

March 3, 2022

SENT VIA EMAIL

Julie Nelson, Senior Planner
Community Development Department
City of Merced
678 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

RE: Comments on Proposed Rogina Annexation Pre-Annexation Application to the City of Merced

Dear Ms. Nelson:

Thank you for inviting Merced LAFCO to participate in the City's important Annexation Pre-Application Review process regarding the Rogina annexation proposal located on the west side of G Street and the extension of Old Lake Road.

This proposal involves 147 acres land located at the northern end of the City's adopted Sphere of Influence. While it is contiguous to the City limits to the south, it continues a strip of existing and pending development along the west side of G Street from the El Capitan High School and a narrow liner subdivision presently under construction. More developed portions of the City are located one mile to the south at Bellevue Road. Therefore, the timing of the annexation and development of this property is one of the main concerns of LAFCO.

The demand for this development at the far northern edge of the City's Sphere of Influence is also questionable given the enormous territory involved in pending annexations under consideration through the City's current Pre-Application annexation process. These projects are summarized as follows:

University Vista – 291 acres adjacent to the UC Merced Campus with 4,176 proposed residential units and 778,762 square feet of Mixed Use and Commercial development.

Virginia Smith Trust – 654 acres adjacent to the UC Merced Campus with 3,857 proposed residential units and 862,000 square feet of Mixed Use, Retail, Hospitality and Office uses.

Branford Point – 47.7 acres adjacent to the UC Merced Campus with 589 proposed residential units and 3,176,064 square feet of Mixed Use, R & D, Commercial and Hospitality uses.

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Yosemite Lake Estates – 734 acres (of Gallo owned land) located north of Old Lake Road east of the Rogina property which is also at the fringe and partially outside the City's sphere of influence with 3,414 proposed residential units, and 8 acres of Village Commercial (no square footage estimate).

In addition to these currently pending Pre-Annexation applications, the vast majority of the Bellevue Ranch Specific Plan area north of Bellevue Road is still vacant and available for development and there are other projects pending or proposed on the east side of G Street on both the north and south sides of Bellevue Road that are within the current Sphere of Influence and part of the Bellevue Corridor Community Plan development plans.

The City also needs to ensure there is adequate sewer, water and all other public services available to serve this growth, and a detailed "plan for services" must be submitted with each future annexation application. The current Pre-Annexation projects listed above currently identify a demand for 2.85 million gallons a day of sewer capacity and a demand for 3.83 million gallons a day of water supply. This does not include the demand for the development within the City limits within the remaining portions of the Bellevue Ranch area.

The Pre-Application process for annexations into the City is a very commendable approach to help make decisions regarding future growth. The Rogina annexation should be carefully scrutinized by the City in balance with the other pending annexations and development projects within the current City limits, as to the anticipated growth rate and service demands of the City.

Please contact me by phone at (209) 385-7671 or by e-mail at bill.nicholson@countyofmerced.com if you have any questions about these comments.

Sincerely,

Bill Nicholson

Bill Nicholson
Executive Officer

cc: LAFCO Commissioners
LAFCO Counsel