

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

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Governor's Office of Planning &amp; Research

2020110450

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April 14, 2020

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

GTS # 04-SON-2020-00450

GTS ID: 19009

SON/116/PM 41.31

Crystal Acker, Planner III  
County of Sonoma  
2550 Ventura Avenue,  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**Stage Gulch Organics Composting Facility (UPE12-0031) – Site Plan Review**

Dear Crystal Acker:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Stage Gulch Organics Composting Facility (UPE12-0031). 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 March 2020 Site Plan Review.

**Project Understanding**

The proposed project is for the construction and operation of a commercial composting facility (Facility). The Facility will operate on five (5) acres of a 112.22 acre vacant parcel within the 384.57 acre ranch. The Facility has been designed to process 185,000 tons of compostable materials per year with a processing time of 35 to 45 days from arrival of incoming materials to finished compost. A future 10-acre agricultural products pad would be located on the same parcel. The agricultural products pad would be separate from the composting facility, would not compost feedstocks, and would store finished compost, develop custom blends, planter mixes, and other agricultural soil products for bulk sale. The site project is located adjacent to State Route (SR)-116/Stage Gulch Road.

**Travel Demand Analysis**

Please submit a travel demand analysis that provides a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis resulting from the proposed project. 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. The travel demand analysis should include:

- A vicinity map, regional location map, and site plan clearly showing project access in relation to the State Transportation Network (STN). Ingress and egress for all project components should be clearly identified. Clearly identify the State right-of-way (ROW). Project driveways, local roads and intersections, car/bike parking, and transit facilities should be mapped.
- A VMT analysis pursuant to the Sonoma County's (County) guidelines or, if the County has no guidelines, the Office of Planning and Research's Guidelines. Projects that result in automobile VMT per capita above the threshold of significance for existing (i.e. baseline) county-wide or regional values for similar land use types may indicate a significant impact. If necessary, mitigation for increasing VMT should be identified. Mitigation should support the use of transit and active transportation modes. Potential mitigation measures that include the requirements of other agencies such as Caltrans are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally-binding instruments under the control of the County.
- A schematic illustration of auto conditions at the project site and study area roadways. Potential safety issues for all road users should be identified and fully mitigated.

With respect to the local and regional roadway system, provide project related trip generation, distribution, turning movements, and assignment estimates. The project-generated trips should be added to the existing, future and cumulative scenario traffic volumes for the intersections affected by the project. In conducting these evaluations, it is necessary to use demand volumes rather than output volumes or constrained flow volume. Additionally, expected speeds and truck percentages should be analyzed.

### **Hydraulics**

As shown on sheet EX-1 site plans, there is a proposed access road that would connect to SR-116/ Stage Gulch Road and widen the roadway on SR-116 for turning lanes. During the Caltrans encroachment permit process, consideration should be taken for mitigating runoff generated from the new construction and intercepting additional runoff entering the State ROW.

### **Construction-Related Impacts**

Potential impacts to the State ROW from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Mitigation for significant impacts due to construction and noise should be identified. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit:

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

Prior to construction, coordination may be required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

### **Utilities**

Any utilities that are proposed, moved or modified within the State ROW shall be discussed. If utilities are impacted by the project, provide site plans that show the location of existing and/or proposed utilities. These modifications require a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit.

### **Lead Agency**

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

### **Encroachment Permit**

Please be advised that an encroachment permit will likely be necessary due to the proposed new access road connecting to SR-116/Stage Gulch Road. Any permanent work or temporary traffic control that encroaches onto the ROW would require a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. The designed driveway on SR-116 should conform to Caltrans Standards according to the Encroachment Permits Manual Appendix J: Driveway Approach Diagram (attached) and Highway Design Manual (HDM). If any Caltrans facilities are impacted by the project, those facilities must meet American Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards after project completion.

Crystal Acker, Planner III

April 14, 2020

Page 4

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, six (6) sets of plans clearly delineating the State ROW, six (6) copies 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.

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

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Andrew Chan at 510-622-5433 or [andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov](mailto:andrew.chan@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 tail stroke extending to the right.

Mark Leong  
District Branch Chief  
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review