

Front page...

# PASADENA STAR-NEWS

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## Lively crowd airs views on mall plan

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ARCADIA -- Corporate sponsorships and allegiances didn't get in the way of appetites at Tuesday night's Planning Commission meeting.

Fueled by Westfield-backed pizza and charged with Caruso-sponsored cappuccino, residents turned a public hearing on a review of a proposal for The Shops at Santa Anita into a referendum on its popularity.

Spirited — and mostly civil — supporters and opponents of the 829,000-square-foot outdoor shopping complex took turns disputing what the project on the site of the Santa Anita Race Track would mean for Arcadia.

Of course, at more than 5,000 pages, it's unlikely many, except perhaps the legal teams

on either side of the issue, have waded through the draft environmental impact report released last month.

### Most indicate support for plan

Whether it signified strong community support or a more successful outreach effort, Caruso Affiliated, the developer behind the project, seemed to have most of the crowd in its column.

To underscore that support, Rick Lemmo, Caruso Affiliated's vice president of community relations, called for a show of hands of those supporting the report's findings and the project.

Most in the audience raised a hand.

"I would remind everyone this is not a popularity contest," said Commissioner David Olson, to little effect.

Many residents, however, did express concerns about negative impacts from the proposed mall.

Chief among those: traffic.

After an initial surge, the report estimates an additional 15,000 vehicles coming and going from the mall daily.

With the decreased throughput of the Foothill (210) Freeway, that has some residents fearing permanent gridlock on Huntington Drive, and many had difficulty accepting the

report's assertion intersection improvements and technology upgrades would actually result in better traffic flow.

If not the Caruso project, supporters said, something will be developed on that location, making an increase in traffic inevitable.

Ann Durgerian, an executive member of Arcadia First!, which opposes the project, said the project review ignored recent, positive financial reports from the race track and painted an unnecessarily dire picture of its future viability.

"There is no immediate need for this proposal," she said.

Some chided the Westfield Group, which owns the adjacent mall on Baldwin Avenue, for its opposition to the project and multimillion dollar campaign for two ballot initiatives voters approved earlier this month.

"They need to join the party and start working with us instead of against us," said resident Scott Sayre.

Comments from the hearing, along with written correspondence, will be included with responses in the final environmental impact report.

A second public hearing will be held in early 2007, along with a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

The entirety of the draft environmental impact report is available on the city's Web site at [www.ci.arcadia.ca.us](http://www.ci.arcadia.ca.us).

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