

From: mike trans <mtrang.mt@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:25 PM

To: Council <council@billingsmt.gov>; Cromwell, Nicole <CromwellN@billingsmt.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Costco relocation

I would like to voice my concern about the location Costco is interested in relocating to. As I'm sure everyone understands, Costco warehouse creates a significant amount of traffic regardless of where it is located. While that is expected, Zoo Drive is not big enough to handle the amount of traffic that it currently supports. Without Zoo Drive first undergoing major reconstruction to allow for 2 lanes in both directions, Costco's relocation to this area will cause some very serious traffic problems. Aside from traffic being severely congested in the immediate area, this will also translate into off-ramp congestion which will no doubt cause traffic to back up onto the highway regularly. This situation is already taking place from time to time without a major retail store located close.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mike - concerned Billings resident

1109 Delphinium Drive
Billings, MT 59102
April 5, 2022

Nicole Cromwell, Zoning Coordinator
Planning Board Members
Billings Planning Division
2825 3rd Ave. N.
Billings, MT 59101

Dear Ms. Cromwell and Planning Board Members:

Re: City Variance 1342 – 3840 Zoo Drive

I am urging Planning Board members to vote against the Variance requested by Costco in order to build a new warehouse at 3840 Zoo Drive.

Even though I have been a Costco member since Costco first opened a Billings warehouse, and even though I shop at Costco regularly, I believe strongly that a new Costco warehouse will be detrimental to Billings, and the best future for Billings.

I understand that you must judge the merits of the Costco request on four specific criteria. Based on those criteria, my perspective is:

- that Costco is choosing not to meet siting requirements rather than it can't
- Costco members will continue to shop at Costco, no matter where it is located
- Costco is, in fact, asking for special privileges
- The requested variance will in no way help Costco contribute to the "Community Fabric," in fact just the opposite.

My major concerns regarding a new Costco warehouse being built on the proposed site have to do with the 2016 Billings Growth Policy (#4). Costco describes itself as an “Essential Investment.” Will it become less essential if remains in its present location? I like having Costco in Billings, but it is, and I believe will continue serving Billings just fine where it is now on King Avenue West. Costco warehouses are most definitely not attractive buildings no matter where they are, and even really nice landscaping next to Costco will not contribute to our “community fabric.” Neither do I see how a new Costco warehouse will turn this area into a “strong neighborhood.”

In fact, allowing Costco to move from its present location to Shiloh and Zoo Drive will tear apart the community fabric in the area on King Avenue West where it is now located. Costco’s departure from its present commercial neighborhood will leave a big, ugly, gaping hole in what is now a busy, peopled business sector. There is already one of these ugly gaping holes on King and Grant Road where an auto dealer used to be, and many Billings business and commercial neighborhoods have, in the recent past, dealt with similar ugly, empty buildings sitting in large parking lots. The closed K-Mart sat as an empty eyesore on a very busy commercial street for years, until it was finally torn down and Winco built on the site. After years sitting empty, the Sports Authority was finally just demolished. The old Sears, near where I live, is another example of a years long empty ugly building and surrounding parking lot. As of just recently, it is finally being used again. Billings does not need any more huge empty buildings and parking lots detracting from our community. What is even more worrisome, Costco’s departure could lead to a domino effect resulting in neighboring businesses deciding to relocate, further deteriorating this area of Billings.

Should Costco move four miles to the southwest, it will result in many Costco members having to drive further from home to get there. This means more vehicle miles driven, resulting in more gasoline consumption, and more carbon and pollutants spewed into the air we breathe. The present Costco location is also on a bus route, which provides access for those who do not drive or own a car, including access to an employment opportunity. The proposed new Costco location comes with the loss of opportunity to get to a hub of goods and services, but also the loss of equal opportunity for employment and economic advancement for those who cannot get there by car.

Costco claims that not only is their proposed new warehouse wonderful for Billings but it is what Costco members want and somehow deserve. Have you ever been to a Costco warehouse in a large urban area? I have shopped at Costco in Denver, Las Vegas, and the Seattle area. They make our Costco look uncrowded and unbusy. But no matter how crowded, these other Costco warehouses continue to serve members who are obviously not at all deterred, even if they have to park a little further away or wait in a longer line for gasoline.

I can’t know what benefits corporate Costco anticipates with a new Billings warehouse, but I feel certain that Costco will continue to gain new members and reap profits at its present location on King, and I also feel certain that if Costco moves to Shiloh and Zoo Drive, it will be in the best interest of Costco, but not in our community’s long term best interests.

Please do NOT grant Costco the variance they are seeking.

Thank you for including my comments in your official record.

Sincerely,
Adela Awner



April 26, 2022

City/County Planning Division
2825 3rd Ave N 4th Floor
Billings MT 59101

RE: Support for Costco's Proposed New Facility

Sir/Madam:

We would like to express our full support for Costco's Proposed Preferred Plan for their New Facility.

Our Nissan facility is located at 3710 Zoo Drive. We also own the land to the immediate West of the Nissan facility and plan to build an approximately 22,500 square foot new facility on that parcel known as 3788 Zoo Drive.

We have had the opportunity to meet, discuss, and review with Costco representatives the variance request with respect to the parking on the front and side of their building. The Costco Preferred Plan for the building, we believe, is the best option available given the property layout, especially with the ditch that crosses the property.

Given the volume of Costco customer base, it would be prudent to plan ahead and provide a safe environment for the overall development of the area by maximizing the use of available access points for entry and exit of their facility.

We also discussed and reviewed with Costco representatives, other alternative designs and believe these are definitely not the best option for their facility. Access and operational issues that the alternative designs present would have a negative impact on our properties and their long-term value.

Thank you

Dennis Menholt
Menholt Auto Group
President/CEO

3710 Zoo Drive Billings MT 59106

From: Stacy Lind <stacy.lind@erckhotels.com>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 4:30 PM
To: Bartley, Robbin <bartleyr@billingsmt.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Costco new development

Good afternoon.

I am reaching out on behalf of Erck Hotels. We have 4 hotel properties in the Billings market, including the Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton and the Homewood Suites by Hilton, located at the Zoo Drive exit – near proximity to where the new Costco Wholesale is being proposed.

We would like to express our support for Costco moving to the proposed site, their proposed plan, and the necessary adjustments needed to make their plan work.

We have reviewed their requests and spoke with the property owners, and feel Costco's proposed development would have a positive impact on the surrounding properties, and be a safer, more aesthetic approach to developing the property.

Thank you for your time,



Stacy Lind
COO
PHR® | Interior Design
P 406.860.8140
E stacy.lind@erckhotels.com

City Board of Adjustment
Miller Building 1st Floor Conference Room
2825 3rd Ave. North
Billings, MT



Members of the City Board of Adjustment,

My name is Jeff Ewelt, and I am the Executive Director of ZooMontana here in Billings. I would like to express my support for the proposed Costco relocation to the corner of Zoo Drive and Shiloh Rd.

We have reviewed the request by Costco to seek a variance and feel that it is consistent with how we expected the property to be developed and is the best option available given the constraints of the site created by existing access points and the ditch that crosses the property. Like other businesses in the area, we believe one of the most important aspects of Costco's plan is it provides a much safer environment for the overall development area by maximizing the use of the available access points and providing shoppers multiple ways to enter and exit the project.

The only concern ZooMontana officials have is the current intersection of Shiloh Rd. and Pierce Parkway. We ask that some attention be given to this area. With the addition of a bus stop on that corner, in conjunction with the Zoo's increasing crowds, Zoo officials are concerned with the lack of crosswalks and the 55-mph speed zone in front of the Zoo's lot. We hope a traffic control device of some kind is installed.

Thank you for your time. For more information or questions, please contact me at (406) 652-8100 or at director@zoomontana.org. Thank You.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JEFF EWELT".

Jeff Ewelt

Executive Director



April 25, 2022

City of Billings – City & County Planning Division
2825 3rd Avenue North 4th Floor
Billings, Montana
59101

Members of the Board of Adjustments,

We have received the documents related to the Costco development that is proposed to the west of our location. We have reviewed the plans provided Costco and the proposed alternatives by the City. We also had a meeting with the representatives from Costco to walk us through their proposed plan for the location.

In reviewing the information, we feel that the Costco plan as proposed is the best plan for the development for the site. The reasons we believes this is the best option are:

- The plan provides the best lay out of the needed parking.
- The flow of traffic appears vey logical and makes sense to us on how customer would access the location in a safe and uncongested manner.
- The proposed plan is consistent with how we understood the property would be developed when we moved into our location and complements our building.
- We feel the location of the fueling center is better in the Costco plan as it will reduce the congestion around our building.

Overall, we are excited and supportive of Costco developing the site next to our location as they have outlined in their proposal. We feel it will have a positive impact on this development and on our business.

We appreciate you taking the time to listen to our thoughts and if you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,
360 Office Solutions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig D. Bartholomew', is written over a faint, light-colored circular graphic element.

Craig D. Bartholomew
President

A large, stylized red arrow graphic that curves from the bottom left towards the top right, pointing towards the company's slogan and website.

Smart answers everywhere you turn.
www.360-OS.com