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**JUN 17 2004**

NAPA COUNTY  
DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS

June 15, 2004

Mr. Robert Peterson  
Director of Public Works  
Napa County  
1195 Third Street  
Napa, CA 94559

**SUBJECT: ROAD EXCEPTION REQUEST FOR OAKFORD VINEYARDS WINERY  
APN 027-360-018 AND USE PERMIT # 04029-UP**

Dear Mr. Peterson:

This letter is to request your Department's consideration of a road exception request for access roads serving the above noted property, herein referred to as Oakford Vineyards. The road exception request applies to two segments of roads accessing the site, as follows.

Existing Conditions and the Exception Request

(1) Private off-site access road from an intersection of Oakville Grade Road, just west of Euclid Drive (the private access to Far Niente Winery) - This private road provides access to three private residences and two wineries, including the Harlan Estates Winery. The current configuration of this road is a paved width that varies from 12 to 14 feet of paved surface. Approximately four areas along this road are conducive to the provision or utilization as turnouts, to accommodate ingress/egress of traffic, in the event of a fire emergency. These areas are located at locations (measured from the intersection of the road with Oakville Grade Road: 0.1(r); 0.2(r); 0.3(r) and 0.4(l).

In general, sight distance is good on the road and the condition of the existing paving is excellent. Portions of this access road parallel an existing drainage way and some steep groundslope areas, making road widening very difficult to achieve. Traffic on this road is minimal. The marketing plans for the existing winery and the winery proposed are very small, below the standard activity even for small wineries and by appointment only.

The reason for the road exception request on this segment of road is that widening of the road to 20 feet would incur encroachment into the stream setback along portions of the road (see stream setbacks on accompanying exhibit) and cuts into steep slope areas along other sections of the road. For reasons of environmental protection, widening of the road is prohibitive and, we believe, unnecessary for accommodating existing and new trips.

(2) Private winery access road on-site: An existing paved road serves a private residence on the Oakford Vineyards site. The development pad for the home will become the winery development envelope, utilizing the existing road on the west side of the residence as a winery access road. From a point slightly north of the development envelope, a new segment of this road will be provided and will loop to the east of the development envelope, terminating at the existing iron gates that serve as the entry to the property.

The winery access road is proposed as a one-way loop. The newly developed portions of the one-way loop will be 10 feet in width, per the County standard. The reason for the road exception request on the existing paved roadway is that portions of the road are approximately eight feet in width. Widening of these sections of the road would necessitate encroachment into the creek setback and an existing steep slope condition and, in some cases, would necessitate removal of mature trees.

A road exception exhibit accompanying this request letter reflect both the on-site and off-site segments of access roads as described herein. Creek setbacks are reflected on this exhibit, as are mature trees that will require removal.

#### Preliminary Site Visit with CDF

Early in the site planning process, the winery design team and fire and life safety engineer Cheryl Domnitch met with CDF Fire Chief Kate Dargan, to discuss the merits of the proposal for a road exception and the one-way winery access road. CDF has indicated their preliminary support of a road exception, provided that the winery access road is a one-way loop system and that there is sufficient turnout provision and vegetative management along the off-site segment of the road accessing the Oakford Vineyards property. These conditions are reflected in the conditions of approval forwarded by CDF as a result of the early circulation of the use permit application with DCDP.

#### Consistency with Standard Objectives

**Criteria 1: The exception is necessary to protect and ensure the preservation of unique features of the natural environment.**

Widening of the existing off-site access road would involve significant encroachment into a stream setback and, in other places would result in cuts into excessive slope areas adjacent to the roadway. Good sight distance, opportunities for turnouts along the off-site road, and the excellent condition of the existing paved surface offer a reasonable condition of the road in its existing condition and allow for protection of significant environmental features.

Widening of the on-site existing segments of road, which will be utilized as part of a one-way loop winery access road system, would involve encroachment into the stream setback, encroachment into excessive downslope areas, and removal of a number of mature native species trees that can otherwise be saved. This road exception request

proposes an exception to the 10-ft. width required for one-way loop roads in those areas where encroachment or tree removal would be otherwise avoided. The existing road will be repaved in its present configuration and maintenance of the road provided per the Code sections related to exceptions.

**Criteria 2: The exception allows a situation that provides the same overall practical effect as the standard does in providing defensible space and does not adversely effect the life, safety and welfare of the public or the persons coming to the property.**

With proper turnouts and defensible space clearing, the existing off-site access road should continue to serve these properties as it has for many years. The road has minimal travel and offers excellent sight distance and pavement conditions along its length. Granting of the road exception will not result in any significant change in this regard. The CDF condition for clearance of dry fuel load materials on either side of the road will actually improve safety conditions relative to ingress/egress in the event of wildfire.

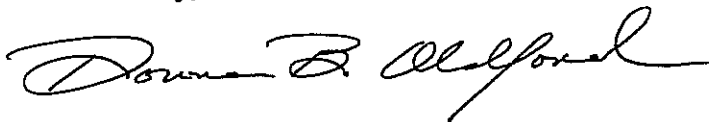
The life, safety and welfare of the public or persons coming to the property will not be adversely effected by the road exception. Preliminary negotiations with CDF personnel have supported that with proper mitigation, the existing and proposed access road systems are acceptable from the standpoint of safety as relates to fire protection.

#### Summary

The applicant and the winery design team, along with the fire and life safety engineer, believe that the road exception request is valid and meets the intent of Criteria 1 and 2. Maintaining the road at its present width in specific segments will also result in protection of significant natural elements such as streams and mature trees. We hope that the Department of Public Works concurs with this.

Please advise as to a time when Public Works personnel can meet with us at the site to discuss the request and the specifics of the roads in question. We are currently scheduled for a hearing before the County Planning Commission on Wednesday, July 21 and need to have the matter of the road exception resolved prior to that date. Thank you for your consideration of this request on behalf of Oakford Vineyards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna B. Oldford", written in a cursive style.

Donna B. Oldford  
Planning Consultant

Attachment: Road exception exhibit prepared by Summit Engineering