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## Public Comment: Rapp Road Residential/Western Avenue Mixed Use Redevelopment Project

1 message

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**Andrew Kennedy** <AndrewK@ceg.org>  
To: "kovalchikk@togny.org" <kovalchikk@togny.org>

Thu, Feb 27, 2020 at 2:15 PM

Mr. Kovalchik,

I am the President and CEO of the Center for Economic Growth (CEG), the Capital's Region's economic development organization. I am writing to express enthusiastic support for Pyramid Management's proposal for a Costco and 222-unit residential development across Crossgates Mall Road.

This project would bolster CEG's efforts to attract talent to the Capital Region as well, as retain the talent already here, by highlighting the vibrancy of our regional economy while also creating a unique shopping destination that could draw people outside the region into it. This project will create opportunities for both workers and shoppers who would otherwise have to travel more than 90 miles to visit the nearest Costco in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Further, by bucking national trends, this major investment in a brick-and-mortar store will not go unnoticed by the businesses we also work to attract to the Capital Region.

Retail remains strong in the region. With a stable economy as well as many high paying technology jobs, the Capital Region is capable of supporting a major retailer such as Costco over the long-term. In 2019 alone, annual sales tax collections in the region increased by 4.3 percent to \$790.6 million, according to New York State Office of the Comptroller data. In 2018, traveler spending accounting for \$168 million in sales taxes, according to Empire State Development data. Crossgates alone generates \$17 million in annual sales tax to the Town of Guilderland and Albany County, \$17 million in annual sales to New York State and \$8.3 million in local property taxes.

By summer CEG plans to launch a multimillion-dollar regional branding campaign to raise the Capital Region's profile as a 1-million-strong metro region with distinct competitive advantages, including strategic location, educational assets, cultural vibrancy, innovation, recreational opportunities, affordability and livability. Studies have shown stores such as Costco are appealing to high-earning professionals. Costco already has locations in markets that our regional branding campaign will target, and having one here could enhance our efforts to attract outside talent to the Capital Region. With a 2019 Business Review study identifying Costco as the most desired, new national brand for local residents, this project will also help us retain talent already in the Capital Region.

Thank you for considering CEG's view on this project. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Regards

**Andrew S. Kennedy**

President & CEO  
**Center for Economic Growth (CEG)**

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