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## Stamford needs a grocery store. Why not an H-Mart?

One of the nation's oldests Asian-centric grocery store chains can find a real market in one of the fastest growing cities in Connecticut.

**Jinu Jung**  
Reporter

Stamford has still yet to welcome H-Mart, which is one of the largest supermarket chains in the United States. H-Mart is a grocery store that sells Asian food products, as well as a couple of restaurants, too.

But with over a dozen locations in New York City and Long Island, why hasn't it moved to Stamford yet?

While there are a few places to get groceries like Costco, Whole Foods,

and Trader Joe's, they all lack the special Asian foods that only H-Mart and a select few stores have.

A freshman at Westhill thinks alike. "Some of the benefits of H-Mart would be readily available ingredients that couldn't be found at other competitor stores, like Jackfruit.

In my family, those are one of our favorites. Also with the other items that would be more convenient to pick up, such as chili crisp." Neil Nair ('28) said.

He also says that the addition of H-Mart would add on to the East Asian



The site of the now-abandoned Burlington, where a future H-Mart could call home. Photo via Google Street View.

culture here.

"I feel that the Asian presence in Stamford is limited to just restaurants, and those who enjoy cooking or find pleasure in just learning the culture of other people's nations," Nair said.

AITE students have also commented on the problems of the distance of Stamford to other H-Mart locations.

"People have to drive 30+ minutes just to get Korean ingredients and snacks. I have friends who often ask me to buy things from there since I go to NY every week, (a lot of

H-Marts there). Having an H-Mart nearby would make it easier for people to cook Korean meals and eat Korean snacks without the inconvenience of a long commute," said Abigail Jung ('25).

Besides the unique food and the long drives, Mr. Colin Ng, a social studies teacher at Westhill, believes that H-Mart would be able to be beneficial to the younger population of Stamford as well.

"Typically H-Marts have a food court, and they have very affordable food with large portions and would benefit a lot

of young people in Stamford. We have the UConn campus, we have students that go and eat in the town, and also a young professional working population that would all benefit from these food courts," Ng said.

In order to get some opinions from the H-Mart headquarters itself, The Westword tried to reach out, but has yet to receive a reply. Nevertheless, whether H-Mart will come to Stamford or not, it will always be one of the best places to eat and shop Asian food even if it isn't right here.

## To Ban or Not to Ban: A look at Westhill's reactions to the recent federal TikTok ban

**Amy Albitres & Scarlett Palma**  
Reporters

TikTok is a global social media platform that has close to 2 billion users and is known for its relatable content with teenagers, ideas, and small businesses. Scrolling on TikTok has become a nightly routine for many across the world.

However, US federal officials have argued that the app is a potential national security threat because it is owned by a Chinese company, a country that the US is currently at odds with.

As TikTok increased in popularity

within the states, the US government became concerned that the Chinese government constantly monitored its users and gathered information from Americans.

Over the years, there have been many discussions over the possible ban of the app. The potential banning of the beloved app was a topic of discussion all throughout the internet. Some believed it was fake and others were too scared to believe it was really going to happen. Citizens took this as a threat against their rights.

On April 24, 2024, former President Joe Biden signed legislation requiring TikTok's owners, Bytedance, to sell the app to a U.S. owner within a year. Otherwise, the app would be shut down in the U.S. This law concerned TikTok users who felt that this violated their own freedom of expression. They claimed that the ban went against the first amendment.

However, TikTok failed to sell their app to a U.S. owner. The former President's ban became effective in January 2025.

On the long anticipated day of January 12, 2025, individuals found TikTok to be unavailable when they opened the app. Millions of American users of the app were absolutely devastated. The government confirmed that TikTok would be temporarily banned.

This shocked users worldwide, including influencers who had committed to a life of social media and could lose their job.

"Honestly, I saw my account literally collapse," Emilie Jacinto

('27) said. "I went on TikTok at like ten forty something at night and I saw that the comments wouldn't work. I was trying to switch accounts, trying to go to my favorites and likes and it wouldn't work. I was scared to refresh it," Like Emilie, a variety of TikTok users were shocked to see such a famous app being taken away from them.

"I went to sleep that night, literally scrolled on Instagram reels for 5 minutes and decided I was done. When I woke up the next morning, the ban an-



THE TIKTOK APP logo on an iPhone. Photo via Creative Commons

nouncement was there and hours later I was shocked to see it came back,” Jacinto said.

*“When I woke up the next morning, the ban [...] was there and hours later I was shocked to see it came back”*

This initial ban lasted a total of 12 hours. President Donald Trump stated that he will fix the situation.

Because of the agreement between the government and ByteDance, TikTok began to function once again for a total of 90 days. But,

this agreement is merely delaying the effects of the permanent ban.

TikTok’s community creates a platform where one can explore various trending topics and learn new things. It creates a space for people who relate to certain topics. More than half of TikTok’s users are teenagers. The potentially permanent ban leads to the question: How will teens adapt to this TikTok ban once it’s enforced?

The TikTok ban can be argued for both sides, as it has its negative and positive effects. “I feel like the whole reason is stupid, TikTok is a place where small businesses are based to gain all their customers and help promote them,” Lily Mejia, (‘28) said.

Mejia is a frequent

user and considers herself into the BookTok community (a community on TikTok where users discuss books) and it comes with benefits but concerns, “BookTok inspires me to read but some people romanticize toxic behaviors that are not okay,” Mejia said.

Briana Kastrati, an artist with a following of 7.5K during the time of the ban shows a great example of her adaptment, “I was honestly pretty upset about it [the ban] because it was the most enjoyable platform to share art on, and I think a big portion of artists including myself find great inspiration on the app.”

“If the ban becomes permanent, I would try to find other platforms to

share art on, but in my experience so far, none of them that I have looked into have many users,” Kastrati said.

Kastrati is one of many young artists and influencers on TikTok who potentially could be impacted from the ban. These influencers will lose the community they’ve built and the support they’ve gained from their followers. With TikTok collapsing, many creators crumble down with them too.

Despite this, opinions highly differ when it comes to the benefits of the ban. TikTok can inspire teens and boost small businesses, but it can also be a major problem for teens and their education.

“I feel like in the

12 hours of the ban, it was probably the most productive time for [my classes],” Mr. Francisco Ahumada, a history teacher at Westhill, said. “TikTok is a major distraction, that’s why I think the ban is important.”

The looming TikTok ban has both its pros and cons. In addition to American citizens getting privacy and gaining national security, teens will not feel inclined to waste their time on TikTok. But, influencers and creators will lose their source of income, and communities for different interests will dissipate.

The TikTok ban raises concerns for regular users regarding how they will adapt, once the ban becomes permanent.