



BARGHAUSEN

Justification Letter

ALTERNATE LANDSCAPE PLAN

Costco Wholesale

**Retail Fueling Facility Expansion and
On-Site Relocation**

1420 Renaissance Boulevard
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

CW No. 21-0313

Costco Loc. No. 116

Prepared for:
Costco Wholesale
999 Lake Drive
Issaquah, Washington 98027

March 14, 2023
Our Job No. 10896

Project Location:

The project site is located in the southwest corner of the Costco Wholesale development and includes the existing fuel facility area in the northwest corner of the site, the main parking field west of the warehouse, and the ADA area in front of the warehouse entrance. The Costco property is approximately 16.26 acres in size and the proposed project area is approximately 2.6 acres (115,345 square feet). The subject property is zoned Mixed-Use, Moderate Intensity (MX-M), and is subject to the development standards of the Albuquerque Integrated Development Ordinance, which permits Light Vehicle Fueling Stations.

Project Description:

Overview

Costco is seeking approval to allow for an Alternate Landscape Plan for the relocation of the existing fuel facility at the location noted above. The relocation will result in the northwest corner of the site being converted from a fuel station to parking stalls and islands for the Costco Warehouse. The parking lot improvements are located within a highly desirable landing area for the City's popular Balloon Fiesta. City staff requested that Costco coordinate with Balloon Fiesta officials to design a revised landscape plan that would increase usable space in the parking lot for pilots to land during the event. Following those discussions, we have provided a plan which omits six (6) parking lot trees in the northwest corner that would otherwise be required in the landscape islands and located them in the landscape buffer along the southern property line.

Apart from the revision described above, the Landscaping Plan will continue to provide landscape islands dispersed throughout the parking area and at the ends of each parking row. In addition, the parking area will be screened with shrubs and trees. City landscape standards require the following:

- Minimum of 15 percent of the net lot area of each development must be landscaped
- Parking lot edges must have landscape buffers of either six (6) feet containing two (2) trees and six (6) shrubs per 25 feet or a 10-foot buffer containing a continuous line of evergreen shrubbery three (3) feet in height
- Street trees are required along frontages at every 25 feet on center
- One (1) tree is required per 10 parking spaces and no parking space should be more than 100 feet in any direction from a tree trunk

The project includes a net increase of 369 square feet of landscaping, resulting in an overall landscaping coverage of 256,481 square feet for the Costco site. The City requires a minimum of 15 percent of the net lot area to be landscaped. The net lot area of this site is 554,185 square feet, which based on City landscape standards, requires a total of 83,128 square feet of landscape. The Costco on-site relocation project will significantly exceed the City's minimum required landscape area.

Purpose of Request – Site Plan – Major Amendment (DRB)

In accordance with the City of Albuquerque Integrated Development Code, the reviewing authority may approve an Alternate Landscape Plan application that meets the following criteria detailed in IDO Section 14-16-5-6(c)(16):

1. *Do not include invasive vegetation included in a City or State list of prohibited or invasive species or listed as a noxious weed in the City's Weed Identification Handbook.*

Response: No invasive vegetation or noxious weeds will be included for the project. Sheet L5 of the Preliminary Landscape Plan (included in this submittal) provides a Plant Schedule for reference.

2. *Do not include a reduction of tree planting requirements.*

Response: The Alternate Landscape Plan will continue to provide the required number of tree plantings for the overall site. The revisions will only consist of planting six (6) trees within the perimeter buffer as opposed to the parking lot islands in the northwest corner of the site.

3. *Provide equal or superior buffering of adjacent properties from anticipated impacts of the proposed development.*

Response: The Alternate Landscape Plan will continue to provide the adequate amount of buffering detailed in the IDO. The relocation of six (6) parking lot trees to the perimeter will likely provide superior buffering, as they will increase the number of trees planted within the buffer areas.

4. *Provide equal or superior visual appearance of the property when viewed from the street.*

Response: The Alternate Landscape Plan will continue to provide the adequate amount of screening as detailed in the IDO. The relocation of six (6) previously proposed parking lot trees will likely increase the visual appearance of the property from the street, as they will be relocated to the perimeter buffer areas, providing additional screening of the parking lot.

5. *Provide equal or superior carbon dioxide absorption and heat island reductions.*

Response: The Alternate Landscape Plan does not impact the number of trees located on site, species, or size of trees planted, but only the relocation of six (6) parking lot trees. Therefore, an equal or superior amount of carbon dioxide absorption and head island reductions will be provided throughout the project site.

Conclusion:

The responses above and application materials demonstrate that this project meets the submittal criteria for an Alternate Landscape Plan for the City to deem this application complete for review.