

May 5, 2025

Local Agency Formation Commission

Re: Letter of Support for Richards Ranch Project

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Richards Ranch development project in Orcutt. This thoughtfully designed project represents a significant opportunity for our community that addresses current needs while planning responsibly for our future.

Our community desperately needs new housing options for working families and the next generation of Orcutt residents. Richards Ranch will provide these much-needed homes in a way that compliments our existing neighborhoods while offering diverse housing options to support various income levels and life stages. This development creates pathways for young families to establish roots in Orcutt and allows longtime residents to find suitable homes as their needs change.

Beyond housing, Richards Ranch includes carefully planned commercial spaces that will stimulate our local economy. These spaces will create new employment opportunities for residents, expand our tax base, and provide convenient shopping and service options within walking distance. The thoughtful integration of commercial elements ensures these additions will enhance rather than compete with our existing business community.

What particularly impresses me about Richards Ranch is its commitment to creating a walkable, vibrant neighborhood that truly reflects Orcutt's values. The development incorporates open spaces, pedestrian-friendly pathways, and community gathering places that foster connection among neighbors. These design elements maintain our town's character while meeting modern needs for sustainable, people-centered development.

The project's transportation improvements are equally impressive. The enhancements at Union Valley Parkway are already improving circulation patterns and effectively reducing congestion on Clark Avenue. These infrastructure investments benefit our entire community, not just future Richards Ranch residents. The comprehensive traffic flow improvements have been strategically designed to accommodate new residents while simultaneously improving conditions for existing neighborhoods – a win-win approach to growth.

From a fiscal perspective, the Tax Revenue Sharing Agreement between the County of Santa Barbara and the City of Santa Maria demonstrates remarkable regional cooperation. This agreement ensures both agencies will benefit financially from the annexation of Richards Ranch, with shared property tax revenues providing sustainable funding for essential public services including fire protection, law enforcement, parks, and road maintenance. This collaborative approach shows exceptional foresight in supporting housing, infrastructure, and economic growth in a fiscally responsible manner.

Richards Ranch represents thoughtful planning that addresses our community's current challenges while preparing for a prosperous future. I encourage the Planning Commission to approve this project and help move our community forward with this balanced, well-designed development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Erika Weber', with a stylized, cursive script.

L Erika Weber  
4107 Eucalyptus Lane  
Orcutt, CA 93455