

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Sep 14 2020*Making Conservation
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September 14, 2020

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GTS # 9739

GTS ID: 04-NAP-2018-00216

Co/Rt/Pm: NAP/128/6.84

Brian Bordona, Deputy Planning Director
Napa County
1195 3rd Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

Benjamin Ranch Winery – Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND)

Dear Brian Bordona:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Benjamin Ranch Winery project. We are committed to ensuring that impacts to the State's multimodal transportation system and to our natural environment are identified and mitigated to support a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system. The following comments are based on our review of the August 2020 IS/MND.

Project Understanding

The proposed project is to request a Use Permit to establish a winery that would produce up to 475,000 gallons of wine per year. The project would demolish an existing barn and shed and redevelop a portion of the site with new winery and hospitality buildings. The proposed winery would offer wine tours and tastings for up to 400 people per day, include a wine marketing program consisting of up to 357 events per year for up to 16 to 150 guests per event, employ up to 61 full-time and part-time staff members, and install 75 parking stalls.

This project is developed on 12.8 acres of an approximately 85.1-acre project site at 8895 Conn Creek Road (State Route SR-128) in St. Helena. A new access driveway is planned and a left-turn lane onto SR-128 would be installed at the new access driveway near the southeastern corner of the site.

Travel Demand Analysis

With the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 743, Caltrans is focusing on transportation infrastructure that supports smart growth and efficient development to ensure alignment with State policies using efficient development patterns, innovative travel demand reduction strategies, multimodal improvements, and VMT as the primary transportation impact metric. Caltrans commends the lead agency in recommending that the winery implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, which would help reduce the project's employee and visitor-generated VMT. Caltrans encourages the Lead Agency to provide more clarification on the project's visitor-generated VMT and to link how the TDM measures proposed the Mitigation Measure TRAN-1 or additional TDM measures may reduce the project's VMT impact to be less-than-significant. Additional strategies can be found on page 82 in the following link: <http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>.

Lastly, Caltrans recommends the proposed TDM measures identified in the plan should be documented with annual monitoring reports to demonstrate effectiveness.

Proposed Left-Turn Lane

The Traffic Impact Study (TIS) recommends the construction of a left-turn lane at the project driveway from SR-128, but it did not include an intersection/driveway analysis showing the driveway traffic turning movements. The driveway and left turn lane must be designed per the latest Highway Design Manual (HDM) standards, particularly section 405.2, Figure 405.2 and Figure 405.3. Please see <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/manual-highway-design-manual-hdm> for detailed information.

Design exceptions would need be filed and approved in the case of substandard design features. Please coordinate with Caltrans at an early stage as it can potentially impact the traffic operations on SR-128 and may require additional Right-or-Way (ROW).

The striping plans refer to Caltrans 2010 Standard Plans, but it should be changed to the latest 2018 Standard Plans. Also, please identify the posted speed of this highway section.

Hydraulics

Please ensure that any storm runoff to State ROW must be metered to pre-construction levels.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the County of Napa is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN). The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Construction-Related Impacts

Please be advised that any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto the ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. Note that potential impacts to the State ROW from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit issued by Caltrans. Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to STN. For more information, and to apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

Encroachment Permit

There appears to be the potential that the property will be conveyed to the State and if that is the case, Caltrans requires the property be transferred on permit projects prior to issuance of the encroachment permit.

If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion. As part of the encroachment permit submittal process, you may be asked by the Office of Encroachment Permits to submit a completed encroachment permit application package, digital set of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, digital copy of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp expiration date) traffic control plans, this comment letter, your response to the comment letter, and where applicable, the following items: new or amended Maintenance Agreement (MA), approved Design Standard Decision Document (DSDD), approved encroachment exception request, and/or airspace lease agreement. Your application package may be emailed to D4Permits@dot.ca.gov.

To download the permit application and to obtain more information on all required documentation, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Brian Bordona, Deputy Planning Director
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Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Yunsheng Luo at Yunsheng.Luo@dot.ca.gov. Additionally, for future notifications and requests for review of new projects, please contact LDIGR-D4@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Leong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

cc: State Clearinghouse