



May 14, 2010

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Tom Keller
Vons Corporation
618 Michillinda Avenue
Arcadia, CA 91007

Dear Mr. Keller:

We represent a nonprofit environmental group in Ojai, California, and we're writing to ask you to promote alternative transportation by installing bike racks at your Ojai location: 1125 Maricopa Highway, Ojai, CA 93023. Given the recent efforts by the City of Ojai to install bike racks around the city, plus the many citizen complaints regarding the lack of bike racks and scarcity of parking spaces for cars in the shopping center where Vons is located, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition is initiating a campaign to correct this situation.

It is unfortunate that Vadnais Investments, the owner of the shopping center, has historically refused to allow bike racks. As our organization continues to promote bicycling as a smart mode of transportation and the city improves its streets to accommodate cyclists, the demand for proper and safe locations to secure bikes will only increase.

Reviewing the Vons corporate sustainability statement, and seeing firsthand the recent remodel of the Ojai Vons store, we see that Vons is making an effort to decrease its ecological footprint. However, of the twenty-seven Vons stores in our immediate region that we recently polled, only eight were providing shoppers with bike racks.

In March 2010, the US Department of Transportation announced a new policy which states that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists must be placed alongside, not behind, those of motorists. Cities everywhere are under orders by various air-control agencies to reduce vehicular trips. There is a growing sense of urgency to encourage people to leave their car at home as much as possible and walk, bicycle, car-pool or ride the bus or trolley.

We suggest that factoring in how your customers arrive at your stores is as important as calculating the greenhouse gases prevented by energy-efficient lighting. Bicycles are a mode of transportation whose legitimacy increasingly warrants retailer accommodation. Our research finds that the average cost to install bike racks is \$150 to \$300, whereas the average cost to provide parking for one car is \$2,200 to \$4,000. And the City of Ojai is offering installed bike racks for free!

**323 E. Matilija St.
Suite 110-114
Ojai CA 93023
805-669-8445**

Though Vons, as lessee, may not have the authority to decide whether bike racks are installed at the Ojai location, it surely does have substantial influence. We believe that if Vons insists that its customers (and those of all the retailers at this Ojai shopping center) have access to convenient and safe bike parking, it will happen.

We urge Vons to continue its green efforts by taking the lead on ensuring that bike racks are installed at its Ojai location. This will promote further bicycle use and reduce traffic congestion, as well as air pollution.

To quote from your website: *Safeway is fully engaged in making a measurable difference in this important “sustainability” journey. And, continuing on another page: Safeway has adopted a guiding principle that promotes growth through the thoughtful use of our natural resources. Our company is focused on a core set of initiatives that make sense for both the planet and our business.*

We applaud both of these statements, and we hope that you will act quickly to clear the way for bike racks to be installed at all your locations, starting with Ojai.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Deborah Pendrey
Executive Director

Suza Francina
Chair of the Transportation Committee

Cc: Todd Baker, Store manager, Ojai Vons
Dean Vadnais, Principal, Vadnais Investments
Mike Culver, Director, Ojai Public Works
Ojai City Council Members
Ojai City Planning Commissioners
Steve Bennett, District 1 Supervisor, County of Ventura