



July 29, 2026

**Via Certified Mail & Email
14177 Frederick St.
PO Box 88005
Moreno Valley, CA 92552**

OPEN LETTER TO THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE MORENO VALLEY CITY COUNCIL

RE: McDonald's Appeal – Conditional Use Permit PEN25-0136, 11875 Pigeon Pass Road, Suite D-4.

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

My name is Jose Jara, founder and owner of Jose's Mexican Food.

For more than three decades, my family, our employees, and I have had the privilege of serving the residents of Moreno Valley. Throughout those years we have worked to be more than simply a restaurant. We have tried to become a trusted member of this community, providing stable employment, supporting local organizations, serving generations of families, and building relationships that extend far beyond business.

Today, however, I write to you not simply as a business owner.

I write as a citizen who respectfully believes this appeal presents an important question about the integrity of Moreno Valley's land-use decision-making process.

This Appeal Is Not About Choosing Between Two Restaurants

Respectfully, this matter should never be viewed as Jose's Mexican Food versus McDonald's.

Healthy competition is part of every free market, and throughout our history we have welcomed competition.

Instead, this appeal asks a much more significant question:

Should a unanimous decision of your Planning Commission be overturned after a lengthy public hearing?

Unless the evidence clearly demonstrates that the commission acted improperly or without substantial support, I respectfully submit that the answer should be no.

Your Planning Commission Fulfilled Its Responsibility

The Planning Commission devoted many hours to reviewing this application.

Commissioners heard from City staff.

They reviewed technical studies.

They listened carefully to the applicant.

Most importantly, they listened to residents who live with the existing conditions every day.

After considering the entire record, the Commission voted unanimously to deny the application.

Whether one ultimately agrees or disagrees with that decision, there can be little doubt that it was thoughtful, deliberate, and reached only after substantial public participation.

That process deserves great respect.

McDonald's Appeal Does Not Demonstrate That the Commission Failed to Perform Its Duties

After carefully reviewing McDonald's appeal letter, I noticed that its central argument follows a consistent pattern.

Public concerns are acknowledged.

Those concerns are then characterized as unsupported.

Finally, McDonald's relies primarily upon technical studies prepared during the entitlement process to conclude that the Commission's findings should be rejected.

Technical studies are unquestionably valuable.

However, Conditional Use Permit decisions have never depended solely upon engineering calculations or regulatory thresholds.

The Planning Commission exists precisely because elected officials have determined that some projects require thoughtful judgment about compatibility, safety, neighborhood character, operational realities, and the public welfare.

That judgment belongs to your Commission and, on appeal, to this Council.

Technical Compliance Does Not Automatically Require Approval

Throughout the appeal, McDonald's repeatedly explains that the project complies with various technical standards.

I fully acknowledge those studies.

However, compliance with technical standards is not the same as demonstrating that a project is appropriate at a particular location.

If satisfying minimum technical thresholds automatically required approval, there would be little purpose in requiring Conditional Use Permits or conducting lengthy public hearings.

Instead, your city's process recognizes something important:

Some projects may technically comply with regulations while still raising legitimate questions about compatibility at a specific site.

That is exactly why the Planning Commission exists.

McDonald's Own Appeal Confirms Important Site Conditions

Ironically, McDonald's own appeal reinforces several facts that deserve careful consideration.

The appeal acknowledges that nearby residences are located approximately eighty-seven feet from portions of the proposed project.

The appeal also explains that all project traffic will utilize the existing shared circulation system rather than providing new access improvements.

It anticipates drive-through queuing during peak operating periods.

It acknowledges early-morning delivery activity.

It further explains that operational security measures will be implemented through future approval of an on-site security plan.

These facts do not necessarily compel approval.

Instead, they demonstrate why reasonable decision-makers could conclude that this particular location presents legitimate compatibility concerns.

Reasonable people may weigh those facts differently.

Your Planning Commission did exactly that.

The Request to Postpone the Appeal Raises an Important Question

One portion of McDonald's appeal deserves particular attention.

McDonald's respectfully requests that the City Council postpone consideration of this appeal until separate appellate litigation involving my business has been completely resolved and all further appeals have ended.

Respectfully, I ask the Council to consider what that request means.

The land-use issues before the City have already been fully presented.

The Planning Commission has already completed its work.

The administrative record already exists.

The traffic conditions surrounding the property have not changed.

The nearby residences have not moved.

The circulation system remains exactly as it was when the Commission reached its decision.

If the land-use issues are ready for review, they should be decided on their merits.

If they are not, the reason should not be that private litigation remains pending between unrelated parties.

Moreno Valley's land-use decisions should remain independent of private commercial disputes whenever possible.

Respect for the City's Own Institutions

Perhaps the most important issue before you is institutional.

Citizens participate in hearings because they believe their voices matter.

Commissioners volunteer countless hours because they believe their careful deliberations matter.

City staff devote substantial effort because they believe the process matters.

When a Planning Commission reaches a unanimous decision after extensive public participation, overturning that decision should require a compelling reason grounded in the record—not simply a different preference.

Respect for that process strengthens public confidence in local government.

Our Family's Commitment

Our family has invested more than thirty years in serving Moreno Valley.

Many of our employees have devoted decades of their lives to our restaurant.

Some began as teenagers and are now raising families of their own.

Our customers have celebrated birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, and family milestones with us.

We recognize that those relationships alone cannot determine the outcome of this appeal.

Nor should they.

I mention them only because they remind us that every land-use decision ultimately affects real people, not simply buildings or businesses.

Respectfully Requested Action

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the City Council:

- Uphold the Planning Commission's unanimous denial of Conditional Use Permit PEN25-0136.
- Preserve the integrity and credibility of Moreno Valley's established land-use review process.
- Ensure that public confidence in the City's Planning Commission remains strong by recognizing the careful deliberation reflected in its unanimous decision.
- Evaluate this appeal solely on the administrative record and applicable law, independent of any ongoing private litigation.

Thank you for your time, your public service, and your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully,

Jose Jara

Founder & Owner

Jose's Mexican Food