

September 23, 2016

Planning Department  
County of San Luis Obispo  
Attn: Brian Pedrotti

San Luis Obispo, 93408-2040

Subject: Comments on Laetitia Agricultural Cluster Subdivision (SUB 2003-00001 and DRC 2003-00001)

Dear Mr. Pedrotti:

This letter conveys the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments' (SLOCOG) comments on the subject application, understanding that its denial by the Planning Commission on February 11, 2016, is now being appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

Significant discussion on the application and EIR has focused on the potential of increased trip generation at the intersection of US 101 and the Laetitia Winery driveway (Laetitia Vineyard Drive). In April 2015, the SLOCOG Board adopted the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP-SCS). The RTP-SCS includes the following policies or strategies:

- Initiate a sub-regional analysis for freeway conversion, access control, and connectivity of local streets and parallel routes to US 101 in the following locations: San Luis Obispo to SR 58, Paso Robles to San Miguel, and Los Berros Rd. to El Campo Rd. [US 101 Improvement Strategies, p. 4-12]
- Los Berros to Traffic Way proposed project: Expressway Conversion [Fig. 4-5, p. 416]
- Safety concerns that warrant consideration of converting the three-mile segment (Los Berros Rd. / Thompson Rd. interchange to Traffic Way) from expressway to freeway standards and closing access at El Campo Rd. This improvement will need to be jointly considered by Caltrans, SLOCOG, San Luis Obispo County, the City of Arroyo Grande, and adjacent property owners [Access Management, p. 4-18]

Given these policies and strategies, SLOCOG agrees with the concern expressed in Caltrans' letters – most recently February 5, July 11, and July 15, 2016 – about additional trips being loaded onto US 101 directly from Laetitia Vineyard Drive. It is relevant to note that the average annual daily traffic (AADT) along this stretch of US 101 is 55-60,000.

In its May 2, 2016, letter, the applicant/appellant argues that the project will not increase use of the Laetitia Vineyard Drive except for emergency situations. The method of enforcing this, according to the letter, “may be in the form of a guarded gate”. According to the Final EIR, p. III-20, originally, a crash gate or removable bollards was previously proposed, but the applicant revised the proposal to the guarded gate. The EIR also states that “[s]ignage would be posted stating that westbound traffic shall only be permitted to use Laetitia Vineyard Drive to exit the subdivision during an emergency”.

According to the EIR, p. III-43, a homeowners’ association (HOA) is proposed to “manage security issues, common area landscaping, agricultural buffers, residential roads, and gates”. Because access management would therefore be subject to the rules developed by the HOA, which may be subject to change, it is uncertain how the applicant/appellant can guarantee, at this time, that a rule restricting access to emergency situations only would remain in effect indefinitely, or, even if so, that it would be in all cases followed. Therefore, it is uncertain how the appellant can guarantee that there will not be non-emergency trips loading directly onto US 101, which is contrary to SLOCOG policies calling for freeway conversion in this area.

If buildout of the subdivision does lead to additional turning movements at the US 101-Laetitia Vineyard Drive intersection, our RTP-SCS suggests that we would support, at least at a staff level, any subsequent proposal from Caltrans to close the median break at this intersection, if not also the adjacent intersections.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeff Brubaker, AICP

cc: Cindy Utter, Caltrans