

Caltrans wants improvements

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Editor:

In an article in The Valley Springs News dated April 13, 2016, with regard to Steve Kearney's proposed recall, he says, "During my election it was no secret that I stood for jobs and economic growth for Calaveras County. I welcome the opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to bringing quality growth and economic prosperity to all." He also said that the Planning Commission and the supervisors removed the required off-site improvements for Olive Orchard Road only after Caltrans formally removed the requirements to the project.

However, in a letter of April 13, 2016, from Skip Allum, (Caltrans public information officer) said, Caltrans sent three letters to Calaveras County responding to the Traffic Impact Study and Initial Study/Negative Declaration for the Olive Orchard Estates Modification of Existing Permit project. Caltrans' letters consistently recommend payment of Valley Springs Benefit Basin Fees to contribute to construction of left turn lanes on SR-26 at Olive Orchard Road and Garner Place. Our March 12, 2015 letter suggested that the county should further evaluate the need for the turn lanes on Olive Orchard at SR-26 intersection. We noted that the Traffic Impact Study identified the need for the turn lanes under cumulative and cumulative plus project conditions. The County Initial Study responded that "Improvement of Olive Orchard Road is (also) a project in the VS Benefit Basin as the western connector." Construction of the western connector would ultimately address the need for the right and left turn lanes on Olive Orchards Road, and the project is required to pay into the fee program as each residence is constructed. Caltrans has not stated there is no need to improve the intersection but has concurred with the county's plan for constructing future improvements.

Then why did Steve Kearney vote (along with Edson and Oliveira) to remove the required off-site improvements for Olive Orchard Road? How much did that vote cost the populace? Did that bring quality growth and economic prosperity to the community?

Don Kuhn

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