



December 15, 2022

Ms. Kelly Smith
Agricultural Community Events Farmers Markets
P. O. Box 113
Kenwood, CA 95452

Focused Transportation Impact Study for the Farmers' Market

Dear Ms. Smith;

W-Trans has completed an evaluation of the transportation impacts associated with continuation of the Farmers' Market that has for some years been operating in the parking lot of the Farmer Lane Plaza located on the west side of Farmers Lane between Bennett Valley Road and SR 12 in the City of Santa Rosa. The purpose of this letter is to estimate the weekday peak hour trip generation associated with the project, evaluate potential transportation impacts as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and address the adequacy of the parking supply remaining in the lot during the market.

Project Description

The farmers' market currently operates on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and on Saturday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Saturday market is the larger of the two, with 50 to 60 vendors, and there are generally 25 vendors on Wednesdays. The farmers' market location would continue to be accessed via the existing signalized driveway on Farmers Lane.

Trip Generation

Assuming that the vendors start arriving at about 7:45 a.m. on a Wednesday morning and the arrivals are dispersed over about a 45-minute timeframe, for 25 vendors the market would be expected to generate about 25 trips in a single hour during the morning peak hour. Customers would be expected to arrive predominantly after 9:00 a.m., so they would not generate any a.m. peak hour trips. No trips would be generated during the p.m. peak hour as the market would be closed and all participants gone from the site well before 4:00 p.m. While the trip generation would exceed 50 trips on weekends, these trips would not coincide with any defined peak period. Because the project would be expected to generate fewer than 50 weekday peak hour trips and Saturday morning is not typically as critical for traffic operation, an operational analysis was not prepared.

Alternative Modes

Pedestrian Facilities

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signal phases, curb ramps, curb extensions, and various streetscape amenities such as lighting, benches, etc. In the project vicinity, sidewalks are available on both sides of Farmers Lane and Neotomas Avenue. There are no sidewalks on Bennett Valley Road to the east of Farmers Lane, and sidewalks or a pedestrian walkway are only available on the south side to the west of Farmers Lane. Although there are sidewalk gaps in the project area, this condition is acceptable given that farmer's market is expected to generate limited pedestrian trips and there is connectivity to the residential neighborhoods to both the north and west.

Bicycle Facilities

In the project vicinity, Class II bike lanes are available on both sides of Farmers Lane, Bennett Valley Road, and Hoen Frontage Road. According to the City of Santa Rosa's *Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update, 2018*, the Class I

Taylor Mountain Regional Park Trail is proposed to the south of Farmers Lane between Bennett Valley Road and Yolanda Avenue and Class III Bicycle Routes are planned on Neotomas Avenue. Further, the City is undertaking the Bennett Valley Road Trail Study to evaluate alternatives to provide a Class I Multi-Use Path or other bicycle and walking connection along Bennett Valley Road between Farmers Lane and Yulupa Avenue, which may result in improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the future. Altogether, the existing bicycle facilities are adequate and are expected to be enhanced upon completion of nearby bicycle projects and once any improvements are implemented based on the Bennett Valley Road Trail Study.

Transit Facilities

In the project vicinity, there are transit stops for Santa Rosa CityBus Route 18 on both sides of Farmers Lane near the project site as well as on the south side of Neotomas Avenue to the east of Farmers Lane. Route 18 serves destinations in the southeast quadrant of the City and operates all days of the week from 10:20 a.m. to 5:10 p.m. with nearly one-hour headways. As existing transit stops are located within a walkable distance of a half-mile from the project site and adequate pedestrian walking connections exist between the project site and transit stops, it is reasonable to conclude that the existing transit facilities are adequate to serve the project site. Further, the existing routes would be expected to have adequate capacity to accommodate any project-generated transit trips.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

Senate Bill (SB) 743 established the change in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a result of a project as the basis for determining California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) impacts with respect to transportation and traffic. The City of Santa Rosa issued guidelines for VMT analysis, as outlined in *Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Guidelines Final Draft*, dated June 5, 2020. This document identifies several criteria that may be used to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a significant VMT impact and can be “screened” from further analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to local-serving retail, which the City defines as having up to 10,000 square feet of gross floor area. The theory behind this criterion is that while a larger retail project may generate interregional trips that increase a region’s total VMT, small retail establishments do not necessarily add new trips to a region, but change where existing customers shop within the region and often shorten trip lengths.

As the farmer’s market would mostly serve the local population, the project would be considered as local-serving retail, which changes where existing customers shop rather than generating new trips. The screening criterion of 10,000 square feet usually refers to big box type retail but the farmer’s market is comprised of local vendors. Additionally, assuming that there are up to 50 vendors and each vendor would occupy about 100 square feet, the farmer’s market would occupy only 5,000 square feet of the parking lot, which is well below the threshold of 10,000 square feet. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the project would screen out as local-serving retail and can be presumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Emergency Response

Site access and circulation are expected to function acceptably assuming applicable design standards were applied when the existing project site was constructed. Further, as all roadway users must yield the right-of-way to emergency vehicles when using their sirens and lights, the nominal volume of project-generated traffic would not appreciably affect emergency response times.

Parking

The existing farmer’s market has been operating at this site for nearly three years as of November 2022. It is understood that there have been no issues related to the adequacy of the parking supply during the farmer’s market operational hours during this time. Further, had the owners of the Farmers Lane Plaza received complaints from their tenants about there being inadequate parking, they would be unlikely to continue to allow the farmer’s market.

Since there have not been complaints, it is reasonable to conclude that the existing parking supply is adequate to simultaneously accommodate parking demands from the shopping center and the farmer's market.

Conclusions

- The project is expected to generate an average of about 45 trips in a single hour on Wednesday morning and more than 50 hourly trips on Saturday morning. The Saturday morning peak hour trips are not expected to coincide with any defined peak period. There would be no evening peak hour trips as the farmer's market would be closed during the evening peak period.
- Existing pedestrian facilities are acceptable given that the farmer's market would generate limited pedestrian trips. The existing bicycle facilities are adequate and would improve upon the completion of nearby bicycle projects as well as upon any improvements based on the Bennett Valley Road Trail Study. Transit facilities are adequate to serve the project site.
- The project would screen out as local-serving retail and would be presumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.
- The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on emergency response times. The proposed project access and circulation would be expected to function acceptably for emergency response vehicles.
- The existing parking lot is expected to be adequate to accommodate parking demands for the shopping center and the farmer's market based on past experience.

We hope this information is useful to staff in preparing your environmental clearance documentation. If you have any questions, please contact us. Thank you for allowing us to provide these services.

Sincerely,


Dalene J. Whitlock, PE, PTOE
Senior Principal



DJW/djw/SRO609.L1