

**APP261 - Appeal Buc-ee's ADM
Public Comments
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Jessica Merriam

From: PLNWEB
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 7:54 AM
To: Jessica Merriam
Subject: FW: Buc-ee's opposition



Gayle Jackson

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From: Dana CORY <danapaultc@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2026 5:41 PM
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Subject: Buc-ee's opposition

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Mark Safe

Report

El Paso County Digital, Strategy & Technology (DST)

To the El Paso County Planning Department and County Commissioners,

I am writing as a concerned resident regarding the proposed Buc-ee's development near Monument and Palmer Lake. I strongly urge the Planning Department not to treat this proposal as a simple administrative approval under the obsolete C-1 zoning designation.

Please do not dismiss these concerns as just another round of public opposition.

Many of us feel that decisions of this magnitude should not move quietly through administrative channels based on outdated zoning definitions that were never intended for a project of this scale. We are asking not for special treatment, but for transparency, careful scrutiny, and a meaningful public process. Public input should matter before irreversible decisions are made.

This project is not comparable to the type of "convenience store" that existed when the C-1 zoning code was created. In 1991, convenience stores were small neighborhood-serving businesses such as 7-Eleven stores, typically around 5,000–6,000 square feet. C-1 zoning and convenience store uses were historically intended to serve local neighborhood and community needs through small-scale commercial services, retail, and offices.

By Buc-ee's own statements to the Palmer Lake Planning Commission in 2025, the company acknowledged that approximately "90–95% of store sales come from outside of the zip code." That statement alone demonstrates that this is not a neighborhood-serving convenience store, but a large regional commercial destination designed to draw substantial outside traffic from well beyond the local community.

Additionally, within the C-1 designation, gas stations were historically permitted only as an accessory use alongside a convenience store, not as the defining feature of a massive regional travel center operation. Buc-ee's far exceeds the original scale, intent, and community-serving purpose contemplated under the obsolete C-1 zoning classification.

Several issues deserve careful scrutiny and a full public process:

- The current C-1 zoning classification is obsolete and has not been updated since 1991.
- Buc-ee's appears to more closely match the intent of C-3 or regional commercial zoning rather than neighborhood commercial zoning.
- A project of this scale should not move forward through administrative approval simply because the obsolete zoning code lacks a modern size limitation for convenience stores.

- Buc-ee's should not be allowed to avoid public hearings by using an outdated zoning technicality.
- The Town of Monument has already raised concerns regarding possible "segmentation" related to the Beacon Lite Road project and the use of dirt generated from county-funded road work.
- The proposed building and sign heights appear to exceed the 30-foot limits allowed under C-1 zoning. I request clarification regarding how these heights are being measured and whether retaining wall height is being included under applicable building code standards.
- The public deserves transparency regarding whether any future Planned Unit Development (PUD) process could be used to waive existing restrictions.

This project would have major regional impacts involving traffic, infrastructure, water use, visual character, noise, and public safety. Because of its scale and significance, I respectfully request that the Planning Department require a full public review process rather than allowing this proposal to proceed administratively.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul & Dana Cory

19390 Doewood Dr

Monument, CO 80132

Jessica Merriam

From: David Parks <dpshops@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2026 5:01 PM
To: PLNWEB; PCD Hearings
Cc: Meggan Herington; Bill Wysong; Holly Williams; Cory Applegate; Lauren Nelson; Carrie Geitner; Kenny Hodges; Kylie Bagley
Subject: Just what is Buc-ee's? And what makes a store a convenience store? Convenience!! Period.
Attachments: EPCO Convenience Store Stats -- August 2026.xlsx

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[Mark Safe Report](#) El Paso County Digital, Strategy & Technology (DST)

First, a Shakespearean take on the current dilemma:

To be or not to be a convenience store is the question:

whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of a giant tourist trap masquerading as a
'convenience store,'
Or to take arms against the troubles which will come in its wake,
And by opposing, end them.

For what IS a convenience store, if not convenient?

The King Soopers on North Gate has its own gas station and convenience store, a mere 173 square foot space, but it is convenient, when getting gas.

The adjacent grocery store is 118,000 square feet. It sells some of the same things as the C-store, but that hardly qualifies it as a convenience store. It's a grocery store. Duh.

of all 250 C-stores in El Paso County, the average size is 2900 square feet. Buc-ee's is 25 times larger. It is neither convenient, nor is it a convenience store. It's a regional travel center, meant to sell travelers lots of souvenirs and junk food they probably don't need, gas, & a pee.

To call it a convenience store is a fool's errand, the work of knaves and buffoons. Ay, there's the rub. This nonsense must end here. Thank you.

And now, the 'evidence':

Dear esteemed fellow leaders and residents of El Paso County,

I guess I'm a little incredulous that we are actually being forced into a situation where we must monopolize the time, energy and resources of our combined elected officials, paid officials, and thousands of local, devoted citizens of El Paso County, in order to determine whether or not Buc-ee's can be considered as a 'convenience store,' in a vain attempt to find it compliant with the current C1 zoning of 30 of the 35 acres which they have recently purchased at Monument Ridge west. This dilemma seems to defy logic, and to be absurd, and is arguably insulting, at the very least.

In May of 2024, two engineers from Kimley-Horn, Kyle Watson and Mary Johnson, represented Buc-ee's' interests in a preliminary meeting with a group representing El Paso County, made of planning staff and other personell, led by Kylie Bagley, with assorted other county engineers and officials.

The meeting lasted almost an hour, and during that time, all types of suggestions and help were offered to Kimley-Horn, and to Buc-ee's, as they began the process of developing a plan to submit to the county.

During that meeting, the proposed 74,000 square foot development was clearly referred to as a 'TRAVEL CENTER' by Kimley-Horn, and they expressed their intention to confirm zoning, as well as addressing water, sewer, storm water, road improvements, and other critical issues. They made it quite clear that patrons frequently stay longer than a 'typical' gas station or convenience store, with 20-30 minutes of shopping around...which is their primary justification for the enormous parking lot.

Further, they expressed their hopes of getting involved with the county, which was in the first stages of the Beacon Lite Road project. They proposed moving forward with the county, working together on it, in order to "limit spending"/and help with input on the intersection configuration between Buc-ee's and what the county already has planned...

To my knowledge, Buc-ee's has contributed \$0 to the Beacon Lite road project, but has made out quite well by getting tons of free fill dirt from it.

Ms. Bagley assured them, both early in the meeting, and throughout until the very end, that they would need to re-zone and re-plat the property, using the word 'rezone' at least ten times, since their project does not fit within the current zoning. And yet here is Buc-ee's, two-plus years later, trying to get what they want anyway, without rezoning. Mind boggling.

Just for giggles, let's just take a quick look at the convenience store situation in El Paso County.

According to El Paso County's own records, there are @248 convenience stores in the county (see attached, for a full listing.) Ranging in size from 156 and 177/179 (King Sooper's) sq ft to 7628 (Quik Trip) and 9435 (Pilot, a truck stop) sq ft. The average size of a convenience store in El Paso County is only 2987.61 sq ft, a whopping 25 times smaller than one, single Buc-ee's store of @74,000 sq ft.

This isn't just a difference in scale; it would be bad enough, if scale were the only issue. But this is a profound difference in character, definition, and overall local impact, both immediate and long-term. No proposed convenience store in history has ever represented this type of impact on a community, nor do today's standard convenience stores ever meet with the type of profound resistance and controversy that Buc-ee's has met with in communities all over the country. A normal convenience store, a Circle K or a 7-11, just moves in, and sets up shop. Generally, there is no contest, no questions, no fuss.

Buc-ee's, however, has been the originator of bitter feuds all over the country. Even Boerne, a town in Buc-ee's own home state of Texas, fought them for 9 1/2 years, before finally succumbing. A mayor at one current Buc-ee's location in Texas said it was great to have them for the first year, but then there were so many problems with Buc-ee's by the second year that he had to resign as mayor, and he later ended up saying on record that approving Buc-ee's was the worst mistake of his life. No one has ever said that about about welcoming a Circle K into a neighborhood.

In fact, no convenience store in this country has ever been the author of such nonsense, and there are over 150,000 convenience stores in the U.S. today...almost all of which came in quietly, and set up shop to serve the local community, as is their mission.

It should come as no surprise that Buc-ee's, and it's now gargantuan, 'Texas-style' obsession with size should have originated in Texas...one tenth of all the convenience stores in the nation are in Texas. And Buc-ee's actually started as a normal, convenient, convenience store with its first location in Lake Jackson, Texas, in 1982. At that time it was 3000 square feet, almost our average size EPCO store, to the foot. But Buc-ee's has absolutely outgrown the ability to call itself a convenience store, and they no longer advertise themselves as a convenience store. They have become something rather different, a different animal altogether, if you will.

According to "Retail Dive," and "Statista," and the National Association of Convenience Stores, most patrons spend from 3 to 4 minutes inside a convenience store, and 1/3 to 1/4 of that time is spent waiting in lines. The growth and success of such stores is based on their convenience, literally, meaning nearby local access, no lines, speedy service, and easy ingress and egress...easy in, easy out. None of these attributes can be applied to a modern Buc-ee's

Even with the general speed and ease of a typical convenience store, there is still an ongoing push on the part of the public to make the experience even shorter, like with on-line pre-ordering and paying.

According to DTiQ, average gas station/convenience stores have @300 visitors a day, and only 35-45% ("goEBT") of those actually go inside the store to make a purchase.

while these visit times are gradually increasing over the years, as locals use true convenience stores more because of their literal convenience, NONE of these things apply to the crowds, wait times, traffic, or sheer scale of a Buc-ee's.

'Convenience Store News' lists the top 100 convenience stores in the country every year, and Buc-ee's has never been on that list, not even in last place. While CS News recognizes Buc-ee's as a competitor of sorts in their general market share, since some of what it offers to the public has similarities to what convenience stores generally offer, they do not see Buc-ee's as one of them, as a convenience store. Buc-ee's is simply in a category by itself.

There is a fairly recent King Soopers on North Gate Boulevard. Next to the gas pumps, it has a convenience store of 173 sq. ft. Across the parking lot, the King Soopers store itself, which sells some of the same things as the convenience store out by the pumps, is some 118,000 square feet. It does NOT call itself a convenience store, because it is not convenient. It is a grocery store, and can't call itself a convenience store simply by its proximity to its gas pumps. An apple is an apple; an orange is an orange.

And this very distinction is at the crux of our dilemma here. Buc-ee's is in its own category, which is not that of a convenience store. And El Paso County does not really have a current zone or code that fits the modern phenomenon of a regional travel center, which Buc-ee's is. It is certainly not a convenience store, a fact which Stan Beard, the director of real estate and development for Buc-ee's, repeated several times to concerned citizens of Efland, North Carolina, back in 2020, to allay their fears that their community would just become a 'pit-stop' convenience store location for out-of-town travelers and tourists.

While Buc-ee's freely admits that most of their clientele are NOT locals (a primary definition of all convenience stores, and of C1 zoning itself, to primarily serve locals), they also generally call themselves a 'travel center,' as in the proposed "Efland Station, North Carolina Family Travel Center" which Buc-ee's wanted to build there, but eventually withdrew. The town simply smelled their false promises, and said "NO!" So Buc-ee's simply moved up the road 10 miles, to the next county, and seduced an even poorer town, in a different county, suggesting that they would be the answer to all their woes.

So Buc-ee's is not a convenience store, and also not a gas station, by their own insistence, and definitely NOT a truck stop, as they vehemently proclaim.

The question remains, then, just what IS Buc-ee's? Since the sole purpose of this particular appeal and upcoming meeting is simply to determine what Buc-ee's is or is not, in terms of the ability to call itself a convenience store, or to fit within the current C-1 zoning, which is a non sequitur from the get-go, this meeting should be decisively concluded, with the determination that Buc-ee's is simply not a convenience store, not for some 40 years now, at least.

The question that follows, logically, is just what zoning El Paso County would think appropriate for a business like Buc-ee's, since in their present codes, fitting Buc-ee's into almost any of those zoning categories would be like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. And there is the problem for the future. Everyone reading this already knows what a

convenience store is. Trying to include Buc-ee's within that group or classification is quite simply an exercise in futility...without even probing the deeper question whether it fits that specific location at all, according to the county's own Master plan, no matter what zoning is used.

For my money, it belongs somewhere else in Colorado, and not somewhere like Monument Ridge West, where the very locals who are supposed to be served by it are protesting it so vehemently.

Thank you so much for recognizing the sentiments of your constituency, and for putting Buc-ee's in their proper place, which is elsewhere, entirely.

In gratitude for your public service, and for doing the 'right' thing...

Respectfully,
David Parks

Jessica Merriam

From: PLNWEB
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 8:11 AM
To: Jessica Merriam
Subject: FW: ADM264 / APP261 – Written Public Comment for Administrative Record – Buc-ee's Appeal



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From: Gary Baumgarten <garybplano@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2026 2:31 PM
To: PLNWEB <PLNWEB@elpasoco.com>
Subject: ADM264 / APP261 – Written Public Comment for Administrative Record – Buc-ee's Appeal

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August 26, 2026

El Paso County Board of County Commissioners
200 South Cascade Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Subject: Opposition to Buc-ee's Appeal of Administrative Determination ADM264

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of County Commissioners,

I am writing as a concerned resident of Monument, Colorado, regarding the appeal Buc-ee's EPCO, LLC (Applicant) has filed regarding the Planning and Community Development Director's July 1, 2026, administrative determination (ADM264). In a July 2, 2026, letter, the Applicant requested a review and interpretation of applicable Code provisions by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). The enclosed written evidence is submitted for inclusion in the administrative record of APP261 ("Appeal Buc-ee's ADM," per its EDARP project title).

This appeal will be considered by the BoCC at the August 27, 2026, public meeting. The appeal is limited to a single issue:

Whether the proposed Buc-ee's use is an allowed use in the C-1 zoning district or is similar enough to be an allowed use to be considered as such.

As presented in the enclosed evidence:

- The proposed Buc-ee's travel center does not meet the County's definition of a "Convenience Store". The proposed travel center would primarily serve highway travelers rather than the neighborhood in which it would be located. The proposed travel center also includes functions beyond the scope of a convenience store with restaurant space, food preparation, and large-scale fuel sales.
- The proposed travel center does not meet the County's criteria to be considered similar to a convenience store or other allowable use in a C-1 zone. The travel center is not consistent with the purpose of the C-1 zone and would have characteristics and impacts of a far greater scale than a convenience store or any other allowable uses in a C-1 zone.

The applicant relies on a flawed analysis by comparing the traffic impacts of the travel center to three scenarios of high-intensity uses. However, the uses they have chosen as comparisons are not convenience stores and are not even allowed uses in a C-1 zone. Thus, the applicant's comparison is invalid.

When a proposed development does not fit an existing use classification, the proper course of action is not to stretch the language of the Code to accommodate the applicant's proposal. Instead, the proposed development should undergo a comprehensive public review process that allows decision makers and the affected communities to fully evaluate the proposed developments impacts, adherence to the County's Master Use Plan and compatibility.

I respectfully urge the BoCC to deny the Applicant's appeal that the proposed Buc-ee's is an allowed use in the C-1 zoning district or is similar enough to be an allowed use to be considered as such.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Baumgarten
Monument, CO

Enclosure

Issue 1: Is the proposed Buc-ee's use an allowed use in the C-1 zoning district?

Buc-ee's original request asked the County to confirm that the proposed 31-acre travel center, with a 74,000 square foot retail and restaurant building, 120 fuel pumps, 20 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and 812 parking spaces (791 standard spaces and 21 accessible spaces) constitutes a "Convenience Store" as defined by El Paso County Land Development Code (LDC) and permitted in the existing C-1 zoning district.

In the LDC, Section 1.15 (Definitions of Specific Terms and Phrases), a "Convenience Store" is defined as:

An establishment for the purpose of offering for sale to the neighborhood in which it is located such items as groceries, ready to eat food, over the counter drugs, and sundries. A convenience store may include retail sale of gasoline and other petroleum products.

On the question of whether the proposed travel center meets the County's definition of a convenience store, the answer is clear that the travel center does not meet the County's definition of a convenience store based on the following evidence:

Applicant Does Not Identify Themselves a Convenience Store

It is clear that the number one reason Buc-ee's claims they are a "Convenience Store" in their application, is that a convenience store is an allowed land use for the C-1 zoning district. However, Buc-ee's own website, news releases about their stores, or permitting at other locations does not identify Buc-ee's as a "Convenience Store".

- Buc-ee's does not refer to themselves as a convenience store on their own website.
 - On their "About Buc-ee's" portion of their website, Buc-ee's only says: "we have been committed to providing a clean, friendly, and in stock experience for our customers". It makes no mention of being a convenience store. ¹
 - Under the FAQ portion of their website, Buc-ee's discusses the times their kitchens open at their "Travel Centers" ²
 - On their "Buc-ee's Locations Maps 2026", the listing of their 55+ stores identifies the location of the facilities as one of the following:

- Travel Center
- Coming Soon
- Smaller store
- Representatives of Buc-ee's in presentations to City/County Officials or the press do not identify themselves as a "Convenience Store".
 - In a news article from the Richland Source, Buc-ee's project coordinator for the Proposed Buc-ee's Travel Center in Mansfield, Ohio made this statement: ³
 - **"We get confused with gas stations, convenience stores. We like to actually be known as a family-friendly travel center."**
 - In a September 1, 2025, CBS News article, Richard Sebastian, Buc-ee's head of operations made the following statements: ⁴
 - "We consider this a destination experience". He goes on to say, it could be described as a "sensory overload".
- In other locations where a Buc-ee's was permitted or requested permits, they referred to themselves as different use categories.
 - In Mansfield, Ohio, the future Buc-ee's was approved by the city commission for the installation of their **Gasoline Service Station**. ⁵
 - In the Town of Johnstown, Colorado, Buc-ee's requested the Planning and Zoning Commission to consider their Site Development Plan for a project called the **"Buc-ee's Travel Center."** ⁶

In addition, the Town of Johnstown Resolution 2022-16 approved the site development plan for **Buc-ee's travel center**. ⁷

Applicant Fails to Demonstrate a Primary Intent to Serve the Neighborhood

An important aspect of the LDC definition of a convenience store, is that a convenience store's purpose is to "serve the neighborhood in which it is located".

Rather than being an establishment for the purpose of serving the surrounding neighborhood, the proposed Buc-ee's travel center has a primary business purpose of selling products and fuel to regional travelers.

The very business model of Buc-ee's is in conflict with the County's definition of a convenience store. Comments from Buc-ee's representatives make it clear that their travel centers are not establishments for the purpose of serving the neighborhood in which it is located.

Here is a sampling of statements that have been made by Buc-ee's representatives noting that they mainly serve people outside the local community:

- At a presentation to the Mansfield, Ohio city Planning Commission, Buc-ee's project coordinator Angela Janik said:
 - 90 percent of Buc-ee's customers come from 20 miles or farther away from the store and that 65 to 68 percent come from more than 100 miles away. Ms. Janik goes on to say, "we do like the locals that come, but most of our guest are outside of your town."⁸
- Springfield Director of Economic Vitality made this statement:
 - Through research estimates provided by Buc-ee's, the new location will serve around six million customers annually, with 80 percent of that customer base traveling more than 20 miles away.⁹

- The applicant previously reported to the Town of Palmer Lake that 90-95 percent of their sales are to customers outside the zip code in which a travel center is located.¹⁰

Applicant Wrongly Asserts that Lack of Size Limit in Code Means Unlimited Size

The applicant asserts that the lack of specific size limits in the LDC means that a convenience store can be any size. While the applicant is correct that there is no specific size limit in the County's definition of a convenience store, that does not erase the requirement that a convenience store must intend to serve the local neighborhood. The lack of a size limit gives flexibility to have somewhat larger or smaller convenience stores based on the size and needs of individual communities, rather than unlimited size.

The retail component of the proposed Buc-ee's travel center at 74,000 square feet would be 30 times larger than the average convenience store in the country and 15 times the maximum allowable size for a convenience store in the neighboring Town of Monument (less than 5,000 square feet).¹¹

The proposed Buc-ee's would be roughly four times as large as all the other existing convenience stores in the Tri-Lakes area combined. In fact, it would be larger than almost all of the nearby grocery stores and drug stores in the Town of Monument and it approaches the size of nearby large-scale retail businesses.¹²

A 74,000 square foot convenience store could not be supported by the population in the surrounding community.

An organization called the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) is the leading global trade association dedicated to advancing convenience and fuel retailing. Many convenience stores including companies such as QuikTrip, Circle K, 7-Eleven and Buc-ee's are members of NACS.

Although not a legally binding definition, NACS defines a convenience store as:

- A retail business that provides the public with a convenient location to quickly purchase a wide variety of consumable products and services, generally food and gasoline.¹³

An NACS research report, "Convenience Store Industry Marketing Strategies and Store Formats" identifies six convenience store formats.

- Kiosk – a store less than 800 square feet. Parking is limited to the pumps.
- Mini Convenience Store – usually 800 to 1,200 square feet. There is no parking other than at the pumps.
- Limited Selection Convenience Store – these stores range from 1,500 to 2,200 square feet.
- Traditional Convenience Store – many convenience stores fall into this category. They are about 2,500 square feet. Most of these stores have 6-12 striped parking spaces.
- Expanded Convenience Store – these stores are 2,800 to 3,600 square feet. These stores typically have 10 to 20 marked spaces.
- Hyper Convenience Store – these large stores are 4,000 to 5,000 square feet.

Additionally, the examples the applicant gives of convenience stores located near transportation corridors highlights the massive difference in scale and scope of the travel center with actual convenience stores. Specifically, the size of the proposed Buc-ee's is 14 to 21 times as large as the applicant's referenced convenience stores (according to the El Paso County Assessor's Office):

- Falcon Circle K is 5198 square feet. The retail portion of the proposed Buc-ee's would be more than 14 times as large.
- Charlie's Convenience Store is 5040 square feet. The retail portion of the proposed Buc-ee's would be more than 14-and-a-half times as large.
- Meadowbrook Parkway Circle K is 4480 square feet. The retail portion of the proposed Buc-ee's would be more than 16-and-a-half times as large.
- Fuel B's Convenience Store is 3500 square feet. The retail portion of the proposed Buc-ee's would be more than 21 times as large.
- Space Village Loaf N Jug is 3621 square feet. The retail portion of the proposed Buc-ee's would be more than 20 times as large.

Buc-ee's Primary Purpose is to Serve Travelers

Rather than being an establishment for the purpose of serving the surrounding neighborhood, the proposed Buc-ee's travel center has a primary business purpose of selling products and fuel to regional travelers.

Here is a sampling of statements that have been made by Buc-ee's representatives noting their strategy for selecting site locations.

- At their store in Leeds, Alabama, Buc-ee's states:
"Leeds was selected for this location due to its position along a busy interstate route and availability of space for a large-scale travel center. Buc-ee's typically chooses high-traffic areas with direct highway access, allowing room for a massive fuel canopy and spacious store that can accommodate a steady flow of travelers." ¹⁴
- Buc-ee's general counsel, Jeff Nadlo made the following comments in an article widely available on the internet. According to Nadlo, the company primarily scouts for locations with a sufficient volume of travelers passing through their area. Nadlo further states, travelers want to stop well into their journey. Having locations that are a reasonable distance between where they're headed and where they've come from makes sense. ¹⁵

Incidental Fuel Sales Do Not Allow for a Travel Center

The County's definition of a convenience store is one of a neighborhood market that "may include the retail sale of gasoline and other petroleum products". While the definition does not specify the number of allowable fuel pumps, it must still meet the requirement of providing a service on a neighborhood scale. In fact, the definition of a convenience store before the C-1 zone was made obsolete, explicitly excluded the sale of fuel.¹⁶ When combined with the fact that gas stations and truck stops are not allowed in a C-1 zone, this

clearly shows the intent to prohibit all fuel sales before the zone was made obsolete. Therefore, it is reasonable to interpret the inclusion of fuel sales by convenience stores in the current version of the LDC as optional and small-scale, or somewhat incidental to the overall purpose of the convenience store

A 120-pump gas station cannot reasonably fit into the definition of a convenience store. This number of fuel pumps would nearly double the number of passenger vehicle gas pumps that currently exist in the entire Tri-Lakes area.

The table below shows the proposed travel center would have 30 times the number of fuel pumps as the smallest existing facility in the area (a 7 Eleven convenience store with four gas pumps). The proposed travel center would have four times as many fuel pumps as the largest facility in the area, the Pilot Travel Center, when accounting for both the Pilot's passenger and commercial vehicle fueling.

Size of Proposed Buc-ee's Travel Center Would Dwarf Others in Tri-Lakes				
Name	Passenger Pumps	Truck Pumps	Total Pumps	Number of times Buc-ee's is larger
Gas Stations				
7-Eleven (Hwy 105)	4	0	4	30
Sinclair	8	0	8	15
7-Eleven (Baptist Rd)	10	0	10	12
Circle K	12	0	12	10
Safeway	12	0	12	10
Murphy Express	16	0	16	7.5
Maverick	20	0	20	6
Phillips 66	12	10	22	5.5
Valero	8	16	24	5
Subtotal	102	26	128	
Truck Stops				
QuikTrip	11	14	25	4.8
Pilot	12	18	30	4
Subtotal	23	32	55	
Total				

The scale of the proposed gas station component of the travel center can in no way be viewed as small scale, serving the neighborhood, or incidental. The gas station part of the proposed travel center fails to meet the County's definition of a convenience store.

Restaurant and Food Preparation Inconsistent with Convenience Store Definition

The County's definition of a convenience store includes the sale of "groceries, ready-to-eat food, over-the-counter drugs, and sundries."

The proposed travel center offers more than “ready-to-eat food”. The proposed travel center includes food preparation services—essentially a large fast-food restaurant inside the Buc-ee’s store that prepares and packages food for sale inside the store.

While the applicant has not specified how much space food service comprises of the proposed project, the Johnstown, CO Buc-ee’s includes an estimated 8,700 square feet of food service space. ¹⁷ At roughly 8,700 square feet, the food service area would be more than twice the size of most fast-food restaurants.

Under the Frequently Asked Questions on Buc-ee’s website, the following question and answers are provided which clearly indicates that Buc-ee’s offers more than “ready-to-eat food”. ¹⁸

When is your kitchen open? What time do you start serving breakfast? What time does lunch start? Can I buy fudge and jerky all day long?

Travel Centers BBQ sandwiches available from 11:30 AM till after midnight.

Breakfast from 4:00 AM to 10:30 AM.

Between 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM, we transition from breakfast to lunch.

Available 24/7:

- Fresh hot food
- Cold sandwiches
- Fruit Cups, Wraps, Salads, Protein Packs and other cold items
- Jerky Bar
- Homemade Fudge

As noted above, the County’s definition of a convenience store does not include having a restaurant or onsite food preparation. Rather the definition for a convenience store only includes “ready-to-eat food”. In addition, the LDC specifically identifies restaurants and food processing as separate uses. Thus, a large part of the travel center would be dedicated to uses that exceed the scope of the County’s definition of a convenience store.

Convenience Stores Allow Sale of “Sundries”, but Buc-ee’s Has Expansive Retail

Buc-ee’s retail offerings exceed the type of retail described in the County’s definition of a convenience store. The County’s definition of a convenience store includes the sale of such items as groceries, ready to eat food, over the counter drugs and **sundries**.

Sundries are not defined in the County's code, but the Cambridge Dictionary defines sundries as "various different small things that are considered together, usually because they are not important enough to be considered separately." Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines sundries as "miscellaneous small articles, details, or items."

While the County's definition of a convenience store includes retail of miscellaneous small items, Buc-ee's travel centers sell a large variety of larger retail items not commonly considered "sundries".

Buc-ee's has an almost Costco-esque variety of merchandise. The fact that Buc-ee's has shopping carts is not an accident. A sampling of the list of things that can be purchased that are not sundries include:

- BBQ smokers
- Sporting goods
- Cookware
- Exercise clothes
- Shoes
- Pajamas
- Candles
- Home décor
- Cutting boards
- Cast iron pans
- Cookbooks

Issue 2: Does the proposed Buc-ee's qualify as a similar permitted commercial use within the C-1 zoning district?

Buc-ee's original request also asked the County to confirm that the proposed 31-acre travel center, with a 74,000 square foot retail and restaurant building, 120 fuel pumps, 20 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and 812 parking spaces (791 standard spaces and 21 accessible spaces) constitutes a similar permitted commercial use in the C-1 district under Section 1.6.7 of the LDC.

Section 5.3.6 of the LDC describes the process for the County to evaluate whether a proposed development is similar to an existing defined type of development. The process requires the County to evaluate the proposed project against certain criteria to determine if:

- (1) the function, performance, and location requirements are consistent with the purpose of the zoning district and,
- (2) the use is compatible with other allowed uses and similar in characteristics such as traffic, parking and noise.

The LDC specifically states:

“When a use is not specifically identified as allowed in a zoning district or overlay zoning district, it shall not be allowed in the zoning district or overlay zoning district unless it meets the following criteria in determining the use is a similar use: The function, performance characteristics, and location requirements of the unlisted use shall be consistent with the purpose and description of the zoning district where it is proposed; The unlisted use is compatible with the uses specifically allowed in the district, and similar in characteristics such as traffic and parking generation, noise, glare, vibration, and dust.”

The evidence presented below shows that the proposed travel center fails the two criteria.

Criteria 1: Is the function, performance, and location requirements consistent with the purpose of the zoning district?

The Proposed Buc-ee’s Travel Center is Not Consistent with Purpose of the C-1 Zone

The first criteria to be evaluated is if the function, performance, and location requirements are consistent with the purpose of the C-1 Zone.

The purpose of the C-1 zone before becoming obsolete was for commercial uses compared to the C-2 zone that was for *large* commercial uses. The C-2 zone, not the C-1 zone, was for large commercial uses. Of these two obsolete zones retained in the code, the C-1 zone is the more restrictive commercial zone.

Also, the C-1 zone, before becoming obsolete, prohibited all sales of fuel. Gas stations and truck stops were not allowed uses and still remain prohibited. The definition of a convenience store before the C-1 zone was obsolete, expressly prohibited the sale of fuel.

Given that the C-1 zone expressly prohibited fuel sales before becoming obsolete and was the more restrictive of the obsolete commercial zones, it is clear, that a travel center is not consistent with the purpose or description of the C-1 zoning district.

Criteria 2: The second criteria asks two questions:

- whether a proposed project “is compatible with the uses specifically allowed in the district, and
- similar in characteristics such as traffic and parking generation, noise, glare, vibration, and dust.”

The Proposed Buc-ee’s Travel Center is Not Compatible with the Uses Specifically allowed in the District

The Proposed Travel Center is incompatible with the uses specifically allowed in the district.

A large travel center is not a compatible use with an established residential neighborhood. Based on a review of the “Your El Paso Master Plan” (MP-21-001) ¹⁹, the area around the proposed Buc-ee’s travel center is identified with a Placetype of Suburban Residential.

The El Paso County Master Plan’s describes suburban residential neighborhoods as:

- supporting mostly single family detached homes
- limited single-family attached and multifamily housing
- limited retail and service uses.

In addition, the proposed travel center is incompatible with some of the other allowed uses in a C-1 zone (a criteria that must be considered under Section 5.3.6).

Specifically, C-1 zones allow for schools, childcare centers, and public parks. These community-oriented uses that serve children are incompatible with a large travel center. This is because the traffic, pollution, and transient nature of travel center customers pose health and safety risks to children.

The Proposed Buc-ee’s Travel Center Does Not Have Similar Characteristics to Convenience Stores or Other Allowed Uses

• Applicant’s Conclusions on Criteria 2 Rely on Disallowed Uses

The applicant included a lengthy analysis in their submittal comparing the traffic characteristics of the proposed travel center with three other development scenarios they claim are allowed in a C-1 zone.

The three scenarios presented by the applicant were:

- **General Retail Shopping Center**
- **Supercenter Shopping Center**
- **Theater/Concert Venue**

However, the applicant's scenario analysis is seriously flawed because they rely on scenarios that are not actually allowed in C-1 zones, and they fail to quantify any characteristics beyond traffic impacts.

Shopping Centers Not Allowed in C-1.

The first two scenarios are very clearly shopping centers. However, shopping centers are not an allowable use in a C-1 zone. They are not listed on the principal or accessory use tables for the C-1 zone. In contrast, shopping centers are allowed in Commercial Service (CS) and Commercial Regional (CR) zones as these zones are intended for larger scale developments.

Section 5.3.6 (C)(2) of the LDC states relative to making similar use determinations that: "The listing of any use as being allowed in any particular zoning district or overlay zoning district shall be deemed to be an exclusion of the use from any other zoning district, in which the use is not specifically listed."

Since shopping centers are allowed in other zones, the absence of a shopping center listed as an allowed use in the C-1 zone not only means it isn't allowed, but shopping centers are specifically excluded as a use.

The C-1 zone allows for commercial or retail as part of an overall shopping center, but does not allow for the development of a shopping center itself. While one specific use identified in the shopping center scenarios might be allowable in a C-1 zone (such as the 5,000 square foot convenience store), building a full shopping center, as the scenarios assume, is not allowed.

Thus, the applicant's first two scenarios must not be viewed as providing evidence of comparable characteristics to other allowed uses in a C-1 zone. Instead, the first two scenarios are merely an insightful illustration of how far outside the scope of C-1 zoning and the concept of a convenience store the applicant must reach to find uses having traffic of a comparable scale to their proposed travel center.

Concert Arena Not Allowable in C-1 Zone.

The third scenario presented was a large indoor theater or concert arena, modeled on a larger, indoor version of the Ford Amphitheater. The applicant asserts that such a venue would be allowable under C-1 zoning as a "theater." In addition to the Ford Amphitheater, the applicant lists the Broadmoor World Arena as an example of a theater that would be allowed in a C-1 zone.

While a theater is an allowable use in C-1 zone, it does not appear that a 9,000-seat arena meets the spirit and intent of a "theater" in the LDC. Neither the Ford Amphitheater nor the Broadmoor World Arena are located in C-1 zones. Both are located in the City of Colorado Springs and neither is in a commercial zoning district. The applicant has

presented no information to suggest that the large arena described in their scenario would be an allowable use in a C-1 zone.

In fact, the dimensional use standards for the C-1 zone, as specified in Table 5.4 of the LDC, limit the height of buildings to 30 feet, which is not tall enough to accommodate a 9,000-seat arena. For example, the interior height of the Broadmoor World Arena is 79 feet from floor to ceiling, with the total building height therefore being even taller.²⁰ The height of the Ford Amphitheater's stage canopy alone is 70 feet from the stage to the canopy.²¹

Thus, while a small theater, such as a small movie theater, or small community theater (with a maximum height of 30 feet) could be allowed in a C-1 zone, the applicant has presented no information on an allowable version of a theater to make the case that the characteristics and community impacts would be of a similar scale to the proposed travel center.

- **Other Characteristics Would Have Impacts of Much Greater Scale**

The information the applicant presents on criteria 2 is heavily focused on the traffic scenarios and contains little analysis on other characteristics or impacts of the project compared to convenience stores or other allowable C-1 zone uses.

While the applicant has failed to quantify other characteristics and community impacts, the available information points to the travel center as having much greater impacts than anything allowed in a C-1 zone.

This is because convenience stores and other allowable uses would not generate traffic, noise and light pollution anywhere close to the scale of the impacts the proposed travel center would generate based on its size, purpose of serving regional travelers, and 24/7 operations. Specifically:

- **Vehicular-Related Noise and Air Pollution.** Based on the applicant's own traffic analysis, the traffic generated by the proposed travel center would be seven times greater than an actual convenience store and gas station. This means the corresponding traffic-noise and air pollution from vehicles would also be at least seven times higher than an actual convenience store (more if the travel center results in traffic backups).
- **Light Pollution of Much Greater Scale.** The proposed travel center would have 260 exterior lights. The existing development in C-1 zones tend to be small-scale with minimal exterior lighting. Nothing comparable to a travel center has been identified in a C-1 zone by the applicant, or in this analysis. In fact, the exterior lighting for the travel center would be of a much larger scale than even the exterior lighting for a large commercial development in a CR zone.

For example, the lighting plans for the King Soopers in the Falcon Marketplace (zoned CR) shows 80 exterior lights. The proposed Buc-ee's travel center would

have more than three times the number of exterior lights as the Falcon King Soopers. This indicates that not only would the light pollution from the Buc-ee's travel center be far greater than any existing C-1 uses, but it would be several times greater than large commercial developments in a CR zone.

- **Other Noise Pollution of Much Greater Scale** Noise pollution would similarly be of a much greater scale with a travel center than a convenience store or other allowable C-1 uses.

One type of noise impact is reflected highway noise caused by the size of the proposed travel center. Because the site of the proposed travel center is sloped, it would sit atop an over 30-foot-high retaining wall built to create a level construction pad. The actual building would rise another 30 feet in the air. In total, the retaining wall plus the walls of the building would create an over sixty-foot-high structure parallel to I-25.

The size of this structure would bounce a significant amount of the highway noise off the retaining wall and building and over to the residential Woodmoor community on the east side of the highway. This is likely to necessitate the construction of sound walls. The applicant fails to identify this serious noise issue and includes no discussion of how it would be mitigated. It is unclear from the applicant's proposal if noise mitigation can be achieved in a reasonable way given the large-scale of the proposed project.

In contrast, a typically sized convenience store would not require a building site built up 30 feet above the natural grade because it would not require such a large construction pad. In addition, an actual convenience store would have a smaller building overall, thus generating much smaller-scale noise impacts and likely not requiring sound walls or other noise mitigation.

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Jessica Merriam

From: PLNWEB
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 11:49 AM
To: Jessica Merriam
Subject: FW: Request to Reject Buc-ee's Classification as a Convenience Store



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From: Pamela Tsufis <pamela.tsufis@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2026 8:22 AM
To: PLNWEB <PLNWEB@elpasoco.com>
Subject: Request to Reject Buc-ee's Classification as a Convenience Store

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Report

El Paso County Digital, Strategy & Technology (DST)

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to respectfully ask that you reject Buc-ee's attempt to classify its proposed Monument development as a convenience store.

A convenience store, by its nature, is intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood. It is generally a relatively small retail business that offers nearby residents basic, everyday items in a convenient location. That description does not fit Buc-ee's.

Our neighborhoods have overwhelmingly rejected Buc-ee's repeated efforts to locate in this area. Buc-ee's cannot reasonably believe that it would be welcomed or used by local residents in the manner of a true neighborhood convenience store. The company continues to pursue the current Monument location despite intense local opposition—opposition substantial enough to generate national headlines. This is not the conduct of a business responding to local demand or seeking to serve the ordinary needs of surrounding residents.

Instead, Buc-ee's is proposing a massive gas station and destination-scale travel center. Its business model depends on attracting high volumes of motorists, including travelers from outside the immediate area, rather than providing ordinary neighborhood retail services. Calling such a large, traffic-generating development a "convenience store" stretches that category beyond recognition.

Buc-ee's own business model further confirms that its chosen label does not resolve the land-use question. The company promotes its Luling, Texas location as the world's largest convenience store, at 75,593 square feet. That branding may be effective marketing, but the Board must apply the El Paso County Land Development Code based on the proposed use's actual scale, operational characteristics, real-world impacts, and compatibility with the surrounding area—not on a business's preferred retail label. A facility of that scale is not comparable to the small, neighborhood-serving retail establishment that most people understand a convenience store to be.

Buc-ee's efforts to avoid further public dissent by seeking administrative approvals also suggest that it understands the depth of its lack of local support. My family would not spend a dollar there, and I doubt that the many neighbors who have displayed anti-Buc-ee's signs would suddenly change their position and become Buc-ee's customers.

There is a particular irony in a massive gas-station chain—one that has consumed so much community time and generated such widespread frustration—calling itself a "convenience" store. It is not convenient for this community. It does not reflect a neighborhood-serving use, and it should not receive a regulatory classification intended for small-scale businesses serving nearby residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Board to reject Buc-ee's attempt to classify this proposed development as a convenience store. Please evaluate the proposal according to its actual size, operational model, anticipated traffic impacts, and compatibility with the surrounding community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Pamela Krueger
1469 Dark Pine Ct. Monument CO 80132