



# COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION  
DRIVE, ROOM 102A  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 3/24/2026

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**To:** The Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Permit Sonoma

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Scott Orr, Director (707) 565-1925, Levan King Cranston, Planner (707) 565-2592

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Fourth

**Title:**

1:40 P.M. Zone Change to remove the Z (ADU Exclusion) Combining District; 711 Lytton Station Rd, Geyserville (Permit Sonoma File No. ZCE24-0013).

**Recommended Action:**

Permit Sonoma recommends that the Board of Supervisors conduct a public hearing and adopt an Ordinance finding the proposed project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 (minor alterations in land use limitations) and approving a zone change to remove the Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District from the subject parcel at 711 Lytton Station Road, Geyserville; APN 091-081-065 (Permit Sonoma File No. ZCE24-0013) (Fourth District).

**Executive Summary:**

The project is a request for a Zone Change to remove the Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District on a 5.09-acre parcel zoned Rural Residential (RR), located at 711 Lytton Station Road, Geyserville, approximately 3 miles north of Healdsburg. The parcel contains an existing single-family dwelling approximately 1,340 square feet in size and one detached garage 1,500 square feet in size.

The Planning Commission adopted Resolution No. 26-001 on January 15, 2026, which recommended the Board of Supervisors approve the Zone Change to remove the Z Combining District from the subject parcel.

**Discussion:**

The purpose of Sec. 26-76-005 of the Sonoma County Zoning Code (Z - Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion Combining District) is to provide for the exclusion of accessory dwelling units in specific areas of Sonoma County. This includes areas where there is an inadequate supply of water for drinking or firefighting, where there is inadequate sewer services or danger of groundwater contamination, where the addition of accessory dwelling units would contribute to existing traffic hazards or increase the burden on heavily impacted streets, roads or highways, and where, because of topography, access or vegetation, there is a significant fire hazard.

The Z Combining District was specifically applied to the subject parcel as part of planning Conditions of Approval for a previous Major Subdivision, project file ZC/MJS89-694, also known as the 'Big Plains Estate subdivision'. The subject parcel is considered Lot 2 of the 'Big Plains Estate Subdivision'. This major subdivision was approved by Board of Supervisors Resolution 1990-2280, for two phases with the condition of approval (not related to a CEQA mitigation measure) that the newly created parcels be subject to a Conservation and Scenic Easement, for the purpose of protecting the nature and character of the subject property from further

subdivision and residential development which could result in visual impacts under CEQA. However, state regulatory conditions have changed since the original subdivision, in that accessory dwellings are no longer considered for visual impacts and are exempt from design review. Additionally, the preservation of scenic areas is not part of the criteria for placement of the Z district on parcels, therefore removal of the Z district from the subject property can be considered.

In 2019, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 6285 approving removal of the Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District from approximately 1,924 specified parcels countywide, including parcels over 10 acres within the Land Intensive Agriculture (LIA), Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA), and Diverse Agriculture (DA) Zoning Districts that met specific screening criteria of former Housing Element Policy HE-3c. While the subject parcels did not pass the screening criteria in 2019 due to Major Subdivision Conditions of Approval, assessing the removal of the Z Combining District on a case-by-case basis continues to be consistent with current Housing Element goals and objectives to increase opportunities for the production of affordable housing.

The addition of the Z combining district was implemented for reasons related to limiting density and preserving scenic character. Staff finds the subject parcel does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the Z Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion District per Article 76 of the Sonoma County Code. Additionally, accessory dwelling units do not count as an increase in density and state law generally precludes jurisdictions from considering visual impacts in the review of applications for accessory dwelling units. In addition, there is a scenic easement on the subject property which limits development which could change the scenic character.

**Planning Commission Recommendation:**

The Planning Commission voted 4-0-1 on January 15, 2026, adopting Resolution No. 26-001 finding the project exempt from CEQA and recommending approval to the Board of Supervisors for the requested zone change to remove the Z Combining District. The project is categorically exempt under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 because removing the Z Combining District is a minor alteration in land use limitations in an area with an average slope of less than 20% that does not result in any changes in land use or density because under state law the addition of one accessory dwelling unit may not be considered to exceed the allowable density (Government Code § 65852.2(a)(8)). No exceptions to the exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to this application.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Permit Sonoma recommends that the Board of Supervisors conduct a public hearing and adopt an Ordinance finding the proposed project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under CEQA Guidelines Section 15305 (minor alterations in land use limitations) and approving a zone change to remove the Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District from the subject parcel at 711 Lytton Station Rd, Geyserville; APN 091-081-065 (Permit Sonoma File No. ZCE24-0013)

**Strategic Plan:**

*Not applicable*

**Racial Equity:**

**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

**Prior Board Actions:**

Not Applicable

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

This is an at-cost project for which project costs are the responsibility of the applicant.

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

N/A

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 ZCE24-0013 Board of Supervisors Ordinance

Attachment 2 ZCE24-0013 Planning Commission Staff Report

Attachment 3 ZCE24-0013 Planning Commission Memorandum with Attachments

Attachment 4 ZCE24-0013 Planning Commission Updated Resolution No. 26-001

Attachment 5 ZCE24-0013 PowerPoint

**Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:**

None