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County Road & Street Standards Exception Application

Hillwalker Vineyards Winery Use Permit P23-00101-UP and Exception
to the Conservation Regulations P23-00239-UP
Planning Commission Hearing Date (August 7, 2024)

Brian Bordona
Director
Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services
1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559

March 6, 2024

Re: Request for Exception to the Napa County Road and Street Standards to allow use of existing shared driveway access road that does not meet the 22 ft minimum width requirement in multiple segments as required by the Napa County Road and Street Standards Section 13 and Detail C-7.

Mr. Bordona,

The proposed project is located at 1871 Mt. Veeder Road in Napa County. The assessor's parcel number is 034-110-047-000.

This project is proposing a micro-winery on this 20.46-acre parcel. The proposed micro-winery will produce 2,000 gallons of wine from existing onsite vineyards in an existing onsite, 1,500 sf, cave. The micro-winery proposes a maximum of 10 visitors per day. This property is accessed down a long shared private driveway that is approximately 4,400 feet long. There is an existing residence and accessory buildings on the property, including an approximately 1,500 square foot cave in the hill adjacent to the house. There is an existing 4.5-acre vineyard on the property. This property has a Home Occupancy permit from Napa County that was obtained in 2019.

The existing shared driveway is shown on Sheet UP 3.0 of the Preliminary Improvement Plan for the use permit application. The existing shared driveway is a well-maintained gravel driveway with a minimum width of 14 feet. This existing driveway is currently being used to access two residential properties and many acres of vineyards. One residence is located on parcel 034-100-043 with an address of 1881 Mt Veeder Road. The second residence is the subject property on parcel 034-110-047 with an address of 1871 Mt Veeder Road. Domain Chandon owns parcels 034-110-040, 034-110-049 & 034-110-059. No houses exist on these three parcels, however, Domain Chandon maintains approximately 315 acres of vineyards on these three parcels. Domain Chandon currently maintains the existing shared driveway as they are the predominate user of this shared gravel driveway.

The proposed micro-winery project is proposing a very small commercial use that will not significantly increase use of this existing shared driveway. The existing shared driveway is located through a mountainous area and travels next to a blue line creek. Widening of this existing shared driveway as required in Section 13 of the Napa County Road and Street Standards is not feasible due to steep slopes, unique environmental features, and proximity to a blue line stream. This project is requesting a Road Exception per Section 3(d)i., of the Napa County Road and Street Standards which states...

i. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment which includes, but is not limited to, natural water courses, steep slopes, geological features, heritage oak trees, or other trees of least six inches in diameter at breast height and found by the decision-maker to be of significant importance, but does not include human altered environmental features such as vineyards and ornamental or decorative landscaping, or artificial features such as, rock walls, fences or the like

The project proposes to improve the existing shared driveway as required without damaging the natural environment, grading on steep slopes, or impacting the blue line stream. As shown on plan Sheet UP 3.0, the project proposes to install nine (9) turnouts and widen the driveway up to 26 ft wide for a length of 1,300 feet. The overall length of the existing driveway from Mt. Veeder Road to the project site is

approximately 4,400 feet. A separate Use Permit Exception to the Conservation Regulations is also being submitted as part of this project since some of the turnouts are proposed within the conservation setback to the blue line stream.


The proposed improvements to the existing shared driveway will provide the same overall practical effect as the Napa County Road and Street Standards and the SRA Fire Safe Regulations towards providing defensible space, and consideration towards life, safety and public welfare. The mitigating factors are as follows.

1. Turnouts that meet the Napa County Road and Street Standards Detail C-11 will be provided in strategic locations to allow vehicles to pull over and pass safely. Turnouts will be placed to provide as much sight distance as possible to be able to see if vehicles are coming in the opposite direction.
2. The driveway will be widened in suitable locations for a total distance of approximately 1,300 feet.
3. Undergrowth vegetation removal and maintenance will be performed to maintain sight distance to be able to see if vehicles are coming in the opposite direction.

Other mitigating items may include signage at the beginning of the driveway at Mt. Veeder Road to indicate private road, addresses, distances, fire water connection locations and fire water volume.

Please accept this letter along with the attached Preliminary Road Improvement Plan, Sheet UP 3.0 completed by Stillwater Civil Design for a complete road exception application. These documents provide findings for the road exception request, and provide mitigating factors to show that the proposed driveway improvements will provide the same overall practical effect of the Napa County Road and Street Standards and the SRA Fire Safe Regulations. Please feel free to contact Stillwater Civil Design if any further information is required.





J. Rangel Gonzales, P.E.
Stillwater Civil Design