence of sensitive uses (i.e. schools, parks, drug/alcohol treatment programs, etc.), and the level of crime, including domestic violence. The input from residents and stakeholders regarding the placement of yet another alcohol use in their environments is critical, as they are the ones that will have to contend with the aftermath of the decision.

In addition to the common concerns of off-site alcohol sales, it is a fallacy to claim that on-site alcohol outlets will generate revenue, without also offsetting those figures with the cost taxpayers must bear for public safety services, including police, ambulance, fire, and sanitation, to say nothing of the increased public health costs of addiction and domestic violence. Restaurants do not produce a significant number of jobs, and the jobs restaurants do create are low-wage jobs which don't pay enough to enable workers to support themselves or their families. These jobs are often part-time and rarely provide health insurance or other benefits and they are not typically career path positions. Business and property owners and developers are the only ones likely to profit from these outlets - not workers, not neighbors, and not taxpayers.

The risk posed by increasing alcohol availability is not worth taking. In addition, it is foolhardy to assume that once problems occur they will be addressed by enforcement of conditions. The city has never adequately funded the regulation and enforcement of alcohol permits, and when resources for enforcement are expended, they are not distributed equitably. Low-income neighborhoods and communities of color have endured the harm of rampant nuisance activity and crime in around alcohol outlets (both off-site and on-site) for decades. It has been common for retailers in these communities to agree to conditions and obtain permits initially, only to then operate their businesses in a manner that falls far below the required standards. Yet because monitoring and enforcement by city departments is so poor, it is difficult - if not impossible - for these businesses to be held accountable or to improve their operations. In our experience, community residents who have documented violations must then struggle to have their voices heard by navigating the complex process of filing complaints and participating in public hearings.

For the numerous reasons stated here, we urge you not support this proposal. Please do not hesitate to call me at 213.622.1621, if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Adelene Bertha
Prevention Coordinator
United Coalition East Prevention Project.