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Council Says No to Chevron C-Store

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Chevron station on Orinda Way Photo Andy Scheck

the Chevron proposal. Vice Mayor Tom McCormick questioned the benefit of losing the service bay.

"Prohibiting the expansion of convenience stores is not keeping service bays open. The services bays are disappearing anyway," stated Abbott. He noted that major oil and tire change chains have usurped the much of the business from the small independent auto repair supplier. While McCormick regretted the potential loss of the service bay, he stated repeatedly that Orinda did not need another empty storefront.

Council Member Victoria Smith found multiple reasons to deny Chevron's request. "I don't think an Extra Mile market is at all the image that we want for our community," stated Smith. In addition to not wanting a large convenience store to sit at the entrance to the Village, she was concerned about the potential for alcohol sales and felt the market was more for people passing through than the residents of the community. "I'm less concerned about the potential for a shuttered service bay than the long-term plan for the City," stated Smith.

The potential for crime exposure was another concern raised by Council Member Amy Worth. "We are right off Highway 24, said Worth. "The Safeway is open 24 hours, so I think the community's needs are met in that respect."

The Council unanimously denied Chevron's request but left the door open for the company to resubmit a revised application. Any staff costs associated with a second application would have to be paid by Chevron.

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Orinda's City Council recently denied a request by Chevron to amend the City's Municipal Code to allow for a large convenience store, an Extra Mile market, at its service station site in the City. Chevron is located on Orinda Way immediately off Camino Pablo as one enters Orinda Village. Currently, the Orinda station has a small (less than 40 square feet) cashier's booth that sells a few snack-food items and three service bays. Chevron's goal was to replace the service bays with the larger convenience store. Chevron has recently built Extra Mile markets at service stations in Alamo and San Ramon. Prior to the public hearing, the Planning Commission had reviewed Chevron's application and recommended denying the request, because they felt that the addition of a larger convenience store would not serve the local user and was inconsistent with the City's village character.

"Our error here was not anticipating some of the questions that might arise, like alcohol sales," stated Bob Abbott, a representative for Chevron, who spoke to the Council. Lifting the City's current Municipal Code that limits convenience markets at service stations to 40 square feet could open the door for alcohol sales at this station and other stations through the City.

The sale of alcohol was not the only problem the Council found with