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August 20, 2024

Napa County PBES Engineering Division
Attn: Brian Bordona
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

RE: Diamond Creek Vineyards – Winery Use Permit Modification
Exception Request to Road and Street Standards for Existing Driveway Entrance
APN: 020-440-004-000 & 020-400-012-000

Dear Mr. Bordona:

This letter is in response to Napa County Planning and Engineering Services Pre-Application Site Visit comments from the field meeting with Jeannette Doss and Scott Augustin, conducted on December 2, 2021 which discussed improvements and the current site constraints along the existing shared driveway.

The proposed winery is accessed via an existing driveway that extends from Diamond Mountain Road (Sta. 0+00) to the start of the proposed commercial driveway (Sta. 2+60). The existing driveway is currently serving the existing residence on APN 020-440-012 and existing winery on APN 020-440-004, both owned by Diamond Creek Vineyards, as shown on sheet UP1.0 of our Civil Use Permit Plans. The first section of the driveway also serves other parcels (Sta. 0+00 to Sta. 2+00).

Exception 1 – Driveway and Bridge Width 0+50 to 1+80

A standard Detail P-2 Common Driveway Connection to a Rural Road of the Napa County Road and Street Standards, requires 20-foot radius on both sides of the proposed 20-foot minimum wide driveway. This is feasible and is currently provided at the existing driveway connection within the currently paved portions of the driveway. However, the driveway is highly constrained due to an existing bridge with 13.7' clear width. Adequate turnout space is provided on the east side of the bridge and a turnout is proposed for the west side of the bridge (Sta. 0+80 to 1+60) (see sheet UP3.0). We are requesting an exception to the Road and Street Standards for the width of shared driveway and bridge width from Station 0+50 to 1+80 and across the existing 13.7-foot-wide bridge.

Section 3(d) of the Napa County Road and Street Standards allows for an exception to the Standards to be made if one or more of the following findings can be made:

i. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment;

ii. The exception is necessary to accommodate physical site limitations; or

iii. The exception is necessary to accommodate other limiting factors such as recorded historical sites or legal constraints.

In this case an exception is required to preserve the riparian corridor of the blue-line creek adjacent to Diamond Mountain Road, within the blue-lined stream setbacks established by the Napa County conservation Regulations, as allowed under Section 3(d)(i) of the Napa County Road and Street Standards.

Section 15, Roadway Structures (e) of the Napa County Road and Street Standards, allows for an exception to the Standards to be made if authorized by Napa County:

(e) A bridge with only one traffic lane may be authorized by Napa County; however, the bridge shall have unobstructed visibility from one end to the other and turnouts at both ends.

In this case, the short span of the bridge allows for unobstructed visibility from one end to the other. There is a turnout which is already existing on the south side of the bridge within the existing pavement, and we are proposing to install a paved turnout on the northern bank of the bridge in order to satisfy the requirements to meet exception (e). The paved turnout is predominately proposed in an area that has been previously graded.

Section 3(e) of the Napa County Road and Street Standards, allows for exception requests meeting the required findings above to be granted, if the exception request and proposed mitigation measures provide the same overall practical effect as these Standards towards providing defensible space, and consideration towards life, safety, and public welfare. The Same Practical Effect is defined in Section 4 as providing:

a) Access for emergency wildland fire equipment;

b) Safe civilian evacuation;

c) Signing that avoids delays in emergency equipment response;

d) Available and accessible water to effectively attack wildfire or defend a structure from wildfire; and

e) Fuel modification sufficient for civilian and firefighter safety.

Our proposed alternative will be to construct a turnout within the creek setback on the northwestern bank to allow intervisible turnouts on either side of the bridge span. This alternative can be supported to meet the five criteria above:

a) Access for emergency wildland fire equipment;

   i. Our design will meet section A because adequate turnout space is provided for vehicles on either side of the proposed bridge to turn out and let emergency vehicles into the site. These turnouts will be intervisible with each other as the bridge span is quite short.

b) Safe civilian evacuation;

   i. Adequate turnout space is provided for vehicles leaving the site to turn out and let emergency vehicles into the site. The turnouts on either side of the bridge span are intervisible.

c) Signing that avoids delays in emergency equipment response;

   i. To meet Section C, signage will be provided on both banks to identify the bridge loading and to advise drivers to yield to emergency vehicles.

d) Available and accessible water to effectively attack wildfire or defend a structure from wildfire; and

   i. Dedicated fire water within tanks is provided at the winery. The total fire water storage volume will increase to meet current Code requirements.

e) Fuel modification sufficient for civilian and firefighter safety.

   i. Fuel in the area will be removed per CalFire requirements. This includes defensible space and tree removals in the vicinity of the new project footprint and driveway.

Exception 2 – Driveway and Gate Width 2+40 to 4+73

An existing gate (Sta. 2+65) to the existing winery is constrained to a width of 15.5' clear. Adequate existing turnout space is provided on the east side of the gate (Sta. 2+65) and an intervisible turnout is proposed for the west side of the gate (at Sta. 4+70) beyond which the site driveway will be expanded to meet the 20-foot commercial driveway standard (see sheet UP3.0). We are requesting an exception to the Road and Street Standards for the width of the existing gate and lower driveway directly up-station from the existing gate as widening of the gate will result in grading on slopes greater than 50%.

Section 3(d) of the Napa County Road and Street Standards allows for an exception to the Standards to be made if one or more of the following findings can be made:

i. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment;

ii. The exception is necessary to accommodate physical site limitations; or

iii. The exception is necessary to accommodate other limiting factors such as recorded historical sites or legal constraints.

In this case an exception is required to accommodate the physical limitations of the existing driveway corridor and gate width and to preserve the unique features of the natural environment. Modifications to the gate would require grading on slopes in excess of 50% including a near 1:1 vertical rock face. This grading would occur in close proximity to the top of bank setbacks established for the adjacent blue-line creek and in close proximity to the site property line. The widening required to meet the Road and Street Standards would require grading over slopes greater than 50% and likely forcing work to occur beyond the top of bank setback.

RSA+ attended a site visit with Napa County Planning, Engineering, and Fire Divisions on 12/02/2021 to walk the driveway and discuss alternative mitigation strategies that can be provided in lieu of the full 22' common driveway width required. It was agreed on site that there is room for proposing mitigation strategies to provide an acceptable alternative that can be supported, and meet the Napa County Road and Street Standard criteria above:

a) Access for emergency wildland fire equipment;

   i. The new drive widening turnout at Sta. 4+73 will be intervisible with the existing gate.

   ii. Existing turnout area at Sta. 2+65 (driveway entrance), will remain, providing safe, intervisible turnout locations for this 228' long driveway segment.

   iii. A drivable swale will be constructed over an existing driveway ditch to provide the maximum width practicable.

b) Safe Civilian Evacuation.

   i. The new drive widening turnout at Sta. 4+73 will be intervisible with the existing gate.

   ii. Existing turnout area at Sta. 2+65 (driveway entrance), will remain, providing safe, intervisible turnout locations for this 228' long driveway segment.

iii. A drivable swale will be constructed over an existing driveway ditch to provide the maximum width practicable.

c) Signing that avoids delays in emergency equipment response;

i. To meet Section C, signage will be provided on both sides of the existing gate at the turnout locations to advise drivers to yield to emergency vehicles.

d) Available and accessible water to effectively attack wildfire or defend a structure from wildfire; and

i. Dedicated fire water within tanks is provided at the winery. The total fire water storage volume will increase to meet current Code requirements.

e) Fuel modification sufficient for civilian and firefighter safety.

i. Fuel in the area will be removed per CalFire requirements. This includes defensible space and tree removals in the vicinity of the new project footprint and driveway.

These proposed mitigation measures noted above are intended to provide an alternate method by which adherence to the Road & Street Standards may be achieved, while assuring compliance with the County's and Property Owner's goal to protect and ensure the preservation of the unique features of the natural environment.

Remaining portions of the site driveway will undergo improvements as part of the project to meet the requirements established by the Napa County Road and Street Standards.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this matter. If you should have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Bruce Fenton, P.E.
Project Manager

DL/BTF/bs