

Walnut asks city attorney to send stern letter to Mt. SAC against parking garage

By [Steve Scauzillo](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

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WALNUT >> Stopping [short of litigation](#), the City Council directed its city attorney Wednesday to send a letter asking the Mount San Antonio College governing board to reconsider its plans for a five-story parking garage adjacent to a residential neighborhood.

City Attorney Mike Montgomery said the letter is an interim step.

“We will try to mediate or negotiate with them before we are forced to file litigation,” he said in an interview Thursday.

He said the Walnut City Council does not like the idea of suing the college because it would sever decades of good will between the city and the institution.

Mt. SAC, the largest community college in the state, is within the city’s boundaries, on 422 acres bordered by Mountaineer Road, Grand Avenue and Temple Street.

Walnut passed a resolution in August opposing the 2,200-space parking garage off Mountaineer Road near homes in the Timberline neighborhood, saying it would increase air pollution, crime, traffic and impede access to the neighborhood by emergency vehicles.

Mt. SAC President Bill Scroggins said in an appearance before the council in January it is the best location for much-needed parking for its students. The college said it lowered two levels of the structure in order to alleviate aesthetic issues.

Montgomery said the letter will “attempt to get them to withdraw the present location of the parking structure in the absence of litigation.” The college has said it will cost \$14.5 million to build it on the southeast side of campus, a suggestion made by residents and the city.

“They want to put a five-story structure 150 feet away from the residences. It is not in accordance with zoning and the city’s general plan,” Montgomery said.

Montgomery reported to the audience Wednesday night after the agenda said the council was meeting in closed session to consider “possible litigation — status report on proposed parking structure, Mt. SAC.”