

November 14, 2016

The Honorable Marqueece Harris-Dawson  
City of Los Angeles, Council District 8  
200 N. Spring St., Room 450  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Harris-Dawson:

Please stand with residents in opposing a toxic Chevron gas station and 7-11 on the NE corner of Adams Blvd. and Normandie Ave. There are many compelling reasons to oppose this development.

### **Toxic Burden**

Gas stations pose serious health and safety risks to nearby residents due to exposure to carcinogens and air toxins. Those impacts fall hardest on vulnerable populations including children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with suppressed immune systems.

The Adams Residential Care Facility, an assisted care center, overlooks the site on the east. Residents' bedroom windows are approximately 10-20 feet from where diesel tanker trucks will load gas into underground storage tanks (see Appendix 1). Appendix 2 shows many of those bedroom windows open on a recent morning. Dense multi-family housing surrounds the site to the north as well.

Exposure to benzene is highest in areas of heavy motor vehicle traffic and around gasoline filling stations.<sup>1</sup> The Toxics Committee of the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association concluded, "...the benzene in gasoline can cause a cancer risk to people living near gasoline stations greater than 10 per million when large amounts of gasoline are dispensed."<sup>2</sup> Emissions from gasoline transfer and dispensing mainly occur at four points: (1) during loading (when a fuel tanker truck unloads gasoline to the storage tanks), (2) breathing (emissions that occur through the storage tank vent pipe as a result of temperature and pressure changes in the tank vapor space), (3) refueling, and (4)

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<sup>1</sup> Report on Carcinogens, Thirteenth Edition, prepared by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed 11/1/2016 at <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/ntp/roc/content/profiles/benzene.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Gasoline Service Station Industrywide Risk Assessment Guidelines, prepared by Toxics Committee of the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, November 1997. Accessed 11/1/2016 at <https://www.arb.ca.gov/ab2588/rrap-iwra/gasiwra.pdf>.

spillage.<sup>3</sup> The proposed gas station's close proximity to a densely populated residential neighborhood—especially vulnerable populations—poses an unnecessary and unacceptable risk to neighbors.

The four gas stations located within a half-mile radius of the proposed location, including one directly across the street and another 500' away, compound this risk (see map 1).

Pollution from burning fossil fuels fouls the air we breathe and profoundly impacts our health. Zip Code 90007, where the proposed project is located, has the highest rate of child Asthma Emergency Visits in the City of Los Angeles; more than 19.9 per 10,000 (see Map 2).<sup>4</sup> Service Planning Area 6, which encompasses our community, has the highest rate of lung cancer in the City.<sup>5</sup> Rather than building new fossil fuel infrastructure that will adversely impact our community's health for decades, we need to be phasing it out.

### **Over Concentration of Auto Uses**

South LA has an over-concentration of blighted automotive uses. There are 22 auto businesses within a ½-mile radius of the proposed site, including 12 on Adams Blvd. alone. Expanding automotive uses on Adams Blvd. is fundamentally incompatible with the safe, healthy community we seek to create and pass on to our children.

Recognizing the over-concentration of auto uses, the South LA Community Plan proposes a ban on new automotive uses within a half-mile of an existing auto use. If the South LA Plan becomes law, this gas station could not be built even with a zone change. Therefore the new owner is asking for a "Vesting Zone Change" which would exclude his property from the new rule.

### **Zone Change**

Current zoning does not allow for a gas station at the proposed site. The property owner lost his by-right of return by leaving the property vacant for years. Therefore the new owner seeks to up-zone the property from C1, which bans gas stations, to C2, which allows gas stations by-right. The return of a toxic land use would undermine gains to community health and safety since the station's closure.

### **Clean Up and Green Up**

Clean Up and Green Up (CUGU) identifies gasoline stations as a problematic use in environmental justice (EJ) communities. CUGU also establishes that there should be a 500 foot buffer between any new and expanding auto-related uses in EJ communities to protect public health of residents. While South LA is not a designated green zone under CUGU, in passing the ordinance the City set a standard for public health and planning that should be extended to residents in South LA.

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<sup>3</sup> Emission Inventory and Risk Assessment Guidelines for Gasoline Dispensing Stations, prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, January 2007. Accessed 11/14/2016 at

[http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/risk-assessment/gas\\_station\\_hra.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/planning/risk-assessment/gas_station_hra.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

<sup>4</sup> Health Atlas for the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Health Atlas for the City of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, p. 57.

### **7-11s Are Trashy**

7-11 claims that it monitors its stores closely. However, a tour of local 7-11s reveals parking lots covered with trash, large outdoor cigarette and vaping ads, and run-down landscaping (see Appendix 3).

### **Council Support Needed**

Some are saying that a toxic Chevron station and trashy 7-11 are the best way to clean up a blighted corner. This corner is indeed blighted. However, sacrificing public health on the altar of Chevron's greed is not a solution. We need the assistance of your office and the Neighborhood Prosecutor to hold the current owner accountable.

### **Progressive Planning Tools**

The Planning Department's most progressive planning tools—including CUGU and the South LA Plan Community Plan Implementation Overlay (CPIO)—acknowledge and seek to redress decades of malign neglect toward low-income, minority communities like ours which are currently staggering under an unfair burden of toxic and blighted land uses. Neither of these policies would allow for another gas station to be built in our community. Up-zoning the proposed project parcel to allow for a gas station where one would otherwise be prohibited runs counter to the Planning Department's vision to ensure social and environmental justice in South LA.

Our community is sandwiched between two neighborhood drilling sites where a multi-billion dollar, multi-national oil company extracts oil and gas from under our homes. Last month the City Attorney settled a civil rights and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) lawsuit brought by youth in our community. Acknowledging the Planning Department's decades-long disparate treatment of South LA and Wilmington as compared to wealthier, whiter, West LA neighborhoods, the City agreed to radically change its procedures to protect residents. Big Oil already has an outsized and negative impact on the health and safety of our community from decades of neglect. We do not need or want to clear a zoning path for Chevron to plant another toxic oil and gas land use in our neighborhood.

This proposal trades public health for corporate wealth. It is a raw deal for residents and does not reflect the community we want to pass on to our children. We ask you to join us in building the beloved community and leaving a legacy of a healthier, safer, more beautiful neighborhood for our children.

Sincerely,



Richard Parks  
President  
Redeemer Community Partnership



Richard Olivarez  
President  
Jefferson & Normandie Neighborhood Assoc.



Martha Dina Argüello  
Executive Director  
Physicians for Social Responsibility-L.A.



Brad Porter  
President  
West Adams Neighborhood Association



Pastor Kevin Blue  
Senior Pastor  
Church of the Redeemer

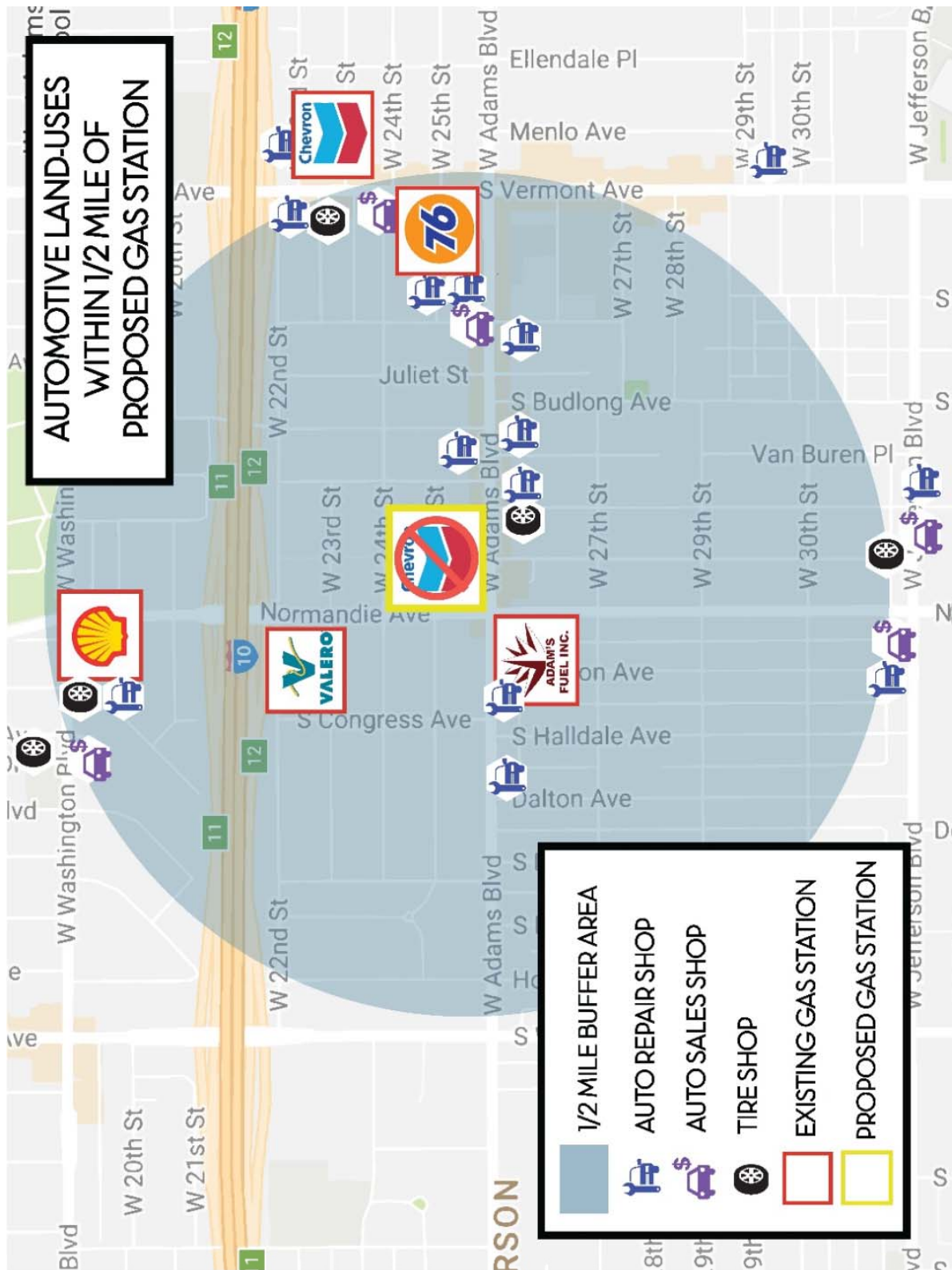


Rev. Kelvin Sauls  
Senior Pastor  
Holman United Methodist Church



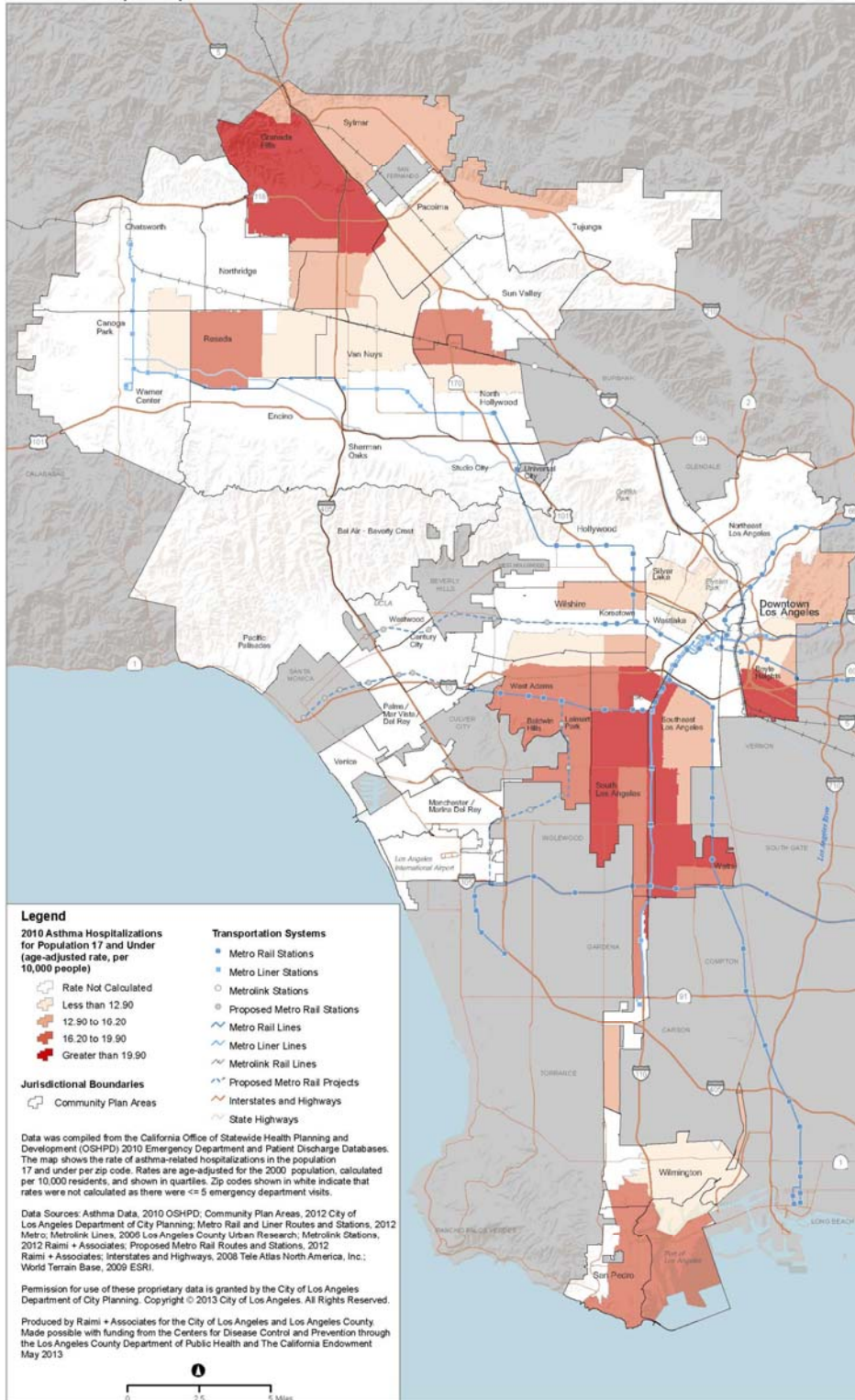
Gladys Limon  
Staff Attorney  
Community for a Better Environment

**Map 1: Gas Stations and Other Existing Auto Uses 1/2-Mile from Proposed Location**

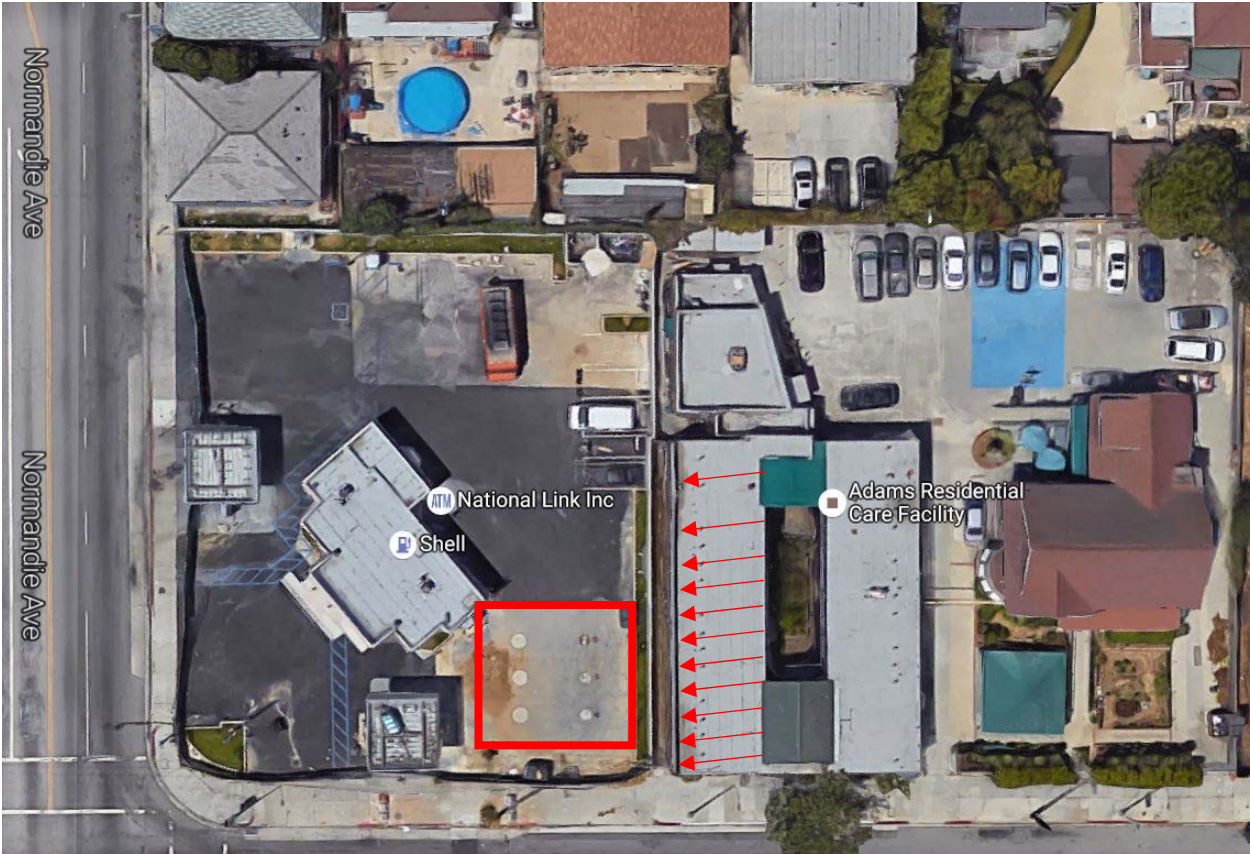




**Map 2:  
Asthma-Related Hospitalization Rate in Population 17 and Under per 10,000  
Residents (2010)**



**Appendix 1: Adams Residential Care Facility**



The Adams Residential Care Facility, an assisted living center, overlooks the proposed site on the east while multi-family homes overlook the site on the north. The assisted living center is located immediately adjacent to where underground storage tanks would be filled by diesel tanker trucks carrying thousands of gallons of toxic and highly flammable gasoline (see the red square). The 11 red arrows represent the 11 care facility windows overlooking the underground storage tanks.



## Appendix 2: Adjacent Residences



Bedroom Windows: Multiple open bedroom windows overlook the site at the fence line.



Residences: Multi-family homes overlook the site along the northern perimeter of the proposed site.



### Appendix 3: Trashy Local 7-11s



*7-11 parking lot at Adams Blvd. and Grand Ave.*



*Trash, un-kept landscaping and parking lot ads at 7-11 on the corner of Adams Blvd. and Grand Ave.*





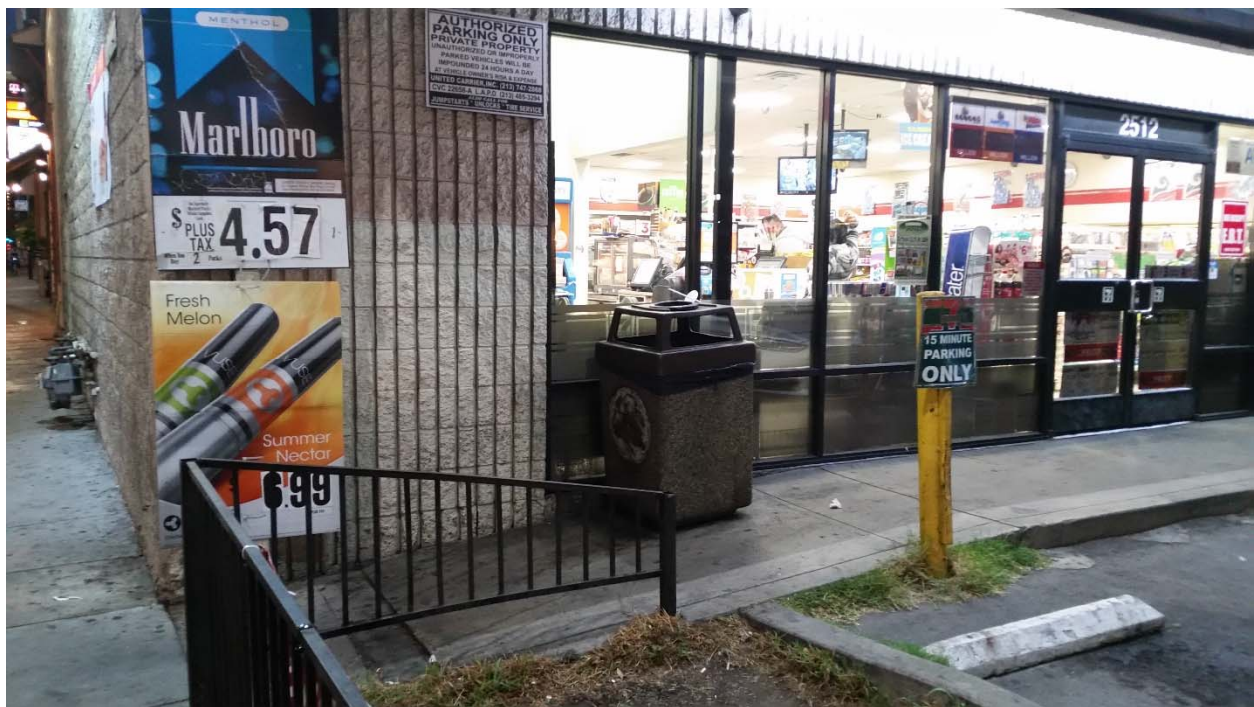
*Trash filled grocery cart and littered yard at 7-11 on MLK Blvd. and Figueroa St.*



*Biohazard Warning and Litter: Garbage strewn outside the 7-11 back door at MLK Blvd. and Figueroa St.*



*Litter, dead landscaping, and parking lot ads for power drinks, cigarettes, and vaping supplies at the 7-11 on Figueroa St. just north of Adams Blvd.*



*Graffiti painted out in a non-matching color, litter, un-kept landscaping, weedy parking lot, and large outdoor cigarette and vaping ads at 7-11 on Figueroa St. north of Adams Blvd.*