

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

City of Salinas, California

DATE: June 28, 2016

FROM: Gary Petersen, Public Works Director

THROUGH: Robert Russell, City Engineer

BY: Megan Hunter, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR A VARIATION TO THE STREET IMPROVEMENT POLICIES FOR A 113,000 SQ FT AGRICULTURAL COOLING FACILITY LOCATED AT 1428 ABBOTT STREET PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION NO. 12963, AS REFERENCED IN THE ENGINEER'S REPORT, APPENDIX C OF THE SALINAS AG-INDUSTRIAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a Resolution approving a variation to the street improvement policies in Resolution No. 12963 as referenced in the Engineer's Report, Appendix C of the Salinas Ag-Industrial Center Specific Plan for 1428 Abbott Street to:

- A) Temporarily waive requirements for street improvements off Dayton Street and Street "B" (Garrett Street) until future development requires these improvements to be constructed; and
- B) Allow Uni-Kool Partners to bond for required street improvements to Harris Road.

DISCUSSION:

Background:

The Salinas Ag-Industrial Specific Plan was approved by the City Council on January 19, 2010 with the purpose of transforming "Salinas into a regional and global center for agricultural innovation and industry". The 257 acres of land located in South Salinas is specifically allotted for new and relocating agricultural-related businesses. Currently, much of the Plan Area is in agricultural production, but it is well-situated to support agricultural-industrial uses with current access to two streets Abbott Street and Harris Road and close proximity to Highway 101. The Specific Plan outlines development timing and financing stating that "backbone infrastructure will be constructed incrementally to support staged development". Depending on the location of the first development, the Specific Plan does not require the construction of the internal public streets (part of the backbone infrastructure) including, but not limited to Street A, Street B (Garrett Street), Dayton Street, or Burton Avenue.

The proposed development, a 113,000 sq. ft. agricultural cooling facility with a current address of 1428 Abbott Street is located between Street B and Dayton Street off Harris Road. The facility would be accessed from Harris Road and will not require backbone infrastructure, nor industrial waste facilities. The property is located in the Industrial – General – Salinas Ag-Industrial Specific Plan-Airport Overlay

(IG-SP-7-AP) District and consists of agricultural land and vacant land. The following provides an overview of the land uses and zoning districts adjacent to the project site:

North: Industry-General uses/IG-AP (Industrial – General– Airport Overlay)
South: Unincorporated Agricultural Land
East: Unincorporated Agricultural Land
West: Industry-General uses/IG-AP (Industrial – General– Airport Overlay)

On June 14th, City Council approved the first amendment to the Specific Plan, which modified the recipient of the agricultural buffer and conservation easements. The modification was necessary to facilitate the sale and development of the property at 1428 Abbott consistent with the conditions of approval in the Specific Plan, the master parcel map per Council Resolution No. 19807 and mitigation measures contained in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The Specific Plan contains language addressing the timing and financing of infrastructure as the area is developed over time. In Appendix C, the Specific Plan contains the Engineer’s Report, which references Resolution No. 12963 requiring new development to install full infrastructure improvements. This resolution was originally developed with a citywide application in mind where infrastructure is largely constructed before or at the time of development. The resolution also contains somewhat contradictory language to that of the Specific Plan, which does not require full infrastructure build out, but rather a gradual phasing of the public improvements as necessary for site user sequencing. In addition to Section 1A. requiring installation of street improvements, Resolution No. 12963 contains a provision in Section III that allows for variations from its policies with “the recommendation of the Public Works Director and as approved by City Council”. To address any possible confusion or inconsistency between the Specific Plan text and Appendix C, it is recommended that the variation process is utilized for this particular project. The variation process is also being employed to allow Uni-Kool Partners to bond, as opposed to construct street improvements required along Harris Road.

In terms of outreach, public notice was provided by means of the Salinas Californian, 300’ mailing notices to surrounding properties, and site posting.

ANALYSIS

The initial development, a 113,000 sq. ft. cooling facility, will be able to tap into existing utilities to service the site and will be constructed according to the design standards outlined in the Specific Plan. However, additional clarity is needed regarding street improvement requirements as discussed above. The Specific Plan has language that provides guidance related to the phasing of internal public streets (Street “A”, Street “B”, Burton Avenue, or Dayton Street), part of the backbone infrastructure. In this case, the proposed development is fully accessible off Harris Road. Thus, the internal public streets are not necessary to serve the proposed project site.

Backbone Infrastructure

While it seems clear that the intent of the Specific Plan was not to require full build out of the internal public streets unless needed, the Engineer’s Report in Appendix C of the Specific Plan creates confusion with the reference to Resolution No. 12963. In order to clarify this, it is recommended that a variation is granted to temporarily waive improvements of the internal public streets until future development triggers its construction as outlined in the Ag-Industrial Specific Plan.

Harris Road

In terms of Harris Road Improvements, the Specific Plan does call out for “infrastructure necessary to support each development increment’s use”. Since this development would receive its access off Harris

Road, “frontage improvements not previously installed” would be required including street widening, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and street lighting. The Specific Plan limits responsibility for these improvements to the north side of the street. However, given the location of key utilities and because of future widening, it makes no sense to construct improvements now when they would be torn out later. Instead of installing these improvements now, the City is proposing that Uni-Kool Partners bond for these improvements to the satisfaction of the City Engineer.

Similar to the backbone improvements, it is recommended that a variation is approved allowing Uni-Kool Partners to bond for the required street improvement to Harris Road. This would ensure that there is funding available to augment the widening of Harris Road when it is undertaken instead of wasting resources on improvements that ultimately would have to be removed to accommodate installation of backbone utilities and future widening. As the first development in the Ag-Industrial Center, these improvements if built today are unnecessary as they do not connect to a larger circulation network. Moreover, the widening on the north side at approximately 5 feet would do little on its own to improve traffic flow.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

An environmental impact report was prepared for the original project. The Salinas Ag-Industrial Center Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was certified by the City Council on January 19, 2010. The proposed development complies with the Specific Plan and FEIR including the Engineer’s report, which references Resolution No. 12963. In Section III of the resolution, variations from its policies may be allowed based upon the recommendation of the Public Works Director and as approved by City Council. The environmental impacts of the variation request have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): the variation request is not considered a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 21065. Further environmental review for such a variation is not required.

FINDINGS:

Resolution No. 12963:

The Public Works Director may recommend variations from Resolution No. 12963 with approval from City Council. It is recommended that the variation is approved to: 1) temporarily waive requirements for the internal public streets because the initial development that does not otherwise require these improvements as stated in the Specific Plan, and 2) allow Uni-Kool Partners to bond for street improvements to Harris Road in order to offset the costs of the future widening of the roadway and associated improvements.

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council approve a variation to Resolution No. 12963 to temporarily waive requirements for Street Improvements to Dayton Street and Street “B” (Garrett Street) until future development as outlined in the Ag-Industrial Center Specific Plan requires these improvements to be constructed and allow Uni-Kool Partners to bond for required street improvements to Harris Road?

FISCAL IMPACT:

No significant impacts to the City’s General Fund are anticipated; however, the bond may be used to defray costs of future improvements at the time the backbone utilities are installed and the roadway widened. Over time as development occurs in the Plan area, the City would receive additional property tax revenue.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS:

The proposed project is not subject to the Permit Streamlining Act (PSA). However, a delay in approval could stop the proposed development, which needs to begin grading in July in order to meet a rigid construction schedule.

ALTERNATIVES/IMPLICATIONS:

The City Council has the following alternatives:

1. Adopt the Resolution approving the variation to Resolution No. 12963, with modifications;
or
2. Find that the proposal is not appropriate and establish findings denying the variation.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS:

The proposed variation is consistent with the following City Council goal:

Economic Diversity and Prosperity. Approval of the variation will allow for the first major agricultural related development in the plan area.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed variation will encourage the first major development in the Ag-Industrial Center and will likely serve as a catalyst for future development in the Plan Area. As incremental development occurs, the necessary infrastructure will be developed as outlined in the Specific Plan. In addition, approving this variation will provide flexibility on improvements for Harris Road, which ultimately hinge on installation of backbone utilities and road widening. Requirements to construct improvements on the north side of Harris Road today would be wasteful as future installation of backbone utilities would result in their removal. The bond would allow the City to offset the costs of the road widening and associated improvements and be more economically beneficial for the City.

Back Up Pages:
City Council Resolution
Resolution No. 12963
Figure 6-1: Specific Plan Circulation