
Fwd: 9.24.25 Land Use Commission Public Hearing

Stephanie Mendoza <smendoza@cityofevanston.org>

Wed, Sep 24, 2025 at 8:15 AM

To: Sarah Flax <sflax@cityofevanston.org>, Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Erin Baynes <ebaynes@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

Stephanie Mendoza**City Clerk**

Office of the City Clerk

City of Evanston

Pronouns: (She, Her, Hers)

909 Davis Street | Evanston, IL 60201 | O:(847) 448-8189
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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Daniel Bennett** <danielelliottbennett@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 23, 2025 at 1:33 PM

Subject: 9.24.25 Land Use Commission Public Hearing

To: <publiccomment@cityofevanston.org>

Dear Members of the Council,

My family lives at [1708 Dempster St](#). Our home, that we own, is one block, less than 650 feet, from the proposed site that the Popeye's location. I would like to insist the bid to operate the proposed Popeye's this location be rejected.

I manage a restaurant for a family-owned, Chicago-based restaurant group. Even our sit-down only establishment is inundated with carryout and delivery services (DoorDash, UberEats, GrubHub, etc). A take-out chain such as Popeyes at this location (with or without a drive-thru) would be a detriment to our neighborhood. If Popeyes was allowed to operate at this location it would cause extreme issues with traffic, public safety, and would lower property values and quality of life in our community.

The evidence that there is traffic congestion, causing public safety at this intersection is already clear to observe. I do not want more litter, which my front lawn collects enough to fill one shopping bag a day. I do not want the smell of fried food to overtake the nature of our trees and gardens. I do not want third-party workforce vehicles to further congest our neighborhood where my son Aiden plays (attached photo of him on our front porch).

Our neighborhood representatives should not sacrifice community for businesses that do not enrich the areas where they are proposed. The density of fast-casual chains at this intersection is beyond capacity and Popeyes at this location would skyrocket my current concerns.

As a community member and resident who lives one block from this location, I insist that Popeye's bid to operate at this location be rejected.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bennett

[1708 Dempster St.](#)

[Evanston, IL 60202](#)

Daniel E. Bennett

||| [309.369.7412](tel:309.369.7412)

||| danielelliottbennett@gmail.com



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Fwd: Written Public Comment for the Land Use Commission Re: Proposed Popeye's at Dempster & Dodge Submitted 9/23/2025 2:40PM CST

Stephanie Mendoza <smendoza@cityofevanston.org>

Wed, Sep 24, 2025 at 8:14 AM

To: Sarah Flax <sflax@cityofevanston.org>, Elizabeth Williams <ewilliams@cityofevanston.org>, Erin Baynes <ebaynes@cityofevanston.org>, Meagan Jones <mmjones@cityofevanston.org>

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Meleika Gardner** <engage@wherethepeoplemeet.com>

Date: Tue, Sep 23, 2025 at 2:42 PM

Subject: Written Public Comment for the Land Use Commission Re: Proposed Popeye's at Dempster & Dodge Submitted 9/23/2025 2:40PM CST

To: publiccomment@cityofevanston.org <publiccomment@cityofevanston.org>CC: Stephanie Mendoza <smendoza@cityofevanston.org>

Dear Members of the Land Use Commission:

This case is not simply about whether a Popeye's is approved at Dempster & Dodge. It is about whether Evanston will choose integrity over convenience, health over profit, and community over corporate influence.

Health Disparities: Your Own Reports Tell the Story

The City of Evanston's own health disparity reports confirm what we already know: residents in the 2nd and 5th wards face disproportionately high rates of diabetes, hypertension, and diet-related chronic disease. Placing yet another fried fast-food chain at Dempster & Dodge, where a McDonald's and a Burger King

already operate, shows blatant disregard for those findings. This is not neutrality. This is knowingly contributing to preventable harm.

Manipulated Zoning and Process Failures

The public record reveals a troubling sequence of events:

- Popeye's was initially approved under a **Type 1 sit-down restaurant classification** - a category that does not exist anywhere in America for this chain. Only after intense community pushback was the application forced back to Type 2.
- Commitments made to send this issue to Land Use were broken. Residents were denied transparency and due process.
- Over **300 residents signed a petition** against this development. Their voices cannot be ignored without undermining the very foundation of community participation in government.

The Intimidation of Nancy Floy

The handling of community opposition reached a shameful low when Heartwood Center owner, **Nancy Floy**, was singled out by a Popeye's representative sent to "talk" to business owners. He did not visit all who opposed the project. He came only to Nancy.

That interaction was so **intimidating and threatening** that Ms. Floy, a peaceful Buddhist community leader, felt compelled to file a police report. Imagine that: in a city that claims to champion diversity and equity, a woman business owner, whose center has served this community for decades, was left to face intimidation tactics alone.

And instead of condemning it, the City allowed the process to continue. Silence from leadership became complicity.

The Slander of a Community Institution

Adding to the injury, the Heartwood Center, a legitimate and respected Buddhist temple and healing space, was slandered publicly as "not a real temple" by a political supporter. That kind of dismissal of cultural and spiritual institutions erodes trust and devalues the very diversity Evanston claims to celebrate.

A Test of Conscience

Commissioners, you are not being asked to vote on neutral paperwork. You are being asked whether you will:

- Sanction intimidation of small business owners who dare to oppose a corporate chain.
- Undermine Evanston's own health disparity reports by green-lighting yet another fried fast-food outlet in wards already overburdened.
- Ignore over 300 residents who have clearly said **we want something different**.

If you approve this application, you are not simply permitting a restaurant. You are endorsing a process that relied on intimidation, misclassification, and community betrayal. You are choosing short-term tax revenue over the long-term health and dignity of the people you serve.

The Path Forward

Evanston does not need more fast food at Dempster & Dodge. It needs businesses that uplift health, celebrate culture, and contribute to equity - options like juice bars, cultural food establishments, and locally-owned enterprises that match our values.

For the sake of our residents' health, for the integrity of our process, and for the conscience of this city, I urge you: **Reject this application.**

History will remember whether you chose to protect the community or to side with corporate interests. Please do not add to the burden of those already suffering from health disparities. Do not endorse intimidation as a tactic in civic decision-making. Stand on the right side of health, equity, and justice.

Respectfully submitted.

Sincerely,

Meleika Gardner

Civic Engagement & Legislative Advocate

WTPM TV

<https://www.facebook.com/WTPMTV>

<https://www.youtube.com/@WTPMTV/featured>

[patreon.com/wherethepeoplemeet](https://www.patreon.com/wherethepeoplemeet)

<https://www.instagram.com/evanstonlivetv/>

<https://www.instagram.com/wherethepeoplemeetv/>

"Do Something!" - Michelle Obama

Name (first and last)	Address of residence or property owned	Meeting date	Agenda Item (Property address or description of agenda item)	Position on Agenda Item (as applicable)	How would you like to make your public comment?	If you are providing a written comment, please leave here:	Are you representing yourself as an individual or speaking on behalf of a group?	Please name the group of people for whom you are the designated speaker.
						<p>I oppose approving Popeyes to locate a franchise on the corner of Dempster and Dodge Streets in Evanston. Although it would provide tax revenue to the city, the negatives would far out way the positives for that location.</p> <p>If approved, business will be driven away from Heartwood and the neighborhood because practitioners and teachers have already said they would leave Heartwood if Popeyes comes in. Traffic congestion, greasy smells, noise will increase and disturb business operations in Heartwood.</p> <p>I have been teaching Tai Chi at Heartwood since 1999 when it opened. The west wall in the classroom is close to the adjoining property in question. I am concerned about greasy smells infiltrating our space and driving away students. Plus, students, patients, clients and meditators not only frequent Heartwood but also support Valli, Zentli and other neighborhood businesses. Potential revenue will be lost.</p> <p>I understand business having worked in a Fortune 200 company for 29 years. Tax revenue is important but is not the only factor determining long-term success. You don't want to make a decision that will drive business away. Plus, there are other options for more favorable businesses to locate in the space under question.</p> <p>I favor approving a business that will bring people and revenue into the neighborhood while at the same time supporting the vision set forth for the surrounding neighborhoods in Evanston.</p>		
Arlene Faulk	Heartwood Center	9/24/2025	Popeyes request	Opposed	Written comment	Please do not be short-sighted and approve Popeyes for the Dempster/Dodge location.		
Darlene Cannon		9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	In person		Self	
Erin Flynn	2218 Orrington	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	Please keep Evanston or rather return Evanston to the creative, earth friendly home it wants to be. Be righteous and forward thinking; choose better; choose authenticity, creativity, healthy for our community. No to Popeyes.		
Asa Gezelius	1819 Crain Street	9/24/2025	Land Use Comm	Opposed	Written comment	<p>My family and I have resided on Crain/Dodge for the past 23 years. We are approximately 1 1/2 block from the proposed Popeyes. During the years that we have resided in the 2nd ward the neighborhood has changed in profound and positive ways. 23 years ago this was not considered an attractive part of Evanston, as we were known for fast food restaurants and low budget stores. With the arrival of Heartwood Center and the focus on artistic talents and healing, our part of the ward became known as West Village; a neighborhood that we all take pride in.</p> <p>I have been shocked by the complete disregard that our alderperson and City staff have demonstrated in response to 300+ people speaking out against this proposal. There is a counter proposal for Heartwood Center to purchase the property and create a very different venue, with the goal of continuing to build community. I cannot even envision another fast food restaurant in my immediate neighborhood. We have worked so diligently to create a very different neighborhood, which can now easily be destroyed. This is deeply personal to myself and my family. I urge the Land Use Commission to vote no to this proposal as it is fundamentally against community wishes.</p>		
Hanna Selekmán	1819 Crain Street	9/24/2025	Land use comm	Opposed	Written comment	<p>I'm writing to express my opposition to Popeyes opening a store on the corner of Dodge and Dempster. The first issue that I would like to address is the violation of trust and community input during this decision process. Alderwoman Harris did not take the time to consult her community and listen to the deep concerns that her community felt from the proposal of Popeyes to open up on their street corners. It is my understanding that community representation is a core aspect of the job description that is required to be an alderwoman/man. The fact that Alderwoman Harris showed such flagrant disregard for the interests/concerns of her community in this process is egregious and shameful. Instead she circumvented the community input process to serve her own interests. She left it up to her community to figure out that their democratic rights had been completely ignored and to figure out how to navigate the political system and to organize against this proposal and face unacceptable threats that were directed at community members in the process (particularly from the owner of this Popeyes store). The second issue that I'd like to raise is that my opposition stems from not wanting yet another unhealthy fast food restaurant on the Dempster/Dodge intersection (we already have Burger King and McDonalds why do we need another?). As a community we would like to have an opportunity to uplift small community businesses that heal our community and bring us together instead of multinational multibillion dollar corporations that make us chronically ill (heart disease, diabetes, etc). I work in the field of food insecurity research and we know that this is the leading cause of death in our country particularly among lower-income communities. We have an opportunity to support local businesses, heal our community, and bring our neighbors together. Food is medicine when the food that we have access to is nutritious, culturally relevant, and delicious. Having yet another unhealthy fast food restaurant will provide none of this and will contribute to poorer community health outcomes, lower our perceived community economic value, and will continue to disseminate small businesses. Popeyes opening on this street corner also desecrates Heartwood, a Buddhist faith-based healing center next store. This goes against their religious freedoms and business model of creating a healing environment for community members seeking spiritual services and treatment there. I strongly urge the land use commission to oppose the opening of Popeyes on the Dempster/Dodge intersection because it fundamentally goes against the interests of the community who lives here on every level.</p>		
Christina Giordano	Heartwood Center	9/24/2025	Heartwood Center	Opposed	Written comment	I am opposed to Popeyes being added to the corner of Dempster and Dodge. There are already so many fast food options in the area and quite honestly we are trying to raise and elevate the community rather than diminish it by adding yet another loud, unhealthy, cheap, fast food chain. The surrounding businesses, especially Heartwood, have worked tremendously hard in keeping the community vibrant, beautiful and harmonious. Stop giving land to these chains that don't care about the people living in these communities. Instead, invest in conscious, sustainable, local business owners who are actual residents, and who actually value their work and what they bring to the space. They will value and cherish the community and remain devoted to its health and well-being.		
Matthew Selekmán	1819 Crain St	9/24/2025	Land Use Comm	Opposed	Written comment	I am greatly opposed to having another fast food restaurant in my neighborhood, which will lead to more noise and traffic. We live right around the corner from where Popeyes would be built.		
Seanna Tully	1221 Hull Terr 2e	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	<p>I'm an Evanston resident as well as participant in Heartwood's services. Heartwood has been invaluable to myself and my family. Generations of Tully's are survivors of religious and spiritual abuse. (Great Grandparents and 2nd great Grandparents are buried at Calvary, we've been here a long time). Heartwood's program for survivors of spiritual abuse has been personally monumental for me and should be seen as a valuable contribution to the Evanston community. This is especially because the most recent incident of abuse (coercive control) occurred right here in Evanston at the Chicago Zen Center when I (and others) studied with Sevan Ross. I took refuge in Buddhism to escape the religious abuse my family suffered under the Catholic Church. Heartwood is the first true religious sanctuary the Tully's truly can take safe refuge and heal. On top of that, the healing practitioners at Heartwood deserve to have a clean and beautiful place to practice that doesn't smell of fried chicken. This will hurt their small businesses (they are independent contractors or renters). Fast food chicken smell and alternative medicine are mutually incompatible, whereas a local vegan spot run by Caribbean community members would be a boon to that corner and create a healing hotspot. Have vision!! Be more like Ithaca NY who supported the Moosewood restaurant!! Evanston, do better!!</p>		

						<p>Heartwood is a vital community asset and has been a true place refuge for me. I am a Buddhist practitioner at Heartwood and my daughter has been a student at Chiaravalle Montessori School for the past 9 years. Although I live in Des Plaines, I am very much part of this Evanston community, with 1 hour commute daily. I am well aware of -this is a lot to be driving! I have chosen to do this because I value raising my daughter in a community that fosters compassion and lifelong learning—me at Heartwood and her at Chiaravalle.</p> <p>I am writing to highlight the profound and often overlooked value that The Heartwood Sangha—a community united by shared practice and a commitment to personal growth—can bring to a city. Heartwood serves as an essential place of refuge, providing far more than just a place of worship. It is a place where individuals come to learn practical ways to nurture their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.</p> <p>At its core, The Heartwood Sangha offers a powerful antidote to the loneliness epidemic by fostering genuine human connection. Heartwood is a safe space where individuals can find and have found support and a sense of belonging. This communal bond is not passive; it is built through shared practices of mindfulness and meditation, which equip residents with practical tools to manage their stress, improve mental clarity, and navigate the demands of life with greater resilience. In short, Heartwood is a center for inner transformation that leads to positive external change.</p> <p>It would pain me and many others to lose this place of safety, peace, and serenity.</p> <p>I opposed. Popeyes does not meet the standard of approval. The Dempster-Dodge intersection already has a high concentration of fast-food restaurants, and the traffic there is already truly horrendous!</p>		
Marides Haidari	8868 Kenneth Dr	9/24/2025	NO Popeyes	Opposed	Written com	-Marides Haidari		
Sarah Jacoby	2625 Hurd Ave, E	9/24/2025		Opposed	Written com	The Dempster/Dodge intersection DOES NOT need another fast food chain! Say no to Popeyes! Support local businesses instead!		
						<p>I love two blocks south of Dodge/Dempster where Popeyes is being considered . I urge the commission to vote no for n this because: We already have too many fast chain businesses on this corner There are many other place to get fried chicken in Evanston and even another Popeyes nearby. We need healthier options in our ward that support our wellness goals. The smell of a Popeyes is pretty bad and will take away from the quality of life for nearby residents There are other options available NOW for that space that would be better for our community and foster the local business that would like to expand there Why are we not supporting the small local businesses that are offering healthier, more variety options for our children and community? Please I urge you to help us enhance our community vote no on Popeyes. Thank you Marjory 2nd ward</p>		
Marjory Basso	1030 Darrow Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes in seco	Opposed	Written com			
Vanessa Coffman	1708 Dempster s	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	In person		Self	

					o Members of the Land Use Commission: I am a 50 year resident of Evanston, and I have lived in the First, Third and Fifth Wards over that period. I write to express my opposition to the application of Amanah Holdings to operate a Popeyes fast food restaurant on the corner of Dodge and Dempster as a special use Type 2 restaurant. Cumulative Congestion. Dempster Street is one of the main East West arteries into the City, and the Dodge/Dempster intersection is already the principal choke point. There are times when traffic is backed up on both Dempster and Dodge due to cars lining up to access the Mc Donalds, Starbucks and other fast food restaurants adjacent to the intersection. The memorandum of staff to the Commission dated September 24, 2025 ("Staff Memorandum") identifies eight existing Special Use Type 2 fast food outlets on or very close to this intersection and an additional three Type 1 restaurants in the vicinity. It is fair to say that this intersection is already the heart of Evanston's fast food strip with neighborhood housing close by on both streets. Adding yet another fast food outlet situated directly on this intersection will inevitably add to this already highly congested space and adversely affect the quality of life in the neighborhood. The proposed site of the Popeyes does not contain adequate space to accommodate a free flow of customer traffic into and out of the location. The plans submitted by the applicant demonstrate that this site is intended to be primarily a high volume take out location, with very limited accommodation for indoor food consumption. The applicant's owner has stated that he does not intend to implement a drive through, and indeed there is probably insufficient space on the site to do so. However, this means that all of the take out customer traffic would have to attempt to find parking on the very limited space available on the site. Applicant also states that additional tenants at the same address will also be "serving food and retail experiences." (See, Applicant's formstack submission dated 08/18/25). Inevitably, there would be times, perhaps frequently, when the small lot is full. This all seems to be a recipe for gridlock on this already extremely busy intersection. The Staff Memorandum asserts that the proposal "will not create undue traffic congestion" and that negative impacts "can be addressed" through "enforcement procedures." (Staff Memorandum, p. 6). It is not clear what the Staff means by "undue" traffic congestion or how it came to such a conclusion. Many of us who drive through that intersection regularly would argue that there already is "undue" traffic congestion. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine how the inevitable increased congestion generated by yet another fast food franchise directly on that corner could be prevented through some form of "enforcement procedures." Some have argued that since numerous fast food outlets are already there it would be unfair to exclude others. I suggest the contrary, that intensifying the concentration of such outlets in one single intersection is bound to exacerbate congestion of traffic and degrade the quality of life for those who live and work in the neighborhood. Moreover, adopting the notion that just because other fast food franchises are there it would be inequitable to exclude any others would forever tie the hands of the City to regulate commercial development. Support of Local Organizations. Over the past number of years light industrial facilities have moved away from West Village and there has been an influx of some small businesses as well as not for profit health care, medical, legal and social service agencies that provide badly needed services to the very diverse West Village and adjacent areas on a no fee or reduced fee basis to those in need. I understand that at least one of those organizations has already offered to acquire the site that Popeyes proposes to occupy. I note also that at the public comment period of the City Council meeting on July 30, a local restaurant operator said that she was prepared to open a Type 1 restaurant at that location "offering multiple food choices that are healthy." Evanston Roundtable, August 1, 2025. Moreover, such an establishment would not generate the traffic that a high volume take out operation would produce. Another fast food franchise might or might not provide more revenue to the City, but the proposed Envision Evanston 2045 Comprehensive Plan aspires to a different priority, not one based solely on possible city revenue, but to "support and retain local businesses" and by "enhancing public health through programs that provide support and wraparound services." It should be noted that the owners of the Popeyes applicant are out of town business executives with no apparent connections to our community. Foster Healthy Choices. Envision Evanston 2045's vision is to foster a healthy community; our community will not be healthy if our youth are not. The City's E-Plan identifies obesity as a serious health risk and notes that the West Village and adjacent areas have an obesity rate of over 37% compared to an average of 24% for the City as a whole. One of the principal causes of obesity and poor health is high levels of intake of fats (especially trans and saturated fats), sodium and sugars that are often highly concentrated in deep fried foods. The Telehealth company Plushcare reported that among fast food chains Popeyes and Five Guys "received the highest unhealthiness scores for some of their most popular menu items." See, plushcare.com and thedailymeal.com. Undoubtedly, there are those that would argue that it is not government's role to tell us what to eat, but I would argue that neither should government facilitate unhealthy behaviors of its citizens, particularly its youth. The E-Plan notes that food choices are shaped by the marketing practices and the social context around us and sets a goal for Evanston of "equitable access to affordable and healthy foods." This should apply especially to our kids because obesity can lead to diabetes and other serious diseases. And, by the way, the Popeyes' website shows there is already a Popeyes on Howard Street that adults can readily access, but to put another Popeyes one block away from the high school is a terrible idea; undoubtedly that is why the proposed site was chosen. Many developing adolescent minds might choose unhealthy high trans-fat fried foods for lunch or after school, but, if polled, I am sure their parents would not approve of such easy access. Envision Evanston 2045 also acknowledges that there have been historic injustices of inequality in our City and promises to "repair past harms and restore environmental injustice." Imagine the reaction in Northwest Evanston if Popeyes came to Central Street. Respectfully submitted, Victor Grimm victor.grimm@att.net		
Victor Grimm	1732 Judson Ave	9/24/2025	1820-1830 Dem	Opposed	Written com		
Robert Krivanek	1212 Dewey Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes at Dod	Opposed	Written com	I've lived in this neighborhood for 3 years, 2-1/2 blocks southeast of the site. I'd rather limit commercial uses to the west side of Dodge. We have modest local businesses on this side of Dodge. They're not an intrusion upon the residential and artistic character of the area. A Popeyes doesn't fit this area and I don't feel that the city should provide any variances to facilitate this land use.	
Jam McClelland		9/24/2025	Popeyes Special	Opposed	Written com	I have recently been attending a support group ran by Heartwood that is for survivors of abuse within Buddhist and Spiritual Institutions. I cannot emphasise how important this group is to me and my wellbeing. The Heartwood facilitators and other survivors on this group have given me confidence to find a way forward in life after my abuse. It is so important for this service to continue given that there are no others in the world like it and it has the potential to quite literally save lives of people who would otherwise be alone in their despair. I hope the commission can see how much the Heartwood center offers the local community (and beyond); it promotes Health, Healing, and Happiness - especially for those who are most in need of it. I hope the commission decides to protect an organisation that improves the health of its population, and not a fast food organisation that will directly worsen it.	
Jill Bowman	9545 Kedvale Av	9/22/2025	Popeyes on Dod	Opposed	Written com	Please do not add another fast food restaurant to our neighborhood. This will significantly and negatively impact our businesses at the Heartwood Center due to smells from Popeyes, traffic and noise impacting our West Side practitioners. Popeyes does not improve our neighborhood. Thank you	
Katarzyna Kornecka	1029 Darrow Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes at the c	Opposed	Written com	Popeyes does not meet standards for approval and would be detrimental to the community	

Thomas Cullen				Opposed	Written com	<p>My name is Thomas Cullen and I am a testament to Heartwood Center's service to the Evanston community.</p> <p>Heartwood center has been in service to the local community for 28 years providing special services to hundreds of people in the Evanston.</p> <p>For nearly three decades Heartwood has been nurturing relationships and offering important alternative health services to people in the Evanston and surrounding area. It has become a place where people commune and where events are held.</p> <p>I personally have benefitted from meditation practice and acupuncture sessions and I know many others who also have.</p> <p>Squandering this glowing warmth that is offered to the community with the laden energy of a corporate restaurant that operates on the systemic abuse of animals and no intention in investing in the community will be a heavy blow to the Evanston neighborhood.</p>		
Diane Wang	8724 Saint Louis	9/24/2025	Popeyes chicken	Opposed	Written com	<p>Please keep Popeyes out of our neighborhood!</p> <p>Save Heartwood. I oppose putting in a Popeyes chicken. I support small business and health. Shame on Evanston if a Popeyes chicken is prioritized over a wonderful business like Heartwood.</p>		
Lela Beem	1727 Lee Street	9/24/2025	Popeye's ar Dem	Opposed	Written com	<p>For 14 years, I have owned a home that is approximately four blocks from the corner of Dempster and Dodge where the proposed Popeyes is being considered. I have also been a patron and previously an independent contractor of Heartwood for the past 20 years even before it was at its current location at 1818 Dempster. I would like to voice my support for Heartwood and the contribution that it makes to the community. I would love to see their services expand into more health and wellness oriented shops next-door. Popeyes, while many people like this restaurant, would definitely add to the lack of character at that intersection as well as more traffic, congestion. I do hope that the Land Use Commission will see the value of offering Heartwood an opportunity to expand its wellness initiatives.</p>		
Jessica Renner	1818 Dempster E	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written com	<p>I do not support Popeyes going in, there's not enough parking, it does not align with Evanston's planning, it would force the closure of Heartwood center which is a unique and special healing and spiritual center. Heartwood has been a corner stone of this community and touch so many lives. If you let Popeyes come in, it would destroy not just the lives of the people practicing and receiving healing but the community as a whole. In a time when we need community more than ever, the last thing we need is a fast food restaurant pushing good community healing out! There are much better options to use that land that would amplify community rather than destroy it</p>		
Sheryl Reda	client of 1807 W.	9/24/2025	Popeyes at Dem	Opposed	Written com	<p>To the Land Use Commission: I am writing in opposition to Popeye's setting up shop next door to Heartwood Center, for several reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to the NIH, "When food is cooked at temperatures up to 300°C, carbohydrates, proteins, and fat are reduced to toxic products. ... Cooking fumes also contains carcinogenic and mutagenic compounds [and] has also been associated in several studies with an increased risk of respiratory cancer. Recently, the International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified emissions from high temperature frying as probably carcinogenic to humans." (https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2685804/) This is a direct assault on the mission of Heartwood. 2. The founder of the Heartwood Center purposely chose a location that was not on a busy corner in order to shield clients from the noise, traffic, and fumes of corner locations. Situating a drive-through restaurant next door turns the location hurts its real estate value as well as its value as a healing center. 3. The placement of a national fast-food chain in neighborhood that has long been food-challenged, and has only recently ceased to be a food desert, undermines the work of neighborhood residents and local business people who contribute to the community instead of sucking its resources away. 4. Putting a Popeyes in this location adds car traffic to an already busy area that struggles to be a neighborhood rather than a throughway. It hurts the neighborhood rather than helping. While there is room for drive-throughs west of Dodge, the area east of Dodge should be subject to neighborhood status and protected from drive-throughs. <p>Please respect the ongoing work of local residents who have labored to make southwest Evanston more livable, and deny the permit to Popeyes for this location.</p>		
Maxine Christopher	3301 Arapahoe A	9/24/2025	Popeye's Special	Opposed	Written com	<p>To the Commissioners:</p> <p>I am a middle-aged white woman living in Colorado. I have, over the decades, been a public servant - chairing my town's Planning Commission; built and run a business - a food-service establishment; and I currently work as an interfaith chaplain with a career that spans hospital settings, hospice, and deployments with the American Red Cross.</p> <p>When I first learned of Heartwood, 2 plus years ago, I was struggling with the impacts of direct and damaging spiritual abuse in my faith tradition and faith community. Heartwood's offerings of support and (hybrid) programming was and is the only thing I found like it, which is quite something to say considering I am a well-networked professional caregiver! Reeling from harm, I looked far and wide for a religiously neutral space (meaning no one is teaching/preaching from any specific faith tradition); a community that was/is peer-led (free of the pitfalls of hierarchy or an authority figure); and a place/space which wasn't selling anything. I can't emphasize this enough (especially in this day and age): the groups I have participated in at Heartwood have been free, and have never made a single mention of, or call for, money. Ever. (This, alone, sets them apart from every religious institution I have interacted with, both personally and professionally.)</p> <p>While I live, literally, 1,000 miles away, I believe you will find me qualified to call-out, directly, the benefit Heartwood has to its community, and the broader city of Evanston. Through my hybrid connection, I have become friends with numerous Evanston locals - locals also participating in Heartwood activities; and I am traveling to Evanston in October, specifically for a Heartwood event. I am bringing with me my 'tourist' dollars: I am sleeping locally (in the Heartwood neighborhood), eating locally (in the Heartwood neighborhood), shopping locally (yes - in the Heartwood neighborhood). I can testify with absolute certainty that, should I visit in the future - which I will, as long as Heartwood is continuing to exist and serve its purpose-driven mission, I would NOT be eating at Popeye's; and I also can testify with certainty that, without Heartwood and its connection to its neighbors/community, I would not now, or in the future, be coming to Evanston.</p> <p>This is not - and with Heartwood, never has been - about money. It's about service - service to the community, and a community which reaches far beyond Evanston's city limits. Please demonstrate you share this value; and please add my voice to the many asking you to VOTE NO on Popeyes.</p> <p>Respectfully, Maxine Christopher</p>		
Brian Finley	1229 Darrow		Popeyes	Opposed	Written com	<p>Do not approve Popeyes. We have more than enough fast food places in this neighborhood. Already too many. Valli sells great fried chicken if u want that. Has to be other uses.</p>		

Michael Birnbaum	9308 Karlov Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes special	Opposed	Written comment	Heartwood is an important element to this neighborhood. I am an artist who has had a number of shows at Heartwood and have brought many of my friends from all over the Chicago area in suburbs and even traveling in from California to Heartwood and they all have loved the neighborhood as well as Heartwood as a welcoming, health giving and cultural institution and is a stabilizing force in this neighborhood that the value of which cannot be underestimated. It provides services for people's health as well as a cultural center for artist and their business supporting friends. These people that come to Heartwood for a wide variety of their services also shop and spend money throughout the Evanston area at LOCAL businesses. The people that go to Heartwood and partake of the services would be severely affected by allowing a crowded fast food restaurant right next-door. The practitioners and clients at Heartwood provide much needed income to a variety of small privately owned businesses and if yet, another fast food establishment -of which there are PLENTY already would SEVERELY hinder the ability for Heartwood to stay in business WHICH WOULD BE A SERIOUS LOSS TO FINANCIAL AND CULTURAL HEALTH OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS WELL AS EVANSTON AS A WHOLE. SAY NO TO POPEYES !!!		
Cindy Levitt	1645 Church St.	9/24/2025	3 A special Use	Opposed	Written comment	I currently live in the Second ward (as of 2008). And I lived in the Sixth ward prior to that. In total, I have been an Evanston resident since 1976. I would encourage the Land Use commission to vote NO on the applicant's request for a Popeyes restaurant on that corner. I would like to see a local business there in keeping with a more neighborhood, focused business. I've been a vegetarian for 33 years and I would love to patronize a local business that offers healthier food. Thank you. Cindy Levitt		
Victor Grimm	1732 Judson Ave	9/24/2025	1826-1830 Demg	Opposed	In person		Self	
Olga Gonzales Walsh	1516 Greenleaf St		Popeyes on Dem	Opposed	Written comment	Can you imagine a world where there was a Popeyes opening somewhere on Central Street? Very unlikely. Why is it that McDonald's, Burger King are the offerings for food in our community. What does that tell our students at ETHS about their worth and value? You deserve greasy unhealthy fast food choices? As a practitioner in the Heartwood building, I smell Burger King every day. I can't imagine what the smell of greasy chicken wafting over in the summer would be like. What about supporting local businesses? The Evanston Chicken Shack on Ridge offers delicious food however, Popeyes would significantly impact their bottom line. How does that support local businesses? Why can't we have a business that fosters the health and wellbeing of the community? Please consider that a great thing about Evanston is the community and the many unique small businesses it supports. Another franchise goes a step further to wipe out the individuality that makes Evanston unique and wonderful. Please don't allow Popeyes to open here. Thank you, Olga Gonzales Walsh		
Ronald D'Ancona		9/24/2025	Popeyes Special Use	Opposed	Written comment	Dear members of the Evanston Land Use Commission, I have been attending classes at Heartwood for over a decade, and believe that the proposed opening of the Popeyes next door could adversely effect operations there. There is not enough parking for the Popeyes, which could result in Popeyes customers parking in the gated Heartwood parking lot, instead of Heartwood clients and practitioners. The increased traffic flow and noise could cause other problems for Heartwood practitioners also. I am also concerned about odors from the business. I would hate to see such a positive Institution such as Heartwood lose income and practitioners because of their proximity to the new Popeyes. I thank you for your consideration. Sincerely Ron D'Ancona		
Paula Rosenfeld	747 Ridge Ave, apt 200, Evanston, IL 60202	9/24/2025	Popeyes at Dempster and Dodge	Opposed	Written comment	Allowing a Popeyes fast food restaurant to be built at Dempster Street and Dodge will be very detrimental to traffic congestion at that corner, as well as create much difficulty for the Holistic Health Center, Heartwood, which is next-door to the location. The fumes will likely seep into the building and disrupt the ability for sessions to take place on the west side of the building. Additionally, there are already a number of fast food restaurants right in that radius of the corner, adding to the congestion as well as the lack of quality of healthy food options. It does not seem at all in Character with the goals of envision Evanston, nor the efforts to nurture the neighborhood with offerings that are healing, artistic and strengthening to the neighborhood's vision.		
Diana Finnegan	1108 Brown Street	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	Dear Land Use Commissioners, You have been made aware that adjacent to the proposed site for a Popeyes is Heartwood, a building that has served an underserved community with health care services for many years. I am writing in particular on behalf of the large numbers of survivors of abuse who have found at Heartwood the only available support group and free mental health services. For a large community that is not just local but international, Heartwood serves as a beacon for resources during the recovery from one of life's most devastatingly traumatic experiences. Their expertise in offering support and services (all free of charge) to survivors of abuse by spiritual teachers is unequalled internationally. Each year, Heartwood has offered a refuge for such abuse survivors, most recently in partnership with Northwestern University hosting a conference to address abuse. Heartwood would no longer be an appropriate place for such a gathering if it is filled with the increased traffic, noise and grease exhaust of Popeyes. And there is literally no other organizations providing such support services. In this time when resources for mental and physical health care for underserved communities are increasingly hard to find, this privately funded organization is filling a niche that deserves to be protected. I ask that the commission take into consideration the benefits that Heartwood has quietly been providing to meet the needs of those seeking healing, many of whom will not be represented at this meeting. I am urgently requesting that you deny Popeyes permission. Heartwood's ability to provide a safe, secure and tranquilly welcoming haven for those who travel from afar as well as their local community members seeking healing would also be terribly impacted by the proximity of a Popeyes. The world does not need another fast food restaurant, and this Evanston neighborhood certainly is not lacking for fast food joints. But the world (and Evanston) does, however, need more initiatives to provide reliable, low cost or free health care. I urge you to protect Heartwood's ability to continue to do so. Thank you very much for your attention. Diana Finnegan		

Sarah Westbrook	I rent space at Heartwood: 1818 Dempster Street in Evanston	9/24/2025	Proposed Popeye's at corner of Dodge & Dempster	Opposed	Written comment	<p>My name is Sarah Westbrook. I am an IAYT-Certified Yoga Therapist. I have been a small business owner for 29 years. My business is currently located inside Heartwood; I rent a 600sq ft. studio space on the west side of the building, separated from the proposed Popeye's by about 4' of space.</p> <p>I moved my business from Wilmette to Heartwood during the pandemic. It was a positive change in a dark time. A fellow yoga teacher referred me to Heartwood saying it acts as a small business incubator.</p> <p>And that's what my, and many other, businesses needed at that time: an incubator to protect us while over 70% of yoga instructors colleagues quit or were fired and several studios permanently closed.</p> <p>And now another threat looms, forcing me to consider relocation, most likely outside of Evanston due to how high the rents are, and with it the pains of generating capital, looking for a new space and the twin burdens of losing old regulars and generating new customers.</p> <p>One single business, Popeye's, will benefit if they are allowed to move in next door, while up to 50 neighboring small businesses inside Heartwood may permanently lose their space.</p> <p>The pervasive smell of Popeyes seeping through Heartwood's walls and windows is fundamentally incompatible with my wellness business' crucial requirement of creating and fostering a healthy, relaxing and safe atmosphere.</p> <p>Part of my job is create conditions crucial to helping clients return to good health, exercise and practice breathing correctly. I cannot fight smell. Noise can be tuned out or dampened with white noise machines or soft music, but the heavy grease smell Popeye's is famous for is undefeatable.</p> <p>I lived close to a Popeye's for eleven years in Chicago. We would roll up our windows to drive past. You could smell it for blocks. Popeye's smell takes fast food's impact to a whole other level.</p> <p>Saying yes to Popeye's is Evanston saying no to Heartwood, a 15 year positive contributor to this neighborhood and corner.</p> <p>Saying yes to Popeye's is Evanston saying no to the almost 50 businesses that call Heartwood home.</p> <p>Because if Evanston says yes to Popeye's, Heartwood will lose so many businesses, that it may need to close permanently.</p> <p>Saying yes to Popeye's puts me out of business.</p> <p>Please say no to Popeye's.</p> <p>Thank you, Sarah Westbrook</p>		
Joan Rundell	2206 Kenilworth Ave	9/24/0025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	<p>Heartwood Center has provided so much care for me, that I don't know where to begin. I can't say enough about how much acupuncture and integrative health resources have improved my life. What started as a curiosity turned into one of the most powerful tools for my physical and emotional well-being. Acupuncture has helped me manage stress, reduce pain, and reconnect with my body in ways I didn't think were possible. Nancy Floy and the other integrative practitioners at Heartwood are a critical resource for the people of Evanston. This space is easily accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds and income levels. Please, let it remain where it is so that it can continue to support a community that is thriving in part because of the services it provides.</p>		
David Becker	1131 Darrow Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	<p>The corner of Dempster and Dodge is already saturated with unhealthy chain restaurants. I live a block away and do not want another. Another unhealthy addition does not align with any of the stated goals in Evanston thrives or envision Evanston. The franchisee is not an Evanston resident. This business provides nothing to our community but a handful of poorly paid jobs, of which there are already a lot of opportunities for employment in the area. This is not a good use of the land.</p>		
Hilda Morales	762 Dodge Ave.	9/24/2025	No to Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	<p>To the City of Evanston, Mayor Biss, 2 nd Ward Alderman Krissie Harris, and fellow residents: As a resident of the 2 nd Ward, and a Latina with a strong family history of diabetes, I am deeply concerned about the opening of a Popeyes at Dempster and Dodge. I must raise my voice in protest against a business that profits from unhealthy, highly processed food in a community already grappling with significant health disparities. Our neighborhood is already saturated with fast-food giants—McDonald's, Burger King, Starbucks, and Dunkin'—creating an unhealthy fast-food swamp. The addition of a fried chicken chain would exacerbate serious health inequities, particularly impacting our African American and Latino communities.</p> <p>The data is very clear: life expectancy in neighborhoods shaped by historical disinvestment—especially the 5th Ward just west of ours—falls 5 to 13 years below that of more affluent, predominantly white areas. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity are disproportionately high in the Latino communities; conditions exacerbated by overconsumption of fried and fast foods.</p> <p>Our voices are not against choice—they are for real and health-promoting options. Heartwood, a local business, has offered a healthier, community-centered alternative, featuring plant-based, vegan, and allergy friendly options. This vision nourishes bodies and builds local wealth—unlike yet another national fast-food chain.</p> <p>Mayor Biss and Alderman Harris—our plea is to uphold Evanston's zoning principles regarding cumulative negative impact, public health, and neighborhood wellbeing. Approving yet another fast-food franchise undercuts the city's own EPLAN goals.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Best, Hilda Morales</p>		
Jeff Boarini	1800 Ridge Ave., #104		Application for Popeye's	Opposed	Written comment	<p>Please reject the application to open a Popeye's restaurant at the corner of Dodge and Dempster streets. As the Land Use Commission, one of your duties is to determine if the proposed use meets the legal requirements set by the City. On a larger scale, your duty is in your name; what is the best use of this land? For what and for whom? On the one hand you have a local, neighborhood group that has been helping to revitalize this neighborhood. On the other hand is a national chain and franchisee owner who does not live in Evanston. Which of these will be best for building our community? Which of these will make the best use of this land?</p> <p>Because of what is at stake, this request for a special use should have come to you right from the start. Now that it is before you, I hope that you will reject this application. Thank you and thank you all for your time and continued diligence.</p>		

Susan Lincke	2526 Davisson St, River Grove IL 60171	9/24/2025	Popeye's Land Use Proposal	Opposed	Written comment	<p>I have never been in a yoga class where I have had to smell fast food chicken grease. When I have had massages, I have smelled fragrant oils, not chicken grease and potentially drive-through fumes. I have heard soft music, not the noises from neighboring businesses. Unfortunately, practitioners along the west end of Heartwood are aware that their services would be negatively affected by Popeyes. If these practitioners are forced to leave, this threatens Heartwood's financial viability. This then affects both the lives of Heartwood's 50 practitioners, many who live in Evanston. All 50 would need to find other places to practice. Then these 50 would be challenged to get their customers to move with them... hopefully. This also would affect Heartwood's customers, many who live and/or shop in Evanston.</p> <p>It would affect me. As a resident of River Grove, I am a member of Heartwood's Buddhist community. I have been involved at various times with each of Nancy and Larry's 3 weekly Buddhist meditation classes. Nancy and Larry are very serious practitioners, and our community is very appreciative of their guidance and knowledge.</p> <p>I am a vegan. I enjoy Blind Faith, a very popular vegetarian restaurant, and very popular bakery. Did you know that Blind Faith has thrived in Evanston for 46 years? Chicago vegetarian/vegan restaurants Chicago Diner AND Soul Vegetarian have both been open and popular for 42 years. Soul Vegetarian, a successful Black vegan restaurant on the south side, catered my wedding. Both also are perpetually busy. The issue is not whether a vegan or vegetarian restaurant can thrive, because good food of any variety is appreciated in this city. I think 4 Suns, when given a chance to open, can thrive as well as these three restaurants, with a tasty menu.</p> <p>A new business should not put an existing successful and helpful organization out of business. Popeyes can find another location.</p> <p>Sincerely, Susan Lincke 2526 Davisson St River Grove IL 60171</p>		
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Trisha Connolly	1428 Darrow Avenue	9/24/2025	3.A.	Opposed	Written comment	<p>Dear Land Use Commissioners,</p> <p>I'm writing today to ask that you DENY Popeyes a Type 2 permit at 1826-1830 Dempster, in the 2nd Ward.</p> <p>I've had many concerns about this application from the start. There were no public facing meetings with the Administrative Review board, or other body while the application was discussed, and originally "approved." No notices were EVER placed on the building.</p> <p>In the City of Evanston Municipal Code: 6-3-5-16, it still states the following:</p> <p>Recommended conditions, as well as pertinent application details, shall be forwarded to the Design & Project Review Committee pursuant to Section 6-3-5-16(l) "DAPR Recommendation".</p> <p>(l) DAPR Recommendation. Any administrative review use shall proceed to the Design & Project Review Committee, with conditions recommended by the Zoning Administrator, for review, discussion, and a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator, Community Development Director, and City Manager or his/her/their designee for a final determination. DAPR review shall also serve as a method of general public notification as any administrative review use is published on a public notice of a meeting and committee agenda.</p> <p>Unlike most Evanstonians, I am well aware that DAPR was dissolved in 2022. I'm sure if you'd ask anyone who voted to get rid of it if they meant that the public would no longer have access to a public meeting to hear deliberations about what decisions are being made on developments in their neighborhood they would say "absolutely not." Where is the public facing process?</p> <p>It is my understanding that this "rush" for administrative reviews and approvals was only set in place for already existing businesses who needed to have a more expeditious process in place for permitting approval during and post COVID. This process was never meant to be used for new businesses opening in Evanston, as it was the case for Popeyes.</p> <p>After asking Councilmember Harris for a public meeting to discuss a Popeyes potentially opening at Dempster/Dodge, she agreed to place it on the agenda for the June 17th ward meeting. Unfortunately, the agenda for the meeting only stated that a "community discussion regarding the development at Dempster St. and Dodge Ave.</p> <p>There was no mention of Popeyes. Regardless, forty people showed up to that meeting with concerns about having another fast-food business located in this corridor, full of fast food restaurants already, including drive-thrus. It was never clear from the beginning until the end of the meeting what coming out to articulate our concerns and the 2nd ward meeting meant for the process going forward.</p> <p>The applicant, Karim Poonja decided on July 20th to apply as a Type 1 operation. I'm concerned that he was TOLD to do this by staff. Why? A Type 1 establishment does not face the same scrutiny as a Type 2. It would be hard to believe that the corporate office of RBI Foods, a multi-billion dollar company would have suggested such, when Popeyes operates no Type 1 restaurants in the United States.</p> <p>The City of Evanston has spent millions of dollars hiring consultants to do outreach in our neighborhoods to learn about what vision we have in our future in Evanston. There has been A LOT of feedback given through the Evanston Thrives initiative, and Envision Evanston 2045 plan. More fast food chain restaurants have not made it into either of these plans.</p> <p>What will happen if Popeyes is denied a permit? The Heartwood Center that has operated in the 2nd ward location for 26 years, has made an offer to purchase the property. In addition, they are interested in supporting a local, Black owned business to operate there. It will NOT be a fast food restaurant, but will offer a variety of healthy food options to meet the diverse food interests of our community. Businesses located in this location would STILL pay their share of taxes. This is an example of what we say we DO want in Evanston, locally owned thriving small businesses. This is what an invested community looks like.</p> <p>I'm asking that commissioners pay close attention to the following standards as stated under 6-3-5-16-J:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.The use shall not cause a negative cumulative effect on surrounding properties or the immediate neighborhood. 3. The use shall not cause undue traffic, parking congestion or noise. 5.The use shall be appropriate when considering the surrounding vacancy rate, public health concerns, other and nearby uses. <p>It is upon our staff, commissioners and our elected officials to follow our standards. We are counting on you to vote NO on Popeyes.</p> <p>Thank you for dedicating your time serving on the Land Use Commission. Trisha Connolly 1428 Darrow Avenue 2nd Ward</p>		
Chuck Wasserburg	1428 Darrow Avenue	9/24/2025	Special Use 1826-1830 Dempster Street	Opposed	Written comment	<p>Dear Land Use Commission:</p> <p>I've writing to ask you to deny a Popeyes at the Dempster/Dodge intersection, which is about three blocks from my residence at 1428 Darrow Ave. I've written and spoken before about my opposition. This time, however, I'd like to talk about the rotator cuff problem in my right shoulder.</p> <p>That's because, as a resident of that neighborhood, I've been walking to the Heartwood Center for two years to have massage therapy for my right shoulder, and it's been helping immensely. An approval of Popeyes would likely cause a shut-down of the Heartwood, which is next door to that lot. My massage therapist is only one of many in that building who help others with various ailments, physical and psychological. Are there other people doing such work elsewhere in Evanston? No doubt. But the idea that I and others can conveniently receive treatment is a great benefit of being in the 2nd Ward. I've also attended excellent music events there. The Heartwood has been at its current location for over 25 years and has served as an anchor for that block of other businesses. Should the owners of 4Sons open their food court next door - and, yes, pay taxes - that corner would truly embody the definition of "Evanston Thrives." Thank-you for your work and your time, and I hope you'll support local businesses like this!</p>		
Alicia Vogel		9/24/2025	Popeyes Special Use	Opposed	Written comment	I am strongly opposed to Popeyes Special Use as it clearly does not meet the Standards for Approval; and would be a detriment to the adjacent community.		
Darlene Cannon	1317 Pitner Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	In person		Self	

						<p>Opposition to Proposed Popeyes at Dempster and Dodge</p> <p>Dear Members of the Land Use Commission</p> <p>I am writing to oppose the proposed Popeyes restaurant at Dempster and Dodge as a Type 2 restaurant site.</p> <p>The addition of another national fast-food chain at this location stands in direct conflict with Evanston's EPLAN, which emphasizes addressing health disparities among different ethnic groups. The Dempster-Dodge corridor is in a community where residents already experience higher rates of diet-related illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Approving a Popeyes here undermines the City's stated commitment to health equity by reinforcing easy access to unhealthy food rather than investing in healthier, community-centered options.</p> <p>This proposal also raises serious traffic and site concerns. While there is no drive-thru planned, the high-volume, quick-service nature of this restaurant will still bring a surge of cars into an already busy intersection. Parking shortages, delivery truck access, and increased pedestrian conflict at one of the city's most complicated crossings will only add to existing congestion and safety risks.</p> <p>Additionally, the public health impact extends beyond diet. The area is already oversaturated with fast-food restaurants, which have been linked to persistent rodent infestations in this part of Evanston. Another chain restaurant of this scale will likely worsen an existing sanitation and rodent problem, negatively affecting both residents and nearby small businesses.</p> <p>Equally troubling is the lack of transparency in this process. Community members and small business owners feel excluded from meaningful dialogue about development at Dempster and Dodge. Evanston Thrives outlined that this corner should be a place where Evanston lifts up small, local businesses—the very backbone of our city's economy and identity. Instead, a corporate chain is being prioritized over the unique and diverse small businesses that reinvest directly in our neighborhoods.</p> <p>For these reasons—health equity, traffic and safety concerns, sanitation and rodent issues, lack of transparency, and the sidelining of local businesses—I strongly urge the Council to reject this proposal. Development at this location should align with Evanston's values of equity, sustainability, and community investment.</p>		
Darlene Cannon	1317 Pitner Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	Thank you for your time and consideration		
Andrew Wymer	1221 Oakton St.	9/24/2025	Review of Popeyes permit application	Opposed	Written comment	<p>To City of Evanston Land Use Commissioners:</p> <p>I email as a resident of the 9th ward who serves on the City of Evanston's (CoE) Environmental Equity Investigation Leadership Committee and who is involved in environmental justice advocacy with several other local committees and organizations.</p> <p>Please ensure that the consideration of Popeye's as a Type 2 restaurant follows all applicable city codes. Please do not give special privileges to this application. Please also strongly consider the environmental justice impacts and systemic implications of allowing another chain, fast food restaurant in this neighborhood when there is interest in putting in an affordable and healthier locally-owned alternative.</p> <p>The City of Evanston's EPLAN documented that residents of census tract 8096—directly adjacent to this property—have a life expectancy disparity of up to nine years with more affluent and white census tracts. This document also notes some characteristics of "living conditions that shape our health" (14). One key feature of the physical environment that the study identifies is, "equitable access to affordable, healthy food" (15). Please do what you can as the LUC to ensure that this location offers affordable and healthy food options for community residents.</p> <p>Apart from fast food, chain restaurants situated along Chicago Ave. and generally catering to college students, drivers on Chicago or mass transit riders (Jimmy John's, Chipotle, and Subway), please note the majority of fast food restaurants in or immediately adjacent to census tracts (Steak and Shake-8103.01; Burger King and McDonalds-8096) that are systemically disadvantaged and have been identified as "draft areas of focus" for "systemic disadvantage" in the CoE's Environmental Equity Investigation (see p. 14 of this public presentation: https://www.cityofevanston.org/home/showpublisheddocument/100416/638828250693730000).</p> <p>I am concerned about the systemic dimensions of the choice you have to make here. Why will we as a city approve chain, fast food restaurants in or near heavily racially minoritized or lower income neighborhoods that face systemic disadvantage when those same restaurants would likely not be approved near or in less systemically disadvantaged residential neighborhoods?</p> <p>Thank you each for your earnest and generous service to our city. This requires sacrifice and commitment that is appreciated.</p> <p>Andrew Wymer</p>		

Meleika Gardner	1101 Davis Street	9/24/2025	Popeye's Zoning	Opposed	Written comment	<p>Dear Members of the Land Use Commission:</p> <p>This case is not simply about whether a Popeye's is approved at Dempster & Dodge. It is about whether Evanston will choose integrity over convenience, health over profit, and community over corporate influence.</p> <p>Health Disparities: Your Own Reports Tell the Story</p> <p>The City of Evanston's own health disparity reports confirm what we already know: residents in the 2nd and 5th wards face disproportionately high rates of diabetes, hypertension, and diet-related chronic disease. Placing yet another fried fast-food chain at Dempster & Dodge, where a McDonald's and a Burger King already operate, shows blatant disregard for those findings. This is not neutrality. This is knowingly contributing to preventable harm.</p> <p>Manipulated Zoning and Process Failures</p> <p>The public record reveals a troubling sequence of events:</p> <p>Popeye's was initially approved under a Type 1 sit-down restaurant classification - a category that does not exist anywhere in America for this chain. Only after intense community pushback was the application forced back to Type 2.</p> <p>Commitments made to send this issue to Land Use were broken. Residents were denied transparency and due process.</p> <p>Over 300 residents signed a petition against this development. Their voices cannot be ignored without undermining the very foundation of community participation in government.</p> <p>The Intimidation of Nancy Floy</p> <p>The handling of community opposition reached a shameful low when Heartwood Center owner, Nancy Floy, was singled out by a Popeye's representative sent to "talk" to business owners. He did not visit all who opposed the project. He came only to Nancy.</p> <p>That interaction was so intimidating and threatening that Ms. Floy, a peaceful Buddhist community leader, felt compelled to file a police report. Imagine that: in a city that claims to champion diversity and equity, a woman business owner, whose center has served this community for decades, was left to face intimidation tactics alone.</p> <p>And instead of condemning it, the City allowed the process to continue. Silence from leadership became complicity.</p> <p>The Slander of a Community Institution</p> <p>Adding to the injury, the Heartwood Center, a legitimate and respected Buddhist temple and healing space, was slandered publicly as "not a real temple" by a political supporter. That kind of dismissal of cultural and spiritual institutions erodes trust and devalues the very diversity Evanston claims to celebrate.</p> <p>A Test of Conscience</p> <p>Commissioners, you are not being asked to vote on neutral paperwork. You are being asked whether you will:</p> <p>Sanction intimidation of small business owners who dare to oppose a corporate chain. Undermine Evanston's own health disparity reports by green-lighting yet another fried fast-food outlet in wards already overburdened.</p> <p>Ignore over 300 residents who have clearly said we want something different. If you approve this application, you are not simply permitting a restaurant. You are endorsing a process that relied on intimidation, misclassification, and community betrayal. You are choosing short-term tax revenue over the long-term health and dignity of the people you serve.</p> <p>The Path Forward</p> <p>Evanston does not need more fast food at Dempster & Dodge. It needs businesses that uplift health, celebrate culture, and contribute to equity - options like juice bars, cultural food establishments, and locally-owned enterprises that match our values.</p> <p>For the sake of our residents' health, for the integrity of our process, and for the conscience of this city, I urge you: Reject this application.</p> <p>History will remember whether you chose to protect the community or to side with corporate interests. Please do not add to the burden of those already suffering from health disparities. Do not endorse intimidation as a tactic in civic decision-making. Stand on the right side of health, equity, and justice.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Meleika Gardner Civic Engagement & Legislative Advocate WTPM TV</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/WTPMTV https://www.youtube.com/@WTPMTV/featured patreon.com/wherethepeoplemeet https://www.instagram.com/evanstonlivetv/ https://www.instagram.com/wherethepeoplemeet/</p>		
						"Do Something!" - Michelle Obama		

Larry Akey	1814 Dempster St	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	<p>I urge the Land Use Commission to DENY the Special Use application of Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen for the property at 1826-1830 Dempster. There are a host of reasons to reject the application: 1) negative cumulative effect of adding yet another fast food restaurant to the already existing over concentration of fast food restaurants at the corner of Dempster & Dodge; 2) adverse impact on local businesses including Spex Car Wash, Windy City Flavors, Zentil and the Heartwood Center for Body Mind Spirit; and 3) added traffic congestion and accidents at the intersection due inadequate parking at the location and the proximity of the curb cuts to the traffic light. Any one these reasons is legally sufficient to deny the application.</p> <p>In this comment I want to address a fourth concern: granting a Special Use permit for Popeyes conflicts with the City's stated goals of developing unique local businesses and promoting health and environmental equity. These are goals outlined in Evanston Thrives initiative, the Evanston Project for the Local Assessment of Needs (EPLAN) and the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP). The City Council has adopted all three as official City policy. As result they have the same force and effect as an ordinance. Standard I requires any application for Special Use be denied if it conflicts with an existing ordinance.</p> <p>I will address each of these stated goals in turn. As a member of the West Village Business Association, I worked diligently on the Evanston Thrives initiative, meeting with neighbors, City staff and consultants to develop a retail action plan for our neighborhood. There was broad consensus among all the participants that we already have enough fast food opportunities in the immediate area, at least two of which already serve fried chicken items. Instead, people asked for more diversity in food choices, including access to more healthful options. We believed the City concurred with this recommendation.</p> <p>Why then are we faced with the City staff endorsing a fast food restaurant? Is the Thrive initiative just one more study that gets ignored the first time it becomes convenient? It is little wonder that the City finds it so difficult to get citizen involvement in civic planning efforts; e.g. the the community involvement process for current rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan attracting a paltry 2% of the affected population. Citizens rightly ask why waste our time on working with the City if our involvement gets completely ignored at the first opportunity?</p> <p>The EPLAN establishes a goal of health equity in the City. It notes the reduced lifespan of people in the 2nd and 5th Ward compared to the rest of the City, in part due higher incidences for diabetes and obesity. The link between those two diseases and the high-sugar, high-sodium, high-transfats characteristics of most fast food is well-known.</p> <p>Popeyes is typically rated as among the least healthful of the fast good chains. For example, Plushcare rates their chicken sandwich as the unhealthiest in that class of fast food, less healthy than either the McChicken sandwich or Burger King's Original Chicken sandwich, both of which are already available in the immediate neighborhood. The same is true of their chicken nuggets. At some point, health equity needs to be more that buzzword: it's easy to talk the talk; it's time to walk the walk.</p> <p>Finally, the CARP sets out a goal of environmental equity. The applicant's stated nature of the business as primarily take-out, the admitted lack of parking sufficient for Popeyes customers and staff identified in the Zoning Dept analysis (let alone parking for whatever other business colcates there), and the proximity of the curb cuts to the intersection all mean there will likely be substantially increased auto exhaust from idling cars waiting to pick up at an already polluted intersection. Why the City didn't require a traffic study as it has done for other fast food Special Use permits in the area in't addressed. Moreover, adding another fast food restaurant will only add to the problem of litter and vermin in the neighborhood.</p> <p>For all of these reasons, I urge you to REJECT the Popeyes application.</p>		
Sarah	3030 Payne St Evanston, IL	9/24/2025	Popeyes Special use	Opposed	Written comment	<p>As an Evanston resident for over 40 years and a patron of Heartwood's classes and services for 20 years, I strongly oppose approval of a Popeyes at this location. I have personally witnessed multiple traffic accidents and near-misses in the intersection where this restaurant is proposed, and I believe the cumulative negative impacts far outweigh any perceived benefit.</p> <p>—Overconcentration of Special Uses: There are already 19 other Special Uses within 500 feet and 11 chain fast-food Special Uses within 300 feet. Another fast-food chain would push the area well beyond a reasonable balance.</p> <p>—Excessive Fast-Food Density: If approved, there would be chain fast-food restaurants on all four corners of the intersection, creating a highly concentrated, low-quality corridor that undermines Evanston's planning goals.</p> <p>—Traffic & Safety Concerns: I have personally seen accidents and near misses at this intersection. The additional drive-thru and delivery traffic Popeyes would generate will only worsen congestion and safety risks for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.</p> <p>—Inadequate Parking: The site lacks sufficient on-site parking, which would push cars into already limited neighborhood parking and create further conflicts.</p> <p>—Odor & Health Impacts: The grease exhaust odors would directly affect me and my ETHS student who regularly go to the offices located immediately next to the proposed Popeyes site. This has direct consequences for our health, well-being, and quality of life.</p> <p>—Negative Cumulative Effect: The combined impacts of congestion, accidents, odors, and fast-food density will create an environment that reduces neighborhood safety, livability, and value.</p> <p>—Conflict with City Plans: This project is inconsistent with CARP (Climate Action and Resilience Plan), the E-Plan, Evanston Thrives, and Envision Evanston, all of which prioritize sustainability, reduced automobile dependence, and healthier development choices.</p> <p>—Community Costs Outweigh Benefits: It is my belief that the cost to the community—through increased traffic, safety risks, odors, and environmental impacts—does not justify or negate any potential benefits of having another Popeyes.</p> <p>For these reasons, I urge you to deny this Special Use request. Evanston deserves development that supports long-term sustainability, community health, and safety.</p>		
Lynn Fuller	1005 Dewey Ave, 1R, Evanston 60202	9/24/2025	Popeye's franchise	Opposed	In person		Self	
Julie Fleps	2151 Forestview Rd, Evanston	9/24/2025	Special Use/1826-1830 Dempster St/25ZMJV-0041	Opposed	In person		Self	
Arlene Faulk	Heartwood Center, 1818 Dempster	9/24/2025	Popeye's request to locate at Dempster and Dodge	Opposed	In person		Self	
Alicja Pulit	2674 Prairie Ave, Evanston IL 60201	9/24/2025	Say NO to Popeyes!	Opposed	In person		Self	

Ben Blount	1811 Greenwood St	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	As a person living in the neighborhood, I am against Popeyes moving into the space at Dempster and Dodge. There is already a high concentration of fast food restaurants in our neighborhood. The neighborhood and city would be better served to have an independent business in that space. An independent business would support small business growth and provide a healthy option for ETHS students.		
Trisha Connolly	1428 Darrow Avenue	9/24/2025	3.A	Opposed	In person		Self	
Lisa Applegate	1210 Dewey Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes	Opposed	In person		Self	
Michelle Bobier	2839 W. Jerome St., Chicago 60645	9/24/2025	Proposed Popeyes at Dempster and Dodge	Opposed	Written comment	Dempster and Dodge already has an incredible number of fast food outlets. This is not the area around an exit off I94; it's a suburban intersection then is literally half a block from a residential neighborhood. Having Popeyes right next-door to Heartwood would be very disturbing for both the clients and the practitioners there. Heartwood has been a positive and stable influence in the West village for many years; it's voice should be heard.		
Rebecca Shereikis	1825 Crain Street, Evanston IL	9/24/2025	Popeyes special use application	Opposed	In person		Self	
Elizabeth Hart	1609 Sherman Ave., Evanston		Popeyes	Opposed	Written comment	Popeyes does not meet the standard for approval and must be denied. Please hear your constituents who are clearly opposed to Popeyes. Your representation must reflect the will of the people who voted for you.		
Jason Foster	9038 Forestview	9/24/2025	Popeys	Opposed	Written comment	We need healthier options that are also affordable instead of another fast food establishments. Although there are food options you can still have a food desert. With such a heavy Black and Brown population in the area we should not have another unhealthy option given there is already a McDonalds and a Burger King in the near area. Although people would want it it does not mean it is a healthy option.		
Lucia Licavoli, PhD	39w100 Shannon	9/24/2025		Opposed	Written comment	I've been a customer of the Heartwood Center for over 2 decades. I oppose the addition of Popeyes as it not only disables the ability of Heartwood to continue but also changes the landscape of the area - adding more fast food rather than small businesses and ethnic cuisine. I love Evanston, and drive here at least twice monthly from Geneva. While here I always stop at Pita Inn Grocery store and other local shops. My total spending is a minimum of \$250 every other week. I simply would not come if Heartwood was gone.		
Laurie Fuller	6325 N Lakewood	9/24/2025	Special Use 18	Opposed	Written comment	As a 20 year member of the Heartwood community I oppose the Popeyes. It will not be good for the neighborhood (not healthy food). It will not be good for the Heartwood Center (all the smells and traffic will drive business out of Heartwood Center). The Popeyes does not align with CARP, E-Plan, Evanston Thrives, & Envision Evanston. There are already 11 chain fast food restaurants very close to that corner and on the corner. Please do not allow this special use. Heartwood is a vital part of the community and the people who propose the Popeyes are not members of the community and are not interested in community health and wellness. Vote NO to the special use.		
Jennifer Stumbaugh	2210 lake st	9/24/2025	Popeyes special	Opposed	Written comment	I am opposed to granting Popeyes a special use permit. Please allow small businesses to occupy this space		
Lynn Fuller	1005 Dewey Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes Franchise	Opposed	Written comment	As a resident and community member of Evanston, I appreciate the opportunity to voice my opinion. I'm opposed to a Popeye's franchise moving into the space at 1826 Dempster St. My views are in no way an indictment of the personal choices of my neighbors, but I would like to see healthier options in the 2nd ward. Much like the City of Evanston provides a network of bike lanes for the safety of its residents—but doesn't require the usage—I'd like to see it back healthy dining options, also for the safety of its residents from a nutritional standpoint. I'm in support of Evanston's small business owners moving into 1826 Dempster St. I'd also like to see the space designed to support pop-ups for nascent small businesses on a rotating basis, similar to the Heartwood Center's support for local artists, which I've personally benefitted from and can speak to the additional opportunities the exposure provides. As an example of a pop-up, Marroz Franklin, an Evanston resident, comes to mind. She's a pastry chef at and general manager of Hoosier Mama at 749 Chicago Ave, and she's also in the process of starting her own pastry business, but isn't ready to operate her own storefront. Being able to participate in a pop-up will provide small business owners with exposure, experience, and community feedback before launching full-scale. Experience in a supportive environment could also benefit ETHS students with entrepreneurial leanings. In that vein, I realize it's a tall order but I'd be interested in having a poll run to learn ETHS students' thoughts on how to best utilize the space, especially since the location is central to many of the students' routes and they should have a voice in what merchant options are available to them. I'm continuously astonished by the initiative of the youth and think their voices should be heard because, when given the opportunity, they know what their community needs to thrive. Cookies for Compost comes to mind, which was a program started by ETHS senior Maia Roothaan that provided free composting services to Evanston residents and used cookies as an incentive for sustainability actions. It continues to this day and is run by Collective Resource. All that to say, I would like to see the empty space used to support the health and business goals of Evanston residents versus another fast food franchise.		

						<p>When I was a child, we lived a few blocks from Dempster and Dodge and one of our family "treats" was to do what my mom called "Drive In, Drive Out." It involved first hitting the KFC drive-thru on Dempster and then driving through the McDonalds next door. Everyone got to order what they wanted and it remains one of those unadulterated joyful memories of childhood.</p> <p>This was probably 40 years ago or more, long before the Heartwood Center opened across the street from the Burger King that replaced a Browns Chicken, and while I no longer live in my childhood home at Dempster and Asbury, I live only about a mile down Dodge on the other side of the canal. I shop at Valli produce every Sunday and, yes, I go to McDonalds occasionally, the KFC having been replaced by a Starbucks a while back.</p> <p>I find the arguments against opening a Popeyes at the corner of Dempster and Dodge to be absurd. The Heartwood Center opened at the mouth of the city's fast food corridor. I am sure, back in 1999, they had other options, but that's where they chose. Unless they took the building sight unseen, they have to have known where they were moving.</p> <p>Now, I remember that corner back then. The Evanston Plaza was a shambles, mostly vacant. Nobody thought it'd come back and be the thriving location it is now (driven in large part by a great grocery store and other fast food establishments). There's almost no vacancy in the Plaza or the surrounding blocks anymore, in fact the only space that hasn't been filled with something with staying power is that strip mall right next to Heartwood.</p> <p>While that Dempster/Dodge corridor is thriving now, it really hasn't changed its character much from back in 1999. There are more fast food places, sure, but there's more of everything. Compared to Downtown Evanston, which has struggled to keep tenants, it's a huge success. There's foot traffic, high school kids, and plenty of folks heading to grab groceries, hit the Goodwill, and maybe even do their own version of "Drive In, Drive Out."</p> <p>Popeyes is very much in line with what exists in that corridor already. Heartwood likes to portray it as an aberration, but the reality is it's not. I personally would be excited to frequent it with my family. Let's end this absurd debate and go eat some chicken.</p>		
Dan Sinker	2413 Brown Ave	9/24/2025	Popeyes on Dem	In favor	Written com			
Seren Payne	1205 Ashland Av	9/24/2025	Popeye's	Opposed	Written com	As a local resident to the location Popeye's is seeking to use, I strongly oppose Popeye moving in. I have also been informed Popeyes Special Use does not meet the Standards for Approval.		