

Eastsiders sound off on Grocery Outlet

Residents raise concerns about
traffic, adding another market

By J.M. BROWN

jbrown@santacruzsentinel.com

2-27-14

SANTA CRUZ — Eastside neighbors sounded off Wednesday about a large grocery chain's plans to move into the Morrissey Boulevard post office next year, saying the area doesn't need another market or a project many expect will add traffic on residential side streets.

The Grocery Outlet has requested permits to renovate the 17,747-square-foot building extensively, add signage, improve landscaping and sell wine and beer. The Postal Service did not reach a lease agreement with the building's owner, who lives in Sonoma County, to stay at 120 Morrissey Blvd.

Neighbors promised store representatives they will fight the project.

"We have four very nice grocery stores, and your store is going to kill at least one of them," Marilyn Patton said. "It's really horrible that people have worked so hard to have a big-box store come in and destroy one of our grocery stores."

Safeway is located across the street, and Shopper's Corner, Staff of Life and Whole Foods are located within a half-mile. Grocery Outlet, which plans to open next year, specializes in selling surplus items not sold by other retailers, but also sells produce, meat and deli products.

Because a grocery store conforms with zoning at the Morrissey Boulevard site, tenant improve-

SEE GROCERY ON A5



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

The Eastside Santa Cruz post office on Morrissey Boulevard is closing and Grocery Outlet wants to move in. Neighbors are concerned because there are four food markets within blocks including a Safeway across the street.

GROCERY

Continued from A1

ment permits can be issued from the city's Planning Department without council approval.

"We all feel we were left out of this process," resident Beth McKinnon said. "I think it's very unfortunate that it's a foregone conclusion that this is what is coming and there are hundreds of people affected who were not consulted."

Patrick Davis, a construction manager for the Berkeley-based company tried to assure neighbors the store will be a responsible business. He said local operators will be tapped to manage the store though they are not required to hire organized labor.

He said there will be 96 parking spaces, more than required by the city, and there will be signs directing traffic away from side streets. He said delivery times for four trucks per week can be adjusted to reduce impacts on the neighborhood.

Deidre Hamilton, a land-use consultant representing Grocery Outlet, said the city's Public Works Depart-

ment determined the business would not increase traffic in the area because the post office already draws traffic. She said the city did not require a formal traffic study, but there are conditions on some aspects of the project, including lighting and security measures.

Councilwoman Pamela Comstock and Santa Cruz Neighbors co-founder Deborah Elston urged neighbors to contact the city about traffic and noise concerns, and thanked Grocery Outlet for hosting the meeting.

"We can't dictate who landlords rent to if they are within zoning laws," Comstock said. "But we can help neighborhoods mitigate traffic problems."

Additionally, neighbors are concerned about losing a neighborhood post office. It's unclear where the post office might relocate. The Santa Cruz postmaster could not be reached Wednesday, but a Postal Service spokesman said last month that the federal agency will look for a replacement facility.

Follow Sentinel reporter J.M. Brown at [Twitter.com/jmbrown-reports](https://twitter.com/jmbrown-reports)