

**LETTER NO. 120**

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Sandra Sandoval  
950 South Flower Street, #916  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

**COMMENT 120.1**

As a downtown resident and Staples Center arena employee, I strongly oppose the L.A. Arena Sports and Entertainment District construction project. The potential problems far outweigh any benefits. Downtown Los Angeles will not be the recipient of any economic boom, merely one more neighborhood neglected at the expense of private profits.

**TRAFFIC**

Ever since the Staples Center arena opened in October 1999, traffic has increased dramatically. Before and after an event, the surrounding streets are filled with vehicles blocking the intersections, and freeways come to a complete stop. It is extremely difficult for downtown residents to reach their destination.

**PARKING**

Street parking restrictions and parking lot fees have increased since Staples Center opened. For example Olympic, Flower, 11th, and 9th streets become occupied for hours by Staples Center patrons. I see vehicles parked illegally, even though signs clearly indicate parking is not permitted. If this construction project is built on property currently being used as parking lots, I do not understand how it will help improve the traffic and parking problem already occurring.

**EXAMPLE**

Part of the proposed project is to build a concert theater: Downtown Los Angeles already houses several theaters, for example the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson Theater and (currently under construction) Walt Disney Concert Hall. Several other theaters: Million Dollar, Los Angeles, Loew's State, Orpheum, Palace, Tower, Olympic, Globe, Rialto, Roxie, Cameo, Arcade and Belasco, could be renovated and open for use. Why should we build another theater while these Historic Broadway Theaters currently stand vacant?

Staples Center events do not benefit the downtown community at large. Such activities are insular by nature and detour people from visiting other downtown attractions. I strongly believe the L.A. Arena Sports and Entertainment District construction project needs to be re-evaluated.

### **RESPONSE 120.1**

Existing conditions, including traffic and parking circumstances associated with events at STAPLES Center, are incorporated into the analysis of impacts to intersections and freeways resulting from project development, as addressed in Section IV.F.1, Traffic, of the EIR. It is important to note that although the STAPLES Center is owned by the Project Applicant, it is separate and distinct from the proposed Project, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 c which states, “[t]he term project refers to the activity which is being approved and which may be subject to several discretionary approvals by governmental agencies.” STAPLES Center underwent its own environmental review process and the Final EIR for that project was certified by the City in 1997.

In regards to parking, refer to Responses to Comments Nos. 15.21 to 15.26. There is currently no evidence of significant parking problems associated with STAPLES Center. As part of that project entitlement process, money was set aside to address parking problems if they arose, which is still available. These monies have not yet been allocated, as there has been no action from the neighborhoods to initiate their use. It is the intent of the Project to identify and provide replacement parking for surface lots undergoing development throughout the Project development process. This will take advantage of the current surplus and more than sufficient supply of parking in the area. The first key part of this plan is to construct a parking structure on the Olympic West Property to replace all of the surface parking currently provided on the Olympic West and Olympic East Properties. In addition, as further parking lots are redeveloped, the Applicant will enter into lease agreements with additional parking lots in the immediate area to replace the majority of parking currently provided on the surface lots. This process, discussed on page 292 of the Draft EIR, will be similar to that initially implemented for STAPLES Center. The sufficiency of available supply is underscored by the fact that initially STAPLES Center had agreements with 26 parking lots in the area to provide for exclusive off-street parking, which were subsequently reduced to 16 off-street lots due to the lack of demand for their use. As identified in the Draft EIR, there is thus substantial parking to meet the demand of both STAPLES Center and the Project, even at peak times.

The 7,000 seat concert theater proposed as part of the project would provide a unique entertainment facility with more seating capacity than the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Mark Taper Forum, and the Ahmanson Theater combined. There are no other existing facilities with the capacity required to host special major events near Downtown.