April 9, 2014

Paul Junker and Cyrus Abhar  
City of Rancho Cordova  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, California 95670

RE: Arista del Sol (RC-04-04-077/SAC200400129) and Grant Line 208 (RC-04-064 / SAC200400161)

Mr. Junker and Mr. Abhar,

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) thanks the City of Rancho Cordova for the opportunity to participate in the April 7, 2014 workshop on Arista del Sol and Grant Line 208. We offer the following comments:

Phased Construction of Americanos Boulevard

SMAQMD supports staff’s position in constructing Boulevards outside-in instead of east-to-west. Travel patterns are established when neighborhoods are new and residents are moving in. A complete street with active transportation infrastructure on Americanos Boulevard (i.e. both a north and south bound bike lane) will increase the likelihood that sustainable travel modes are viable in this community from the start, and that future active transportation infrastructure plans are implemented.

Additionally, Sunridge’s Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) requires the project to have a clean-fuel transit shuttle system. Providing frontage on both sides of Americanos Boulevard would give transit planners the greatest flexibility to maximize ridership. Transit stops cannot be located where no sidewalk improvements exist, due to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Transit service is often organized to accommodate round-trips, and this usually requires improvements on both sides of transit route streets.

Finally, improvements adjacent to the wetlands preserve have strong potential to be a pedestrian asset, even when development is located on the other side of the street. The Folsom Boulevard Streetscape project experiences high pedestrian traffic along the
railroad tracks and across the street from major destinations, demonstrating that well-designed pedestrian infrastructure can experience high use even when it is across the street from destinations. The Folsom Boulevard Streetscape project demonstrates the demand for complete active transportation infrastructure, and we encourage the City to continue to accommodate this demand.

Joint-use Parking Opportunity at Community Park/School Site

The Council expressed dismay at the reduced size of the community park, which may not be sufficient for programmed community activities. However, the schematic that the Recreation and Park District presented at the workshop showed that a large portion of the park was slated for parking instead of active uses. Shared parking arrangements could remedy this by making more parkland available for active uses, including programmed community activities.

Because the community park is adjacent to the proposed elementary school, and peak-parking events at the park are unlikely to overlap with peak-parking events at the school, a shared parking agreement could address parking-related space constraints. We encourage the City to facilitate a joint parking use agreement with the school district for this purpose.

Additionally, because the park is located near a major bike trail, the Park District could minimize the parking demand by accommodating and promoting active transportation to the park. We encourage the City to ensure safe bicycle and pedestrian crossings to the trail across Americanos Boulevard.

Finally, minimizing paved parking surfaces would also reduce construction emissions and increase carbon sequestration. We encourage the City to explore all feasible measures to minimize the size of the parking facility.

Consistency with Approved Air Quality Mitigation Plan

Arista del Sol and Grant Line 208 are located in the Sunridge Specific Plan area. These projects are therefore subject to the adopted AQMP. The Sunridge Specific Plan has a 17.97 point plan that includes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit measures, parking measures, residential development and mixed use measures, and other measures. These measures are attached. Please continue to keep these projects consistent with the AQMP.

General Comments

All projects are subject to SMAQMD rules and regulations in effect at the time of construction. The attached document describes SMAQMD Rules which may apply to this project whether the air quality impacts are determined to be significant or not.
The SMAQMD thanks the City of Rancho Cordova for the opportunity to comment on this project. If you have additional questions or require further assistance, please contact me at mwright@airquality.org or 916-874-4207

Sincerely,

Molly Wright
Air Quality Planner / Analyst

Cc: Larry Robinson, Program Coordinator, SMAQMD