



## **An Open Letter to Unilever CEO Paul Polman, Alderman Ricardo Muñoz, and the 26th and Kostner Council**

On Tuesday March 31st members of LVEJO attended the community meeting to discuss Unilever's plans to expand its facility at 26th and Kostner in Little Village. As an organization with deep roots in the neighborhood we are extremely concerned by the responses and attitude of Unilever's representatives to the questions raised by community members. We are also concerned that Alderman Muñoz and the 26th and Kostner Council are committed to forcing through the project despite serious problems that were highlighted at the meeting. This was apparent when translation services were decidedly skewed to favor Unilever's plans during the meeting.

At the meeting many neighbors raised serious issues with Unilever's failure to address issues such as parking, strong odors, garbage, and home damage committed in the past. The meeting also clarified that Unilever does not intend to negotiate with the community and is moving forward with its plans to expand. In response to repeated questioning, Unilever admitted that:

- 1. There is a very real possibility that in the future Unilever could require over 500 trucks a day to travel to its site next to Zapata Elementary.**
- 2. Unilever is unwilling to pay for a zero-emission truck fleet.**
- 3. Unilever will donate land for the expansion of Zapata elementary but will not pay for the remediation of the land. The land will be donated "as is."**
- 4. Representatives from Unilever will not attend another community meeting and will not delay its plans.**

Our organization refuses to believe that a multi-national corporation with over 6 billion dollars of profit reported in 2014 lacks the resources to utilize a zero-emissions truck fleet. Our organization is very concerned that an increase in truck traffic will severely impact air quality in the area particularly around Zapata Elementary. The admission of Unilever that it will not even consider a zero-emission truck fleet strikes us as disrespectful to the community and its need for a healthier environment.

It is also angering that given its profits Unilever will not put forth the resources to remediate the land that will be donated to Zapata. The costs related to remediating land will be expensive and we have no confidence that CPS will expend the resources to clean the land. We believe



that Alderman Muñoz is misleading the community by proposing that the school district will willingly put forth the resources for this project.

Finally, it is unacceptable that Unilever's representatives refused to future meetings with the community to discuss the expansion project. The project represents a massive transformation of an important intersection in the community and requires significant community engagement. More importantly, the proposed location of the Unilever expansion next to an elementary school raises serious health concerns that need to be addressed with great patience for community members.

Based on our evaluation of the expansion project LVEJO calls upon Unilever CEO Paul Polman, Alderman Ricardo Munoz, and the 26th and Kostner Council to stop and reconsider the expansion project. The conceptualization of the expansion project, the re-zoning of the land, and the community engagement process have been rushed and are ill conceived. We have the following recommendations:

- 1. Alderman Muñoz must suspend Unilever's re-zoning application until all community concerns have been addressed through a thick community engagement process.**
- 2. Unilever must commit to utilizing a zero emissions truck fleet at its facility.**
- 3. Unilever must commit to paying for the remediation of the land that will be donated to Zapata to the standard that is required for a school**
- 4. The 26th and Kostner Council must require Unilever to meet with community members multiple times and must represent the will of the community if it opposes the project.**
- 5. The 26th and Kostner Council must require Unilever to commit to hiring from the community and paying living wage jobs.**

In the past, our community has suffered from high rates of cancers and respiratory illnesses because elected officials and those representing the community allowed polluting companies to enact whatever plans they desired irrespective of community health. This is no longer acceptable. We urge you to recognize that the Unilever expansion project and re-zoning of the parcel ignores the health of school children and neighbors, and neglects the great need for healthier spaces in Little Village.