

Summary of Concerns

This summary reflects comments received by city staff regarding the proposed Roger's Garage project through August 11, 2025. Ongoing comments submitted will be compiled and uploaded to the "Major Development Projects" webpage as part of the public scoping process.

Environmental and Health Concerns

Soil Contamination:

- Petroleum contamination from decades of automotive operations (1945-1998)
- Heavy metal contamination (lead, zinc, copper, barium, nickel, cadmium) documented in site soil sampling
- Concerns that excavation will release toxic materials into air and groundwater
- Potential exposure to school children and teachers at nearby Jacoby Creek Elementary. Particular concern for children's exposure to lead and other toxins
- Air quality impacts during construction from dust and volatilized contaminants
- Questions about adequacy of remediation plans

Traffic and Transportation Issues

Current Congestion:

- Existing traffic problems during school pickup/drop-off times
- Cars frequently exceed 50 mph in 25 mph zone on Old Arcata Road
- Difficulty making left turns during peak school hours
- Road conditions described as poor, needing resurfacing

Lack of Public Transit:

- No city bus service to Bayside area
- Residents would be car-dependent, adding to traffic burden

Parking and Infrastructure

Insufficient Parking:

- Proposed 45 units with only 43 parking spaces
- Street parking already limited due to school needs
- Families typically have two cars, requiring more than one space per unit

Infrastructure Strain:

- Concerns about impacts on emergency services response times
- Potential impacts on utilities and schools

Procedural and Legal Issues

CEQA Compliance:

- Arguments that project is not exempt from environmental review
- Claims of premature CEQA exemption without complete environmental studies
- Missing required findings for infill exemption
- Brown Act concerns regarding inadequate public notice

Public Engagement:

- Lack of meaningful public participation in planning process
- Adjacent property owners not notified
- Requests for more transparent decision-making process

Financial and Governance Concerns

- Lack of transparency about project costs and city financial investment
- Questions about cleanup cost estimates and liability
- Concerns about using public funds for contaminated site acquisition

Community Character and Compatibility

Rural Character Loss:

- Bayside valued for semi-rural, agricultural character
- Dense housing seen as incompatible with existing neighborhood
- Concerns about visual impacts and loss of open views

Scale and Density:

- Project size (45-53 units) considered too large for the site
- Height concerns (three stories) incompatible with surroundings

Alternative Suggestions

Several commenters suggested alternatives:

- Purchase adjacent parcel for development instead
- Cap contaminated site and use for parking/open space
- Reduce project size and increase density of other projects outside of project area instead
- Consider mixed-use development with retail/office components (*staff note: project does involve a mixed-use component*)

Support for Affordable Housing

Some commenters supported the project, arguing:

- Addresses regional housing crisis
- Would increase neighborhood diversity

- Research shows affordable housing doesn't increase crime
- Environmental concerns will be addressed and contamination would be cleaned up through development