

# Vida Valiente Appeal



P20-00079-UP

# Planning Commission Decision

“[W]hen I read the State Fire Safe Standards, it says a road needs to be 22 feet wide. And [Crystal Springs Road] isn’t, so, you know, I think we need the supervisors to clarify the policy again.”

Commissioner Kara Brunzell - May 1, 2024

“[T]he specific aspects of the project that are in conflict with the required Findings are [Crystal Spring Road] not meeting the State Fire Safe Code Regulations.”

Commissioner Megan Dameron - May 1, 2024

## DEFINITIONS

**Access** - The vehicular route from the nearest publicly maintained Road to Building construction.

**Disaster** - A Local Emergency Declaration by the Board of Supervisors declaring a specific event as a disaster.

**Driveway** - A vehicular pathway that serves no more than four (4) Residential Units and any number of noncommercial or non-industrial Utility or Miscellaneous Group U Buildings on each parcel. A Driveway shall not serve commercial or industrial uses at any size or scale.

# Access Definition

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- Consistently applied for over 30 years
- Certified by Board of Forestry in 2016 and 2019
- Adopted again by Board of Supervisors Resolution 2023-59
- Applied by County staff on every project in Napa County

# Redefining Access

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“[I]f we were to ask an applicant to make major public improvements like that, that would not only derail the project, but would also have negative downstream effects for all of the residents on that road if they needed to rebuild due to a fire.”

Jason Downs Napa County Fire Marshall - December 6, 2023

“[W]e have approved several wineries’ use permit applications, roadways, similar to Crystal Springs Road. We feel it’s unfair to ask the applicant to do the major improvement on any substandard roadway to bear the cost of the entire neighborhood.”

Ahsan Kazmi Napa County Traffic Engineer - December 6, 2023

# Redefining Access

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“[F]rom a policy standpoint, the County does have many roads that were built before standards were adopted. Obviously, a lot of our roads go back to the 1800s, 1870s, 1880s, early 1900s. So those roads exist and like I said, they were built before standards were adopted.”

“The Fire standards that were adopted recently by the State had the opportunity to address existing roads that were built before standards. They chose not to. So, and then the one, like I said, to the best of my knowledge, the Board has never actually turned down a project solely due to the road.”

Steve Lederer Napa County Public Works Director - December 6, 2023

# General Plan Policy SAF-20

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All new development shall comply with established fire safety standards.

*Design plans shall be referred to the appropriate fire agency for comment as to:*

- 1) Adequacy of water supply.
- 2) Site design for fire department access in and around structures.
- 3) Ability for a safe and efficient fire department response.
- 4) Traffic flow and ingress/egress for residents and emergency vehicles.
- 5) Site-specific built-in fire protection.
- 6) Potential impacts to emergency services and fire department response.

# Fire Marshall Testimony

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“[T]he project itself is compliant with the Napa County Road and Street Standards and all relevant NFPA standards, California Fire Code standards, and local fire codes.”

“I was the third engine in on the Glass Fire... Fire engine access was not an issue. Evacuations were done and conducted safely, and that area was obviously heavily overgrown, and the fire did some serious damage and there were some significant losses. However, no life loss occurred.”

“[W]e look at can we get safe ingress and safe egress. And based on my personal experience and others that I’ve worked with, that was achieved in 2020 during the Glass Fire.”

Jason Downs, Napa County Fire Marshall - December 6, 2023



# Vida Valiente's Fire Safety Measures

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- Direct traffic to the northern segment of Crystal Spring Road  
Conditions 4.19.b., 6.12.f. & 9.8.a.
- No visitation during Red Flag Warning or PSPS events  
Condition 4.3.f.
- Fire Code §403 Emergency Plan  
Condition 9.9.a.
- Hydrant, 40,000 gallons Fire Protection Water, Fire Truck Turnaround  
Condition 6.1.c.

# Visitation Reductions

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- Daily Tastings reduced from 28 to 22 per day
  - Merus has 25 tastings per day with less production
- Weekly Tastings reduced from 120 to 100
- Cut 24 person events in half from 24 to 12 per year
- Eliminated the twice annual 125 person events
- Annual Visitation cut from 7,246 to 5,668
  - 22% reduction
  - Average for 30,000 gallon wineries is 7,998

# Vida Valiente

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- Grant the Appeal
- Approve the Project subject to the Recommended Conditions of Approval
- Uphold Resolution 2023-59 and the Board's longstanding definition of Access