



City of Salinas

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October 26, 2021

Michael Harrington, Esq.
 Horan Lloyd
 60 West Alisal Street, Suite 1
 Salinas, California 93901

RE: AMENDMENT TO SALINAS AG-INDUSTRIAL SPECIFIC PLAN; SPECIFIC PLAN AREA FLOOR AREA RATIO

Dear Mr. Harrington, Esq.:

On October 12, 2021, we received from you an application for a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Salinas Ag-Industrial Center Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The request outlined in the application is to remove footnote (b) from Table 3-1 of the Specific Plan as it applies to the “Wholesale Distribution” land use listed under “Warehousing Sales and Services”. No other modifications are proposed to the Table 3-1 or other parts of the Specific Plan and footnote (b) will continue to apply where otherwise listed in the Table.

Below shows a strikeout version of the portion of Table 3-1 subject to the amendment:

Warehousing Sales and Services:		
Land Use	Land Use Classification	
	Agricultural-Industrial (IA)	Abbott St. Frontage Zone (ASFZ)
Limited	NP	NP
Wholesale Distribution	SPR (b)	SPR (b)

Pursuant to Section 9.3.3 of the Specific Plan, the City Manager or designee may administratively approve an amendment request that does not strictly fit one or more of the items (1a-1e) listed for a Type 1 Major Amendment. After careful consideration of the request, I concur that the requested amendment is a Major Amendment Type 2 because it does not 1a) involve an addition or major change to Table 3-2; 1b) introduce a new land use to “Land Use Classifications”, Table 3-1 that would not otherwise reasonably fit into an existing Land Use category; 1c) increase the maximum allowable “Major Agricultural Processing” acreage beyond the maximum acreage; 1d) involve a major change in standards for floor area ratio, parking, allowed uses, density or intensity of development; or 1e) introduce new or intensified “significant” environmental impacts not previously analyzed that would change the character of the project.

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Under the authority granted to the City Manager under Section 9.3.3, Major Amendment Type 2, I am approving the requested amendment removing footnote (b) for the Land Use “Wholesale Distribution” under the Land Use Classifications for Agricultural-Industrial (IA) and Abbott Street Frontage Zone (ASFZ). Footnote (b) unnecessarily restricts “Wholesale Distribution” uses to those that are “agriculturally-related or serve the agriculture industry”. Since the Specific Plan was adopted in 2010, “Wholesale Distribution” has significantly changed with the rise of e-commerce, globalization, and more recently challenges in the supply chain and labor shortages created by the pandemic. The agriculture industry has also significantly changed since 2010, such that the original basis upon which the Specific Plan was originally adopted may no longer be relevant; more substantive non-administrative amendments may be necessary in the future to more usable for contemporary industries and business operations. This minor amendment is necessary to allow more flexibility to “Wholesale Distribution” without having to restrict distributors that may not be exactly aligned with footnote (b). The development regulations for “Wholesale Distribution” remain the same and the associated Ag-Industrial Specific Plan Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzed “Wholesale Distribution” and its environmental impacts with no distinction whether it was agriculturally related.

After the application was submitted, The Uni-Kool Partners’ Representative, Michael Harrington requested clarification on implementation of the Specific Plan relating to Floor Area Ratio (FAR). After review of the Specific Plan, the City agrees that FAR can be averaged across the associated Land Uses of “Major Agricultural Processing” and “Minor Agricultural Processing and All Other Uses” within the Specific Plan project area. Implementation of FAR averaging will result in FAR reductions of future development sites. For example, the FAR limitation for “Minor Agricultural Processing and All Other Uses” is .5 in the Specific Plan. If a parcel is developed with a FAR greater than .5, the remaining parcels would be restricted to a lower FAR so that the average remains at the .5 limitation. Given the maximum FAR allowed under the Specific Plan and analyzed in the EIR, depending on the amount of FAR consumed by the first users within the project area, the Specific Plan and the EIR may need to be amended and updated in the future to allow for additional future development.

Understandably, the built-in flexibility of Land Distribution, FAR, and Building Area in the Specific Plan could accidentally lead to overdevelopment of the site not contemplated in the EIR. Fortunately, this was anticipated in Specific Plan, which requires that all development applications “be accompanied by an updated Land Use Map” to be included in Appendix D so that the City and other stakeholders can track development and ensure it is within the capacity analyzed in the EIR. Any subsequent development that is greater than the overall development capacity analyzed in the EIR will be subject to more extensive environmental review.

To successfully track future development and make sure that it was appropriately analyzed in the EIR, the City must fully understand the development capacity established in the EIR. As written, the development capacity outlined in the EIR is confusing and requires a more in-depth review of the technical studies, particularly the traffic assumptions. Within the next couple of weeks, the City will schedule a meeting with the applicant and original consultants for the Specific Plan, EMC and RJA to identify the development capacity analyzed in the EIR to accurately track future development. I request that you help facilitate that meeting.

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We look forward to continuing working with you on future development of the Salinas Ag-Industrial Center in order to bring more economic opportunity and revenue to the City. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Megan Hunter, Community Development Director at (831) 758-7387.

Respectfully,



Steve Carrigan
City Manager

cc: City Attorney
Community Development Director