

East Richmond Neighborhood Council

October 29, 2024

Hector Lopez, Senior Planner
City of Richmond Community Services Department
450 Civic Center Plaza, 2nd Floor
Richmond, CA 94804

RE: Requested Improvements to Noise Scope of Work - Dollar Tree

Hello Hector,

Thank you for providing the most recent scope of work proposals for both the noise consultant (LSA) and the traffic safety study (Kimerly-Horn).

We are requesting that the Department make some specific improvements to the noise consulting contract to address the specific needs and interests of neighbors, as follows and as explained in more detail below:

1. We recommend *City Planning Department* include the City's applicable noise standards in the scope of work - ARTICLE 15.04.605 *NOISE*, and compliance with CUP 26-22 - Condition #26, as modified, to require "a sound-absorbing wall at the loading dock that meets the zoning code noise limits."
2. To aid in complying with the CUP, include in the consulting scope of work at **least three product recommendations for a "commercial sound-absorbing wall"** for the the east and north sides of the loading dock that meets and/or exceeds the City code.
3. Include contract language that specifies that measurements will be taken at the two locations most likely to capture nuisance noise to neighbors.
4. We recommend that the best use of the consultant's expertise to the City and the public is to conduct exterior noise measurements during store operations.

Further explanation of the above requests follows:

1. **Include Applicable City Code and Condition in Scope of Work**

The proposed Scope of Work (8/20/24) includes notes that it will identify city noise standards. Normally, the *client* specifies that their standards be met.

We recommend *City Planning Department* include the City's applicable noise standards in the scope of work - ARTICLE 15.04.605 *NOISE*, and compliance with CUP 26-22 - Condition #26, as modified, to require "a sound-absorbing wall at the loading dock that meets the zoning code noise limits."

To comply with the CUP, include in the consulting scope of work at **least three product recommendations for a "commercial sound-absorbing wall"** for the the east and north sides of the loading dock that meets and/or exceeds the City code.

Include contract language that specifies that measurements will be taken at the two locations most likely to capture nuisance noise to neighbors.

2. Provide three Commercial Sound Wall recommendations

The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) specifies installing a "**commercial sound-absorbing wall at the loading dock**" that meets the city's code. At this time, the consultant's scope of work in the proposed "Technical Memorandum" only says that that "should exceedances of the Zoning Code occur, *next steps* will also be recommended," which, if not specified, could simply be a comment recommending "more study."

Since the City does not have a sound noise management expert, but has to assure the public that the CUP is being enforced, we request the City be provided the technical information to assure compliance with the CUP. by including three recommendations for commercial sound-absorbing walls that meet the zoning code in the consultant's scope of work.

Our previous communications to the Department point out that the Accoustiblok blanket product suggested by Dollar Tree and under consideration by the Department is not a long-term product suited for outdoor use and it does not qualify as a commercial sound-absorbing wall. Also, the technical research provided the volunteer neighborhood council to the Department (attached) illustrates the superior sound transmission loss (STL) qualities of a sound-absorbing wall over the product the Dollar Tree is recommending and the Department is considering.

REQUEST: To comply with the CUP, include in the consulting scope of work at **least three product recommendations for a "commercial sound-absorbing wall"** for the the east and north sides of the loading dock that meets and/or exceeds the City code.

3. Ambient Noise Levels - Clarify When and Where they are taken

Under **Determination of Existing Noise Environment** the draft contract says that: "To determine the noise levels in the project vicinity, LSA will conduct two (2) property-line noise level measurements at the *northern property line* of Dollar General" for three days.

First, the consultant's scope of work does not tell the City and the public where the "northern property line" is or why it is selected. From discussions at the Planning Commission and comments by residents, we know that the highest noise impacts are anticipated at the **loading dock** (A in below map) and for **homes alongside the parking lot** (B in below map).

REQUEST: Include contract language that specifies that measurements will be taken at the two locations most likely to capture nuisance noise to neighbors.

4. The "Exterior Noise Impact Assessment" needs to actual noise measurements during store operations

Under "Exterior Noise Impact Assessment" and "Determination of Existing Noise Environment," the scope of work says that *ambient noise* measurements will be taken, but there will only be an "analysis" when the store is in operation. Is this "analysis" only an estimate of potential noise problems during store operations? If so, noise measurements should be taken as part of actual store operations, especially if there are noise complaints from neighbors.

Loud, nuisance noise above the City's code limits could come from the trucks engines and horns that service the store, merchandise off-loading, car alarms, any loud parking lot conversations, possible parking lot cleaning, leaf blowers, waste removal trucks, dumpster use and pick-up, etc.

REQUEST: We recommend that the best use of the consultant's expertise to the City and the public is to conduct exterior noise measurements during store operations.

Noise issues at the loading dock should be taken care of by the sound-absorbing wall that's already required in the CUP. Also, measurements to respond to neighbor complaints for when the store is in operation. The noise measurements can be compared to the ambient noise level data to determine when the company needs to mitigate for noise exceedences above the city code.

We believe these contract improvements will both satisfy the CUP and be of value to the City, the neighbors, and the company.

We look forward to the Department's response to these requests. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jim Hanson, President