



Sonoma County Planning Commission STAFF REPORT

FILE: Winery Events Ordinance ORD16-0001

DATE: June 3, 2021

TIME: At or after 1:50 p.m.

STAFF: Georgia McDaniel, Project Planner

A Board of Supervisors hearing on the project will be held at a later date and will be noticed at that time.

SUMMARY

Applicant:	County of Sonoma
Supervisory District(s):	All
Subject:	Winery Events Ordinance
Proposal:	Consideration of amendments to the County Code, Chapter 26, adding standards for new winery visitor serving uses on lands zoned Land Intensive Agriculture, Land Extensive Agriculture, and Diverse Agriculture, outside of the coastal zone.
CEQA Review:	Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Cal. Code Regulations, Title 14, § 15308 exempting standards authorized by State Law to protect the environment; and § 15061(b)(3) because the ordinance will not result in a significant effect on the environment.
Ordinance Reference:	Sonoma County Code Chapter 26 – Sonoma County Zoning Regulations, Article 6 – Agricultural and Resource Zones and Article 18 – Agricultural and Resource-Based Use Standards.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a resolution recommending that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopt the draft Sonoma County Winery Events Ordinance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Permit Sonoma is proposing a draft Winery Events Ordinance to address key issues associated with winery events and promotional activities. On October 11, 2016, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare



zoning code amendments to address key issues associated with winery events and promotional activities, and to develop siting criteria and standards for areas of concentration.

Three areas of local concentration were identified in the county: Sonoma Valley, Westside Road, and Dry Creek Valley. Stakeholders in each of the three areas of concentration have worked at the local level to establish local guidelines for their respective community.

At the conclusion of a Winery Events Ordinance project update on May 19, 2020, the Board of Supervisors directed Permit Sonoma staff to move forward with preparing a countywide winery events ordinance with additional community input. Staff has developed a countywide ordinance based on stakeholder input, as well as information from traffic and noise studies commissioned for this policy effort. Moreover, the ordinance is informed by community input received during numerous stakeholder meetings and community workshops, including a 195-person public workshop on February 18, 2021.

The draft Winery Events Ordinance includes a set of standards for winery events and promotional activities. These standards will be used by Permit Sonoma staff and decision makers when considering new and modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving uses. The intent of the draft Ordinance is to provide consistency and clarity to the use permit evaluation process, reduce impacts to surrounding uses, protect agricultural lands, and preserve rural character. The draft Ordinance defines key terms and sets forth operating standards for maximum hours of operation, parking, food service, event coordination and traffic management, and setbacks for noise attenuation.

Staff will present a final draft Winery Events Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for approval on August 17, 2021.

POLICY HISTORY

On December 9, 2014, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Work Plan for Comprehensive Planning that included developing regulations to address winery events and potential overconcentration. The Work Plan would update countywide standards and procedures for regulating winery-related promotional activities on agricultural lands to better address land use compatibility and potential overconcentration. The Work Plan anticipated focused policies in Sonoma Valley, Dry Creek Valley, and Westside Road because of the relative concentration of existing wineries with events and related traffic impacts.

To complete the policy project, the Permit Sonoma Director formed a Winery Event Working Group that met for six months to review existing policies and inform staff of key issues and policy options. The Winery Event Working Group comprised individuals representing both industry and neighborhood groups. A number of key issues emerged through this effort: 1) wine industry business need for direct marketing activities; 2) neighborhood compatibility; 3) potential impacts related to noise, traffic, dust and water supplies; 4) commercialization of agricultural lands and concentration; and 5) maintaining rural agricultural character.

Following the Working Group meetings, staff conducted a public workshop attended by roughly 500 people and received written comments from various groups. Staff reviewed regulations from other counties, completed an audit of use permits issued to date, updated the winery database (a catalogue of active wineries in Sonoma), and contracted with qualified traffic and noise consultants to prepare analyses on issues associated with winery events in areas of concentration.



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On July 12, 2016, the Board of Supervisors held a study session on winery events to consider key issues and policy options that could reduce the potential for neighborhood conflicts and provide more certainty to the permitting process. The Board discussed policy options, and directed staff to return with a summary of the Board of Supervisor's comments and a revised Resolution of Intention.

On October 11, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution of Intention directing staff to initiate zoning code amendments to address key issues associated with winery events, and to develop siting criteria and standards for areas with potential overconcentration. Staff would work through the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council, the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission, and a stakeholders group for the Westside Road area to facilitate development of criteria and standards for each local area of concentration.

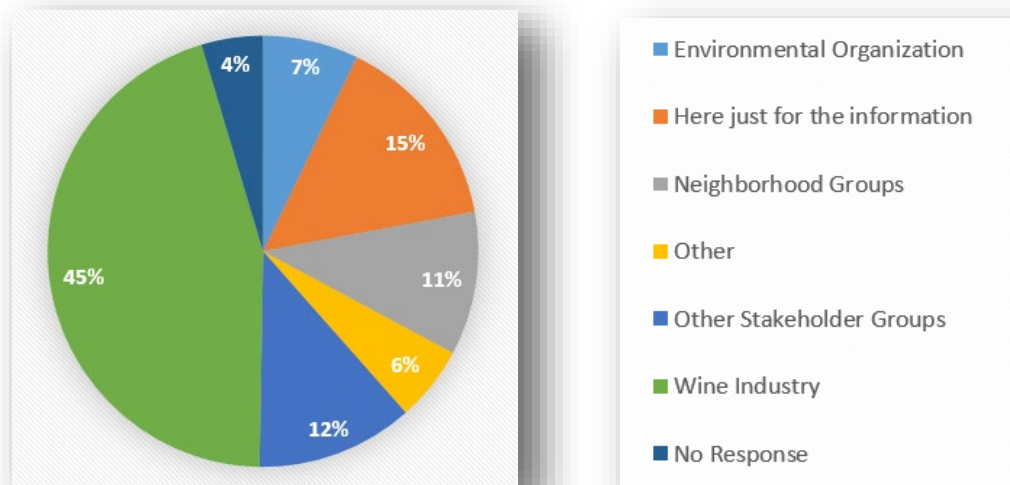
Preparation of local guidelines with siting criteria and operational standards began in 2016. The Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCVCAC) completed their guidelines in 2017. The DCVCAC local guidelines were approved by the Board of Supervisors in 2018 and posted on the DCVCAC webpage. Sonoma Valley Stakeholders meetings began in 2017 with the goal of preparing guidelines with siting criteria and operational standards. The draft Sonoma Valley guidelines were presented to the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission (SVCAC) on November 18, 2020. SVCAC is currently reviewing final revisions and expect to complete their guidelines in summer 2021. Westside Road Stakeholders met on a monthly basis in 2019, however, draft guidelines have not been prepared.

During a Winery Events Policy update on May 19, 2020, the Board directed Permit Sonoma to obtain additional public feedback and move forward with preparing a countywide winery events ordinance that defines key terms and addresses common issues identified across the local guidelines.

On February 18, 2021, Permit Sonoma held a public workshop on a draft framework for the county winery event ordinance. The workshop was attended by 195 people, including representatives from the wine industry, neighborhood groups, environmental groups, and other stakeholder groups. Workshop attendance is broken down into the identifying groups shown below.



Figure 1. Workshop Attendees by Identifying Groups



The workshop included a presentation on the history of winery events policy and community work, actions taken to reduce cumulative impacts, a brief overview of the local guidelines process, and developing a draft framework for county winery event ordinance. Participants were provided an opportunity to make public comments in 30-minute small group (breakout group) discussions. A summary of public comments documented by facilitators is available on the Winery Events project website (Attachment 4).

The summary of comments represent the diverse views on developing framework for a winery events ordinance and the distinguishing factors between normal business operations and events. Reducing impacts to surrounding uses and negative cumulative effects depends on a variety of site- and neighborhood-specific factors, such as parcel size and distance to neighbors, road and traffic conditions. Key themes emerged from the public comments.

Public Comments – Emerging Themes:

- Size is the major determining factor whether an activity or event
- Food and wine pairing is an activity. Full meal served is an event.
- Activities/parties during normal business hours are normal visitor-serving activities.
- Activities/parties after normal business hours are winery events.
- Wine industry meetings/parties are part of normal operations.
- Lack of monitoring and enforcement results in direct negative impacts to neighbors and contributes to negative cumulative effects.

Written Public Comments Received February 2, 2021 - March 19, 2021:

Over 30 public written public comments were received via email separately from the February 18, 2021 virtual public workshop. The comments largely cover topics raised in public comments received during the February 2021 workshop and past community and stakeholder meetings. Wine industry members raised concern about the relationship between preexisting wineries with vague permit approvals and the new ordinance. The Vintners Association proposed a set of draft winery definitions and guidelines they requested to be considered in the development of the ordinance. Comments were also received from Preserve Rural Sonoma County, Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Wine and Water Watch Board, Greenbelt Alliance, Friends of Atascadero Wetlands, Korbel Champagne Cellars, Rodney Strong Vineyards, Bacigalupi Vineyards, Peay Vineyards, Dry Creek Vineyards, and Valley of the Moon Alliance; as well as a number of private citizens.

Information regarding past meetings from 2016 through the Virtual Public Workshop in February 2021 can be accessed at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Winery-Events/Past-Meetings/>

Documents from 2015 and 2016 may be accessed on the Winery Events Documents and Maps webpage at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Regulations/Winery-Events/Documents-and-Maps/>

Table 1 below summarizes prior project history and actions taken for the Winery Events Policy initiative.

Table 1: Summary of Policy Milestones

Date	Policy Event/Milestone
December 2014	Board adopted 2015-17 Work Plan with Winery Events Policy
2015-2016	Winery Event Working Group met on key issues and policy options
November 2015	Permit Sonoma held a public workshop; 500 attendees
July/October 2016	Board held a Winery Events Study Session; staff directed to prepare zoning amendments and policy options for local guidelines
2017-2019	Permit Sonoma facilitated Sonoma Valley Stakeholder Group meetings on preparation of local advisory guidelines
October 2018	Board approved local advisory guidelines prepared by Dry Creek Citizen Advisory Council
November 2019	Consultant completed noise guidelines and traffic studies for 3 areas of concentration
June 2019	Board adopted 2017-19 Work Plan with Winery Events
2019-2020	Permit Sonoma facilitated Westside Road Stakeholder Group meetings on preparation of local advisory guidelines
May 2020	Permit Sonoma provided Winery Events Policy update to Board; staff directed to prepare countywide winery event ordinance
November 2020	Sonoma Valley Stakeholders Group presented draft local guidelines to Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission
January 2021	Consultant presented traffic study recommendations to Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to inform local area guidelines
February 2021	Permit Sonoma held a public workshop; 195 attendees

POLICY ANALYSIS

Background

Prior to 1989, the zoning code allowed agricultural cultivation by right and retail sales and tasting rooms with a use permit, but did not allow events or promotional activities. In 1989, the Agricultural Resources Element was added to the General Plan, which included a change in policy allowing agricultural promotional activities on agricultural lands so long as the promotional activities were compatible with long-term agricultural use of the land. These policies were implemented in the 1993 zoning code update, which allows sales and promotion of agricultural products with a use permit, as well as occasional cultural events with an administrative zoning permit.

In 2008, the Board approved an update to the General Plan, which expanded on policies regulating winery events activity and agricultural promotional events. Since 1993, when zoning code amendments were adopted to allow promotional activities and events with a use permit, the wine industry has increasingly shifted the mode of wine marketing to focus on direct-to-consumer sales. This shift has driven an increase in promotional activities and events that bring customers to agricultural areas for wine release parties, winemaker dinners, industry-wide events and other gatherings that have, in some situations, resulted in neighborhood impacts and potential land use conflicts. Many wineries have applied for modifications to their use permits.

Of the 464 winery and tasting room permits approved in the unincorporated areas of Sonoma County, 307 are permitted for visitor serving uses, such as tasting and events. Most of the permitted tasting rooms are allowed to participate in industry-wide events unless prohibited in the use permit. Use permits also specify other promotional activities and events depending upon site constraints and marketing plans of the operator.

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan Agricultural Land Use Policy includes three agricultural use categories, "Land Intensive Agriculture", "Land Extensive Agriculture", and "Diverse Agriculture". Each category permits the full range of agricultural uses, including agricultural production, agricultural support uses and visitor serving uses as provided in the Agricultural Resources Element. The goal of the General Plan policies is to preserve agricultural lands and maintain the rural character of the area while enhancing the economic viability of farms. Goals and objectives of the Agricultural Resources Element identify the need to promote a healthy and competitive agricultural industry for locally produced products and to allow visitor serving uses that are beneficial to the agricultural industry and compatible with the long term agricultural use of the land. Agricultural Resources Element policies also call on the Board of Supervisors to develop regulations that further define compatible agricultural promotional activities including their permissible sizes and intensities. Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses can be detrimental to the primary use of the land for production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. Detrimental concentration can be caused by the following factors: road access conflicts, negative impacts to neighboring wells, and rural character. Related Agricultural Resources Element General Plan policies are provided in Attachment 3.

The draft Winery Events Ordinance (Ordinance) implements General Plan Land Use Element and Agricultural Resources Element policies and programs to protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities and areas, as designated by the Board, while allowing for visitor serving uses that support and are secondary and incidental to agricultural production. The Ordinance is consistent with General Plan policies in that the Ordinance defines compatible agricultural promotional activities and provides a set of



standards that prevent detrimental impacts to surrounding uses, agricultural lands and rural character. The Ordinance will not create an internal inconsistency in the General Plan, or inhibit the implementation of any other General Plan policies or program.

Zoning Code Consistency

The Zoning Code currently requires agricultural processing and tasting rooms to be consistent with General Plan policies related to visitor serving uses in the agricultural zoning districts. The proposed zoning amendments do not involve specific development nor do the amendments increase development beyond that which the County Code currently allows by use permit in agricultural zones. The proposed amendments will not create an internal inconsistency within Chapter 26 but will clarify compatible agricultural promotional uses allowed with a use permit by adding definitions and establishing standards for these visitor serving uses. The Zoning Code will continue to require use permits for agricultural processing and tasting rooms.

CEQA Determination

Staff finds the proposed ordinance is exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15308 exempting standards authorized by state law to assure protection of the environment; and under the general rule in Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that adoption of the ordinance will not result in a significant effect on the environment. No exceptions listed under Section 15300.2 apply.

The basis for this determination is that the Ordinance does not involve specific development, it does not increase development more than what County Code currently allows by Use Permit in agricultural zones, and it does not create an intensification of use of land beyond what is currently allowed. Further, the Ordinance implements General Plan Land Use Element and Agricultural Resources Element policies and programs to protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities and areas, as designated by the Board, while allowing for land uses and development associated with agricultural- production, processing, and visitor serving uses authorized by Land Use Element Policy 2.6, consistent with the Agricultural Resources Element policies for promoting and marketing agricultural products. The changes proposed by the Ordinance are in line with current application evaluation practices which requires a discretionary review process, including CEQA review, for winery visitor serving uses.

Cumulative Impacts – Traffic, Noise, Water

The County is also addressing cumulative impacts of traffic, noise and water. Permit Sonoma contracted with GHD, a traffic consultant, to prepare traffic studies in the Dry Creek Valley/Westside Road area and in Sonoma Valley. Many of the recommendations have become requirements for winery use permit applications or conditions of approval. Application requirements and conditions of approval include maintaining safe driveway access, no parking along adjacent County roads, requiring traffic studies with applications and implementing traffic mitigations recommended by those studies, plus traffic management plans. The GHD traffic studies are posted on the Winery Events webpage.

Permit Sonoma contracted Bollard Acoustical Consultants, Inc. (BAC) to prepare recommendations for screening applications for winery events. Applications for new and modified use permits for winery events and activities are screened in accordance with Bollard's "Recommendations for General Noise Standards for Winery Events" to determine if a site-specific noise study is required and to ensure compliance with Sonoma County General Plan



noise standards. Noise control in accordance with Sonoma County General Plan Table NE-2 (or an adjusted Table NE-2) is a standard condition. The required noise attenuation setback distances consistent with the Bollard recommendations and Permit Sonoma's February 2019 Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis are included in the Ordinance. The Bollard recommendations are posted on the Winery Events webpage.

The Water Resources Element of the General Plan includes goals and policies for managing groundwater as a valuable and limited shared resource. The County uses a four-tier classification system to indicate general area of groundwater availability: Class 1 = Major Ground Water Basin, Class 2 = Major Natural Recharge Areas, Class 3 = Marginal Groundwater Availability and Class 4 = Low or Highly Variable Water Yield). Water Resources Element Policy WR-2e requires preparation of groundwater studies to verify the quality and quantity of groundwater and assess cumulative impacts associated with discretionary projects located in the Class 3 and 4 areas of the county. Permit Sonoma also requires preparation of groundwater studies for discretionary projects located in the Sonoma Valley, Petaluma Valley, and Santa Rosa Plain priority groundwater basins. Winery visitor serving uses are subject to discretionary review therefore, wineries and tasting rooms located in Class 3 areas, Class 4 areas, and priority basins are required to: verify groundwater quality and quantity; and, assess the impact of the proposed project's groundwater use on overdraft conditions, land subsidence, saline intrusion, surface water resources, and neighboring wells. Professional water use estimates are required when applying for a winery Use Permit plus Water Conservation Plans to reduce demand. Groundwater monitoring, reporting and easements have become a use permit condition of approval. Zero net water use is required in high value watershed for Coho/Steelhead (Mark West, Green Valley and Mill Creeks) and in areas sensitive to stream flow depletion in late summer and fall.

Permitting Process

The adoption of the Ordinance will not change the Zoning Code requirements for a discretionary review of use permit applications for new and modified winery visitor serving uses. The discretionary review process ensures site- and project-specific California Environmental Quality Act review. Use permit applications often require site specific studies, a public hearing, and can only be approved if found to be consistent with the Sonoma County General Plan, Zoning Code, applicable Area or Specific Plan, and if found to be compatible with the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood.

POLICY DESCRIPTION

County Ordinance

The Winery Events Ordinance (Attachment 2) proposes amendments to Sonoma County Code Chapter 26 (Zoning Code) by amending uses allowed in agricultural zoning districts to establish standards for winery visitor serving uses. The Ordinance would apply to new and modified use permits for winery visitor serving uses in the agricultural districts, LIA (Land Intensive Agriculture), LEA (Land Extensive Agriculture), and DA (Diverse Agriculture), outside of the Coastal Zone.

The intent of the Winery Events Ordinance is to provide consistency and clarity to the use permit application evaluation process, reduce impacts to surrounding uses, protect agricultural lands, and preserve rural character. The Ordinance defines key terms and includes a set of standards that clarify existing General Plan policies, permit requirements, and standard conditions of approval. The proposed "Winery Standards" would be used as



evaluation criteria by Permit Sonoma and decision makers when considering new and modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving uses, such as tasting rooms and winery events.

Proposed Zoning Amendments

- The Agricultural and Resource-Based Use Standards, Article 18 of the Zoning Code, will be amended to add new section “26-18-260 – Winery Standards”.
- The Agricultural and Resource-Based Use Standards for “Agricultural Processing”, Section 26-18-030(C) of the Zoning Code, will be amended to add new subsection 26-18-030(C), as follows:
 - 5. *LIA, LEA, DA zones: Wineries, winery visitor-serving activities, and winery events are subject to Winery Standards in section 26-18-260.*
- The Agricultural and Resource-Based Use Standards for “Tasting Rooms”, Section 26-18-210(B) of the Zoning Code, will be amended to add new subsection 26-18-210(B)(3), as follows:
 - 3. *LIA, LEA, DA zones: Wine tasting rooms, winery visitor-serving activities, and winery events are subject to Winery Standards in section 26-18-260.*
- The Agricultural and Resource-Based Land Use Table 6-1 “Allowed Land Uses in Agricultural and Resources Zones”, Section 26-6-030 of the Zoning Code, will be amended to include reference to section 26-18-260 – Winery Standards, in the Land Use Categories for Agricultural Processing and Tasting Rooms.

Section 26-18-260 – Winery Standards includes:

- **Definitions** of key terms related to winery visitor serving activities and events – Catering and Commercial Kitchens, Food and Wine Pairing, Rural Area, Winery, Winery Events, Wine Trade Partners, and Winery Visitor Serving Activities.
- **Winery Standards** for sizing of winery visitor serving activities and events, maximum hours of operation, parking, food service, event coordination and traffic management, and setbacks for noise attenuation. Table 2 below summarizes operating standards specific to winery visitor serving activities; activities which are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. A summary of operating standards specific to winery events is provided in Table 3.

Table 2: Typical Visitor Serving Activities

Visitor Serving Activities		Maximum Hours of Operation	Attendees*	Food Service
TYPE	EXAMPLES			
SALES	Wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars	10am – 5pm	ANY	Food & Wine Pairing, Retail Pre-packaged Food
WINE TRADE	Meetings or harvest parties for wine trade partners	8am - 10pm	Wine Industry	Food & Wine Pairing, Retail Pre-packaged Food, Prepared Meals
* Attendees means members of the public, club members and/or wine industry members				

Table 3: Typical Winery Events

Winery Events		Maximum Hours of Operation	Attendees*	Food Service
TYPE		EXAMPLES		
AGRICULTURAL PROMOTIONAL	Winemaker lunches & dinners, release parties, club parties	10am - 10pm	ANY	Food & Wine Pairing, Retail Pre-packaged Food, Prepared Meals
INDUSTRY - WIDE	Association-sponsored, up to 3 days	10am - 5pm		
* Attendees means members of the public, club members and/or wine industry members				

Local Guidelines

The purpose of the local area guidelines is to provide guidance on new use permits that include visitor serving agricultural uses, (e.g. tasting rooms or events) in agricultural zones within the specific local area of concentration. The local area guidelines provide a local framework for evaluating new or modified use permit applications on land that is zoned Agricultural (LIA, LEA, DA) and Resource and Rural Development (RRD). The local advisory group such as a Citizens Advisory Council adopts advisory recommendations based on unique conditions to its area of concentration.

The Guidelines are intended to advise applicants on the design of their projects and on the events-related facilities and programs when preparing a use permit application. Each project is regarded as unique in the



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evaluation process, and each will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Although the Winery Events Ordinance applies countywide, including areas where local area winery event guidelines exist, the local guidelines are important to the decision-making process.

Dry Creek Valley Guidelines

The Board created the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCVCAC) in 2012, Resolution 12-0410). The purpose of the DCVCAC is to provide guidance on new use permits that include visitor serving agricultural uses (e.g. tasting rooms or events) in agricultural and resource zones in the Dry Creek Watershed. The DCVCAC prepares advisory recommendations that help inform decision-making by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, the Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments, and the Sonoma County Planning Commission.

In 2017, the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCVCAC) prepared the Dry Creek Valley guidelines for agricultural promotional activities, which provides a set of definitions and preferred guidelines for use by the DCVCAC in investigating, discussing and considering applications for new use permits that include visitor serving agricultural uses in agricultural and resource zones in the Dry Creek Valley watershed. The Dry Creek Valley Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor-serving Agricultural Uses are posted on the DCVCAC webpage at Permit Sonoma: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Dry-Creek-Valley-Citizens-Advisory-Council/Guidelines/>

Sonoma Valley Guidelines

The Board of Supervisors and Sonoma City Council Resolution 93-1552 created the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission (SVCAC) on October 12, 1993. On December 11, 2018, the Board approved another continuance of the SVCAC for an additional 5 years to December 31, 2023 via Resolution 18-0510. On December 17, 2018, the City of Sonoma approved Resolution 84-2018 concurrently.

SVCAC's purpose can be summarized as: (1) provide a regular forum for citizen participation in the formation of public policy; (2) consider local planning issues concerning the Sonoma Valley; (3) evaluate solutions to these issues; (4) advise elected officials and other decision makers and (5) form a bridge for communication between governmental agencies and the public.

The Sonoma Valley Working Group (Stakeholders Group) was formed to develop local guidelines for Sonoma Valley and began meeting on June 27, 2017. Two workshops were facilitated on September 5, and September 28, 2017. Tasting Room Siting Criteria and Operating Standards were discussed. The Complex Fire occurred on October 8, 2017 and the Sonoma County Stakeholders Group was put on hold.

On June 7, 2019, Permit Sonoma began facilitating meetings of the Sonoma County Stakeholders Group again. Permit Sonoma staff prepared a workbook and discussion materials to assist guideline development. The Stakeholder Group reviewed data on winery events in Sonoma Valley, discussed development criteria and operating standards for wineries, and crafted definitions of winery events (event types, standards of review, and facilities). Following delays due to 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoff events and the Kincadee Fire, the draft Sonoma Valley guidelines were ready for review and comment by the SVCAC.

The Sonoma County Stakeholders Group and Permit Sonoma presented draft Sonoma Valley Winery Guidelines to the SVCAC meeting on November 18, 2020. GHD, the traffic consultant hired by Permit Sonoma to prepare a cumulative traffic impact study for the Sonoma and Dry Creek Valleys, presented the Sonoma Valley Capacity Threshold Study at the SVCAC meeting on January 27, 2021. The SVCAC is currently revising their draft guidelines and expect to adopt a final set of guidelines in summer 2021.



Westside Road Guidelines

Currently, there is no Citizens Advisory Council/Commission (CAC) for the Westside Road area. The Westside Road Stakeholders Group, comprised of winery industry representatives and community members (including members of the Westside Community Association), met with the task of preparing winery guidelines for siting criteria and operational standards within the Westside Road area.

In July 2019, invitations to join the Westside Road Stakeholders Group were sent to individuals that represent neighborhood groups and the agricultural industry. In August 2019, Permit Sonoma began facilitating monthly meetings with the Westside Road Stakeholders Group. Seven monthly meetings occurred from August 2019 through February 2020. Copies of the DCVCAC guidelines plus the draft Sonoma Valley winery guidelines were provided for reference. The stakeholders' were not able to reach consensus on siting criteria and operating standards therefore, draft guidelines have not been prepared and the meetings discontinued. In the future, a Westside Road CAC may be formed and Westside Road winery guidelines prepared.

CONCLUSION

In response to October 2016 and May 2019 Board direction, Permit Sonoma developed a countywide winery events ordinance to address key issues associated with winery events and promotional activities. The Winery Events Ordinance includes a set of Winery Standards that provide consistency and clarity to the use permit evaluation process, reduce impacts to surrounding uses, protect agricultural land, and preserve rural character. The proposed Winery Standards are based on the development of local guidelines, advisory and stakeholder group input, information from traffic and noise studies commissioned for this policy effort, and community input received during numerous stakeholder meetings and community workshops. The local guidelines for Dry Creek Valley are complete and available on the DCVCAC website. Sonoma Valley local guidelines are expected to be adopted by the SVCAC in summer 2021. Local guidelines provide guidance to winery applicants on the design of their projects, as well as a local framework for advisory body review and evaluation of use permit applications for new visitor serving agricultural uses.

The Ordinance meets the intent of the Board of Supervisors with the proposed zoning amendments to add "Winery Standards" to the agricultural use standards for wineries and tasting rooms on lands zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, outside of the coastal zone. Staff recommends Planning Commission approve a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors adopt the draft Winery Events Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution
2. Draft County Winery Events Ordinance
 - a. Exhibit A "Section 26-6-030 – Allowed Land Use Table"
 - b. Exhibit B "Section 26-18-260 – Winery Standards"
3. Related Agriculture Resources Element General Plan Policies
4. Summary of Public Comments made in February 18, 2021 Workshop
5. Public Comments Received from January 28, 2021 – May 12, 2021
6. Public Comments Received from May 13, 2021 – May 28, 2021



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Resolution Number

County of Sonoma
Santa Rosa, California

June 3, 2021
ORD16-0001 Georgia McDaniel

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 26 OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADD WINERY STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH EXHIBITS A AND B, AND FIND THE ACTION EXEMPT FROM CEQA.

WHEREAS, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element allows for the sale and promotion of agricultural products grown or processed in the County, including promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element contains a number of policies relating to the definition and limitations for agricultural promotional events; and

WHEREAS, General Plan Policies AR-6f and AR-6g state that local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses can be detrimental to the primary use of the land for production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. Detrimental concentration can be caused by the following factors: road access conflicts, negative impacts to neighboring wells, and rural character; and

WHEREAS, General Plan Policy AR-6g calls for the Board to "define in the Development Code compatible visitor serving uses such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events which support and are incidental to local agricultural production, and define their permissible sizes and intensities"; and

WHEREAS, on October 11, 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution of Intention (Reso. No. 16-0394), directing staff to initiate zoning code amendments to address key issues associated with winery events and promotional activities, and to develop siting criteria and standards for areas of local concentration which include Dry Creek Valley, Westside Road, and Sonoma Valley areas; and

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution approving the local advisory guidelines for visitor-serving agricultural uses in the Dry Creek Watershed, prepared by Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (Reso. No. 18-0430); and

WHEREAS, draft local advisory guidelines for winery visitor serving uses in the Sonoma Valley area are expected to be considered by the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission and presented to the Board of Supervisors in 2021; and

WHEREAS, members of the Westside Road Stakeholders Group did not reach consensus on siting criteria and operating standards for winery visitor-serving uses therefore, local advisory guidelines have not been prepared. In the future, a Westside Road Citizens Advisory Council may be formed by the Board of Supervisors and Westside Road local advisory guidelines prepared.

WHEREAS, during a Winery Events Policy update on May 19, 2020, the Board of Supervisors directed Permit Sonoma to obtain additional public feedback and move forward with preparing a countywide winery events ordinance that defines key terms and addresses common issues identified across local advisory guidelines. On February 18, 2021, Permit Sonoma held a public workshop on a draft framework for the county winery event standards.

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of law, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on June 3, 2021 at which time all interested persons were given an opportunity to be heard.

WHEREAS, WHEREAS, consistent with California Government Code Section 65855, the Planning Commission's recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the proposed ordinance amendments will be transmitted with applicable findings in support thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission makes the following findings:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct, and incorporated into the findings herein.
2. CEQA. The proposed Ordinance is exempt from further review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15308 exempting standards authorized by state law to assure protection of the environment; and, by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3). Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. No exceptions apply. The basis for this determination is that the Ordinance does not involve specific development, does not increase development beyond that which the County Code currently allows by Use Permit in agricultural zones and would not create an intensification of use of land beyond what is currently allowed. Further, the Ordinance implements General Plan Land Use Element and Agriculture Resource Element policies and programs to protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities. The changes proposed by the Ordinance are in line with current application evaluation practices which requires a discretionary review process, including CEQA review, for winery visitor-serving uses.
3. General Plan Consistency. The proposed Ordinance implements General Plan Land Use Element and Agricultural Resources Element policies and programs to protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities and areas while allowing for visitor serving uses that support and are secondary and incidental to agricultural production. The Ordinance is consistent with General Plan policies in that the Ordinance defines compatible agricultural promotional activities and provides a set of standards that prevent detrimental impacts to surrounding uses, agricultural lands and rural character. The Ordinance will not create an internal inconsistency in the General Plan, or inhibit the implementation of any other General Plan policies or program.
4. Zoning Consistency. The Ordinance proposes zoning amendments that do not involve specific development, do not increase development beyond that which the County Code currently allows by use permit in agricultural zones, and would not create an intensification of use of land

beyond what is currently allowed. The proposed amendments will not create an internal inconsistency within Chapter 26 but clarify compatible agricultural promotional uses allowed with a use permit by adding definitions and establishing standards for these visitor serving uses. The Zoning Code will continue to require use permits for agricultural processing and tasting rooms.

5. Additional Findings

- a. A notice of the public hearing was duly published for public review and comment at least 10 days prior to the public hearing.
- b. The Planning Commission has reviewed and considered the staff report and presentation, and all comments, materials and other evidence presented by member of the public prior to and during the public hearing held by the Commission on June 3, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, based upon the entire record of proceedings herein and the findings above, the Planning Commission hereby determines that the proposed zoning amendments will not have a significant effect upon the environment.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the proposed zoning amendments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, the Planning Commission designates the Secretary of the Planning Commission as the custodian of the documents and other material, which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision herein is based. These documents may be found at the office of the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department, 2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was introduced by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption, seconded by Commissioner _____, and adopted on roll call by the following vote:

Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner
Commissioner

Ayes: Noes: Absent: Abstain:

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the above and foregoing Resolution duly adopted; and

SO ORDERED.

ORDINANCE NO. ()

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SONOMA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTER 26 OF THE SONOMA COUNTY ZONING CODE FOR WINERY VISITOR SERVING USES BY AMENDING USES ALLOWED IN AGRICULTURAL ZONING DISTRICTS (LIA, LEA, AND DA), ADDING DEFINITIONS, AND ESTABLISHING STANDARDS FOR WINERIES, TASTING ROOMS AND WINERY EVENTS.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, ordains as follows:

Section I. Purpose. The Board finds and declares that the adoption of this Ordinance is necessary and appropriate to implement the policies and programs of the Sonoma County General Plan, to ensure neighborhood compatibility, protect the general welfare of residents in the County, protect agricultural lands, and promote the economic viability of the local agricultural economy.

Section II. The Agricultural & Resource-Based Land Use Category in Table 6-1 of Section 26-6-030 of the Sonoma County Code is amended as shown in underline, in Exhibit A, attached.

Section III. New Section 26-18-260 is added to Sonoma County Code Chapter 26, Article 18 as shown in *Exhibit B*, attached.

Section IV. Sonoma County Code Chapter 26, Section 26-18-030(C) is amended to add new subsection 26-18-030(C)(5), as follows:

5. LIA, LEA, DA zones: Wineries, winery visitor serving activities, and winery events are subject to Winery Standards in section 26-18-260.

Section V. Sonoma County Code Chapter 26, Section 26-18-210(B) is amended to add new subsection 26-18-210(B)(3), as follows:

3. LIA, LEA, DA zones: Wine tasting rooms, winery visitor serving activities, and winery events are subject to Winery Standards in section 26-18-260.

Section VI. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds and declares that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 15308 in that the standards set forth in the ordinance are authorized by state law to assure the protection of the environment; and Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that adoption of the ordinance will not result in a significant effect on the environment. The basis for this determination is the Ordinance proposes zoning amendments that do not create an intensification of use of land, involve specific development, or increase development beyond what County Code currently allows by Use Permit in agricultural zones. Further, the Ordinance implements General Plan Land Use Element and Agriculture Resource Element policies and programs to protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities and

areas, as designated by the Board, while allowing for land uses and development associated with agricultural- production, processing, and visitor serving uses authorized by General Plan Land Use Element Policy 2.6, consistent with the General Plan Agriculture Resource Element policies for promoting and marketing agricultural products. The changes proposed by the Ordinance are in line with current application evaluation practices which requires a discretionary review process, including CEQA review, for winery visitor serving uses. No exceptions listed under Section 15300.2 apply.

Section VII. Pipeline Projects. An application for winery, tasting room or winery event activity that was determined complete for processing prior to the effective date of this ordinance may continue to be processed and reviewed under the zoning code provisions pertinent to winery events and tasting rooms in effect at the time the applications were deemed complete or approved.

Section VIII. Severity Clause. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portion of this Ordinance. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and every section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases be declared unconstitutional or invalid.

Section IX. Effective Date. This Ordinance shall be and the same is hereby declared to be in full force and effect from and after thirty (30) days after the date of its passage and shall be published once before the expiration of fifteen (15) days after said passage, with the names of the Supervisors voting for or against the same, in *The Press Democrat*, a newspaper of general circulation published in the County of Sonoma, State of California.

In regular session of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, introduced on the ____ day of _____, 2021, and finally passed and adopted this ____ day of _____ 2021, on regular roll call of the members of said Board by the following vote:

SUPERVISORS:

Gorin:	Rabbitt:	Coursey:	Gore:	Hopkins:
Ayes:	Noes:	Absent:	Abstain:	

WHEREUPON, the Chair declared the above and foregoing Ordinance duly adopted and

SO ORDERED.

Chair, Board of Supervisors
County of Sonoma

ATTEST:

Sheryl Bratton,
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Exhibit A: Table 6-1 of Section 26-6-030
Exhibit B: New Section 26-18-260

EXHIBIT “A”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 6. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED LAND USE

Table 6-1: Allowed Land Uses in Agricultural and Resource Zones

Key of symbols for Table 6-1:

P = Permitted Use

P* = Permitted Use, subject to discretionary approval criteria

C = Conditional Use

- = Prohibited Use

† = Permit requirement indicated in Use Regulations column

Land Use	LIA Zone	LEA Zone	DA Zone	RRD Zone	TP Zone	Use Regulations
Agricultural & Resource-Based Land Use Category						
Agricultural Crop Production and Cultivation	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-020
Agricultural Processing	C	C	C	C	-	26-18-030; 26-88-210, <u>26-18-260</u>
Agricultural Processing, Small Scale	P*	P*	P*	P*	-	26-18-040
Agricultural Support Services	P*/C	P*/C	P*/C	-	-	26-18-050
Animal Keeping: Beekeeping	P	P	P	P	P	26-18-060
Animal Keeping: Confined Farm Animals	P/C	P/C	P/C	C	-	26-18-070
Animal Keeping: Farm Animals	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-080
Animal Keeping: Livestock Feed Yards	C	C	C	C	-	26-18-090
Animal Keeping: Pet Fancier	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-100
Aquaculture	-	C	C	C	-	26-18-110
Composting, Commercial	-	C	C	C	-	26-18-120
Composting, Non-commercial	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-130
Farm Retail Sales	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-140
Farm Stands	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-150
Indoor Crop Cultivation	P	P	P	P/C	-	26-18-160
Land and Resource Management	P	P	P	P	P*	26-18-170
Mining, Surface	-	-	-	C	C	26-18-180; Chapter 26A
Mushroom Farming	C	C	C	C	-	26-18-190
Nursery, Wholesale	P	P	P	P	-	26-26-200
Tasting Rooms	C	C	C	C	-	26-18-210, <u>26-18-260</u>
Timber Management	-	-	-	P	P	26-18-220
Timber Operator Storage Yard, Off-Site	-	-	-	C	C	26-18-230
Timber Operator Storage Yard, On-Site and Incidental	-	-	-	P	P	26-18-230
Timber Saw Mills and Lumber Production	-	-	-	C	C	26-18-240

Exhibit A
26-6-030
Table 6-1 Amendments

Timberland Conversions, Major	-	-	-	C	C	26-18-250; 26-88-160
Timberland Conversions, Minor	P	P	P	P	-	26-18-250; 26-88-150
Industrial, Manufacturing, Processing and Storage Land Use Category						
Animal Product Processing	C	C	C	C	-	26-20-020
Fertilizer Plants	C	C	C	C	-	26-20-030
Recreation, Education & Public Assembly Land Use Category						
Camp, Organized	-	-	-	C	C	26-22-020
Campgrounds	-	C	C	C	C	26-22-030
Community Meeting Facilities	C	C	C	C		26-22-050
Country Club	-	-	-	C	-	26-22-060
Educational Institution: Elementary and Secondary Schools	-	C	C	C		26-22-080
Golf Course	C	C	C	C	-	26-22-100
Parks and Playgrounds	P	P	P	-	-	26-22-110
Periodic Special Events	P*	P*	P*	P*	P*	26-22-120
Recreation and Sports Facilities: Rural Sports and Recreation	C	C	C	C	-	26-22-160
Studios for Art Crafts, Dance, Music	P	P	P	P	-	26-22-190
Residential Land Use Category						
Accessory Dwelling Unit	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-020; 26-88-060
Agricultural Employee Housing: Caretaker Dwelling	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-030
Agricultural Employee Housing: Full-Time	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-040
Agricultural Employee Housing: Seasonal	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-050
Agricultural Employee Housing: Temporary Camp	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-060
Agricultural Employee Housing: Year-Round or Extended Seasonal	P	P	P	-	-	26-24-070
Cottage Food Operation	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-100
Dwelling, Single-Family	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-130
Family Day Care Home, Large	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-150; 26-88-080
Family Day Care Home, Small	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-150
Farm Family Dwelling	P	P	-	-	-	26-24-160
Guest House	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-170
Home Occupation	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-180; 26-88-121
Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-190; 26-88-061
Live/Work	C	C	C	C	-	26-24-200; 26-88-122
Permanent Supportive Housing	P	P	P	P	-	26-24-230
Residential Community Care, Large	C	C	C	C	-	26-24-240
Residential Community Care, Small	P	P	P	P	P	26-24-240
Temporary Occupancy of Travel Trailer	P	P	P	P		26-24-260; 26-88-010(p)

Exhibit A
26-6-030
Table 6-1 Amendments

Transitional Housing	P	P	P	P		26-24-270
Retail Land Use Category						
Firewood Yard	-	-	C	C	C	26-26-060
Nursery, Retail	C	C	C	C	-	26-26-120
Services Land Use Category						
Cemeteries	C	C	C	C	-	26-28-050
Commercial Horse Facilities	C	C	C	C	-	26-28-060
Commercial Kennels	C	C	C	C	-	26-28-070
Day Care Center	C	C	C	C	-	26-28-080
Horse Boarding	P	P	P	P	-	26-28-100
Lodging: Agricultural Farmstay	P	P	P	P	-	26-28-110; 26-88-085
Lodging: Agricultural Marketing Accommodations	C	C	C	-	-	26-28-120
Lodging: Bed and Breakfast (B&B)	-	C	C	C	-	26-28-130; 26-88-118
Lodging: Hosted Rental	P	P	P	P	-	26-28-140
Lodging: Vacation Rental	-	P	P	P	-	26-28-160; 26-88-120
Veterinary Clinic	-	-	-	C	-	26-28-230
Transportation, Energy, Public Facilities Land Use Category						
Airfield and Landing Strips: Agricultural, Resource or Personal Landing Strip	-	C	C	C	C	26-30-020
Low Temperature Geothermal Resource Development	C	C	C	-	C	26-30-050
Oil and Gas Exploration and Extraction	-	-	-	C	-	26-30-070
Public Safety Facilities	C	C	C	C	C	26-30-090
Public Utility Facilities	C	C	C	C	C	26-30-100
Renewable Energy Facilities	†	†	†	†	†	† See 26-30-110 and Section 26-88-200, -202, -206, and -208
Telecommunications Facilities	†	†	†	†	†	† See 26-30-120 and Section 26-88-130
Other Land Uses						
Cannabis Cultivation, Personal Use	P	P	P	P	P	26-88-258
Commercial Cannabis Uses	†	†	†	†	†	† See 26-88-250; 26-88-254

EXHIBIT “B”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 18. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED USE STANDARDS

26-18-260 – Winery Standards

- A. Purpose. This Section 26-18-260 provides a greater level of detail for the desired character of development in areas zoned LIA - Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA - Diverse Agriculture. For the areas zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, this Section 26-18-260 identifies procedures and criteria applicable to new or modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving activities and winery events. The Standards in this division shall be referred to as “Winery Standards.”
- B. Applicable Areas. The provisions of this section apply to parcels zoned LIA – Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA-Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA -Diverse Agriculture. For split-zoned parcels, the provisions of this section apply to the portion of the parcel zoned for any of the agricultural zoning districts listed above.
- C. Local Advisory Guidelines. Citizen advisory councils/commissions established by the Board of Supervisors review projects subject to this section in accordance with their adopted local advisory guidelines, and make advisory recommendations to the Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.
- D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:
1. **Catering Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A catering kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top, grill or range hood.
 2. **Commercial Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A commercial kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include counter space, sinks, microwave oven(s), warming oven(s), refrigeration, a stove or range, grill and an exhaust hood, and outdoor equipment such as pizza ovens or barbecues.
 3. **Food and Wine Pairing** means providing samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products that are showcased with different wines.
 4. **Rural Area** means any area not located within an urban service area designated on the General Plan Land Use Map.
 5. **Winery** means an agricultural processing facility that converts fruit into wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, administrative offices, tasting rooms, event space, commercial kitchen, and catering kitchen.
 6. **Winery Events** means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite and/or in the area and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR-

6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Events.

7. **Agricultural Promotional Events** are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release parties, and wine club parties and similar events.
8. **Industry-Wide Events** are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.
9. **Wine Trade Partners** means distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners and their representatives, winery or tasting room owner(s), winery employees, and tasting room employees.
10. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities** means visitor serving activities that are part of normal winery and wine tasting room business operations. There are two types of winery visitor-serving activities: Sales Activities and Wine Trade Activities.
11. **Sales Activities** are wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars and other hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales.
12. **Wine Trade Activities** are by-invitation meetings, seminars, harvest parties and similar activities attended only by wine trade partners and are not advertised to the consumer.

E. Operating Standards.

1. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities.** Winery visitor serving activities are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. All winery visitor serving activities must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
2. **Winery Events.** Winery events must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of event days, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
3. **Sizing of winery visitor serving activities and winery events,** and maximum number of event days is based upon a variety of factors specific to the site and surrounding uses, including, but not limited to, septic capacity, available water supply, emergency access, availability of on-site parking, noise attenuation, increased risk of harm to people or property as a result of hazards, and the potential for negative cumulative effects related to noise, traffic, and water supplies.
4. **Hours of Operation.** The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor serving activities and winery events are specified below, unless further limited by the use permit.
 - a. **Tasting Rooms.** Regular business hours for tasting rooms are 10 am - 5 pm.

- b. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor-serving activities are specified below by activity type.
 - (1) Sales Activities: 10 am – 5 pm.
 - (2) Wine Trade Activities: 8 am – 10 pm.
- c. Winery Events. The maximum hours of operation for events are specified below by event type.
 - (1) Agricultural Promotional Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 10 pm, with all cleanup occurring no later than between 9:30 pm – 10 pm.
 - (2) Industry-wide Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 5 pm.
- 5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events.
- 6. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for wineries and tasting rooms:
 - a. 1 parking space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee. The parking standard may be reduced in accordance with Article 86. - Parking Regulations Sec. 26-86-010 (i).
 - b. Use of on-site unimproved overflow parking areas or shuttling may be allowed to accommodate winery events, if specified in the use permit.
 - c. Overflow parking and shuttling shall not be used to accommodate parking for winery visitor serving activities.
 - d. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.
- 7. Food Service. Food service is allowed as specified below.
 - a. All food service must be designed to promote and enhance marketing of wine. Food service shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production, wine sales and education.
 - b. Operating the food service area as a restaurant, café, delicatessen or any food service offering cooked-to-order food is prohibited.
 - c. Food and wine pairings featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with winery visitor serving activities and winery events.
 - d. Prepared meals featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with wine trade activities and winery events.

- e. Retail sales of pre-packaged food in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to the following limitations:
 - (1) Retail sale of pre-packaged food featuring local foods and food products is allowed during the regular business hours identified in the use permit.
 - (2) Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for on-site consumption only. Outdoor seating areas may be allowed for use as outdoor picnic areas.
 - (3) Indoor seating area or table service in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food is prohibited.
 - (4) Off-site signs advertising retail sales of pre-packaged food are prohibited.
- 8. Event Coordination and Traffic Management.
 - a. On-Site Coordinator. An on-site coordinator is required to address complaints about winery events both during and following an event. The on-site Coordinator shall:
 - (1) Ensure that the winery's website prominently lists a telephone number for the public to make event-related complaints; and
 - (2) Send an annual notice to owners and occupants of lots within 300 feet of the winery/tasting room lot boundaries to provide the "complaint hotline" telephone number.
 - b. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are required to address the maximum number of people visiting during winery visitor serving activities and winery events. For events exceeding 100 participants and for events that require use of overflow parking, the traffic management plan shall include the following:
 - (1) Provisions for event coordination to avoid local traffic delays.
 - (2) Parking attendants for each day of the event.
 - (3) A shuttle plan, if shuttling is requested, to support each day of the event. A convenient and secure "park and ride" area must be provided.
 - (4) A plan for on-site parking requirements and queuing of traffic.
 - (5) Enforcement of the on-street parking restrictions.
 - (6) Subsequent changes to the approved Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in advance to the Permit and Resource Management Department.
- 9. Noise Attenuation Setbacks. Noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source. To ensure compliance with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element thresholds for maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels, winery visitor serving activities and winery events shall meet the required setbacks provided in Table 18-2 below:

Table 18-2: Required Noise Attenuation Setbacks

Noise generating land use	Setback measured from the exterior property line of any adjacent noise sensitive land use
Parking lots	450 feet
Outdoor areas involving groups of people or non-amplified music (i.e. acoustic)	625 feet
Outdoor areas involving amplified music, or loud instruments such as brass instruments, horns, or drums	1,600 feet

Exceptions to the setbacks listed in Table 18-2 above may be allowed when a project-specific noise study prepared in accordance with the Permit and Resource Management Department Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis determines the project will comply with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element due to intervening structures or natural features, available open land on noise sensitive parcels, or by incorporating noise mitigation measures.

ATTACHMENT 3.
RELATED AGRICULTURAL RESEROUCES ELEMENT GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The following General Plan Agricultural Resources Element policies are related to visitor serving uses which promote and enhance marketing of local agricultural products:

Policy AR-1a: *Permit a wide variety of promotional and marketing activities of County grown and processed products.**

Policy AR-4a: *The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.**

Policy AR-6a: *Permit visitor serving uses in agricultural categories that promote agricultural production in the County, such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production. Limit recreational uses to the "Land Extensive Agriculture" and "Diverse Agriculture" categories, specifically to bed and breakfast inns and campgrounds of 30 or fewer sites.*

Policy AR-8b: *Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.*

The following General Plan Agricultural Resources Element policies relate to defining compatible visitor serving uses in agricultural zones and avoiding detrimental concentration of such uses:

Policy AR-5g: *Local concentrations of any separate agricultural support uses, including processing, storage, bottling, canning and packaging, agricultural support services, and visitor-serving and recreational uses as provided in Policy AR-6f, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and shall be avoided. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:*

- (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.*
- (2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.*
- (3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area. In cases where the proposed processing use would process only products grown on site, such use would not be subject to this concentration policy.**

Policy AR-6b: *Except as allowed by Policy AR-6a, prohibit new restaurants and lodging. Recognize existing restaurants or lodging facilities and those which were approved prior to adoption of this plan, but limit their expansion or intensification.*

Policy AR-6d: *Follow these guidelines for approval of visitor serving uses in agricultural areas:*

- (1) The use promotes and markets only agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.*
- (2) The use is compatible with and secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities in the area.*
- (3) The use will not require the extension of sewer and water.*
- (4) The use is compatible with existing uses in the area.*
- (5) Hotels, motels, resorts, and similar lodging are not allowed.*
- (6) Activities that promote and market agricultural products such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products are allowed.*
- (7) Special events on agricultural lands or agriculture related events on other lands in the Sonoma Valley Planning Area will be subject to a pilot event coordination program which includes tracking and monitoring of visitor serving activities and schedule management, as necessary, to reduce cumulative impacts.*

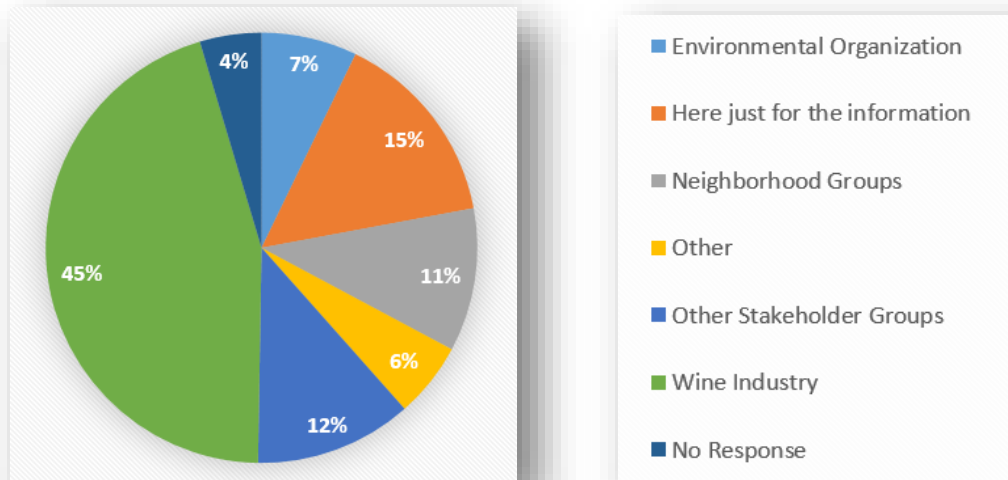
Policy AR-6f: *Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses, and agricultural support uses as defined in Goal AR-5, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:*

- (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.*
- (2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.*
- (3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.*

Policy AR-6g: *Define in the Development Code compatible visitor serving uses such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events which support and are incidental to local agricultural production, and define their permissible sizes and intensities.*

ATTACHMENT 4
WINERY EVENTS POLICY
FEBRUARY 18, 2021 VIRTUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Workshop Attendees by Identifying Groups



Total Workshop Attendance: 195 People

Summary of public comments made in breakout group discussions:

Amplified Sound

- Lots of discussion on music. Everyone thought that music played over a PA system to an outdoor tasting area would be fine at all times as part of normal operations, and that small live music groups could also be fine, as long as the resulting volume of each was still ambient background noise to enhance the tasting experience. But, for example, music played specifically for dancing, like at a wedding, whether live or over a PA, would not be background for the tasting experience and would therefore be associated with an event.
- Amplified music may be ok for normal operations depending on number of people and type of music venue.
- No amplified sound should be allowed at either normal operations or a winery event. It does not have a place at all
- Outdoor amplified sound - could be variable depending potentially based on time or level of sound (decibel levels), band size/live band
- Terminology around 'outdoor amplified music' needs to be defined/clarified carefully. If the guitarist plugs into an amp and plays background music for ambiance and is not heard by neighbors, why would that constitute an event?
- Need a better definition of amplified noise (levels, etc.)

Distinguishing Winery Events from Normal Operations

- The amount of people shouldn't be the distinguishing factor between events and tasting room activities. Size and scale of both events and tasting room activities should be on a site specific basis.
- In general, group thought that the number of attendees was more important than what the attendees were doing in distinguishing normal ops and events.
- Number of people attending seems to be a major factor
- Scale of events is a major determining factor, either events are small and part of normal operations or large and part of winery events
- Concern with table – anything other than tasting rooms is a winery event
- Winery Events:
 - Everything with event in the name is an event
 - If there are invites, they are events
 - If there is a full meal after business hours
 - Harvest parties
 - If a full meal is served at all
 - Any event is an event, parties are an event
- Normal operations vs. event:
 - Food is appropriate with wine. Meals may be ok for normal operations depending on number of people and overall scale of operation.
 - Meals served to a small group of high end clients is not really an event.
 - If an activity is advertised, it's likely an event.
 - Participation in Industry wide events is an event
 - Operations after 5pm are not necessarily an event.
- Normal Operations: With distributors visit with their Xanadu's, they may arrive at 10:00 a.m. and then serve them at lunch time, not open to the public, invite only. Having distributors come to have a luncheon should be considered a winery event. It is not part of the ag lands mission.
- Wineries are for production of wine. Marketing is a different activity which does not have to be done at the winery that do not impact the wine country. It is not either a normal or winery event.
- Events can be mitigated at wineries in ag zoned districts, e.g., not allowed to have a tasting room without a use permit. One way to allow more in the way of events to have them at other locations and not just the winery.
- Wine club member parties during typical business hours:
 - Scale and capacity of the site and the impacts of noise, traffic. Winery can have a dinner for 12 after hours that won't disturb the neighborhood more than a resident has a party of 12.
 - Activities that take place after hours it is considered a winery event.
 - Classify as events and not normal business.
 - Distinguishing factor such as the size of the site and the quantity of people attending.

- The county should provide specific criteria should be set forth of what classifies as an event. A known number of people, noise level, traffic mitigation and traffic control would be the deciding factors on what classifies something a normal business or an event.
- Industry-wide events:
 - It is an event.
 - Large event should be offsite and more conducive to large events.
 - Site by site location as it depends on where the event is being held.
 - It depends on how often they happen and the size of the groups.
- If you can't accommodate the amount of people, then it's an event.
- What's an event depends on the number of the people and the purpose
- Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties:
Harvest parties are something different and do not fit into either category of normal business or a winery event.
- Criteria for distinguishing events from standard tasting room activities:
 - group size, cumulative size
 - not making it more difficult
 - Business activities – where to draw the line
- Ticket purchase and food service required at afterhours club member parties make them events otherwise normal course
- Wedding, concert, industry wide coordinated events, are essential to sales but might be might be different category of event from above
- Sonoma county vintners came up with definitions of events vs tasting, did this inform this project?
- Majority of participants don't think distinguishing between activities is useful/logical
- One said the categories should be 1) activities that are standard part of running a wine business - including all of the wine selling activities listed above 2) everything else?
- Consensus that focus should be on impacts and not activities, since impacts depend more upon the scale / location and unique conditions of the business - not the different categories of sales related activities
- Tasting room activities are typical/normal while winery events have more impact.
- If the neighbors to the winery/tasting room are impacted by noise and traffic, the activity is probably an event. The net effect on neighbors is what matters.
- If the activity exceeds the normal septic capacity and water use, the activity is an event.
- Using 'after business hours' is a clean and simple way to distinguish events from standard tasting room activities.
- If the activity is advertised and a fee is charged, it is probably an event.
- One member in the group felt that activities involving anything beyond wine tasting should all be considered events.
- Metaphor used several times for defining events: If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck it is probably a duck.

- If the winery has to hire someone that is not usually part of daily operations to be part of the event then it should be considered something outside of daily operations. For example, typically a winery does not have a photographer on staff and that would be required for a wedding therefore the activity would be outside of daily operations.
- If a customer is coming to the winery just to go to the restaurant then the group would consider the restaurant to be outside of daily operations and would be considered an event or something outside of the typical daily operations of a winery.
- The lines are blurred on normal vs event. For smaller wineries, the club parties are small.
- An event that is industry wide may be very small, limited at some wineries.
- Neighbors felt that an event might be more than 10 people.
- What types of visitor-serving activities should be a part of standard tasting room operations and which should be considered an event? Depends on size and invitation of public
- 2016 Winery Event Study Session defined events (why are we doing this again?)
- Thoughts that events were things you advertise and publicize that are out of the ordinary wine tasting- perhaps over 100 in attendance. It would also be based on traffic and noise implications.
- Educational and trade events should not be considered “special events” but just doing business.
- That after normal business hours should be considered events
- People want activities with wine and food. One off time scheduled event. What makes it an event is the size and specific start and end and is marketed. Percentage of the tasting rooms capacity
- After hours all industry people that might crush collaboration. If it gets too big after hours is where you get the impact
- Outside of normal business hours networking is important
- Types of events: Tasting clubs, Pickup parties, Harvest parties, Private events: Weddings, Harvest association events
- Lives in Dry Creek... it depends if it doesn't have more people than it accommodates
- Parties -- Based on number of people
- After hours would be considered winery event
- Depends on number of people on the property

Food Service

- General plan – full meal is not allowed
- Full meal needs to be defined
- Full meal serve should be considered an event
- Meal pairing opportunities to bring wine into the forefront.
- Defining what a full meal involves. At Chalk Hill experience with a bucket of chicken during normal tasting hours.
- How much do full meals matter in an event?
- Question in response: What about impact on local restaurants? Answer by another: The food comes from local chefs and restaurants.

- Lunch and dinner are food and wine pairing. Whole point is to showcase food with wine so it can be with lunches and dinners. Showcasing wine and how it relates to food.
- Advocating for food service to be addressed and allowed at wineries, food service to be allowed on AG lands. More important to allow food service to guests at wineries
- Very difficult to establish food operations at an existing winery and the ability to add food to winery operations is beneficial to both the winery and the people that the winery serves.
- Concern of not allowing full-blown restaurants on wineries in the AG area as there are plenty of restaurants in town and the surrounding areas which could be impacted negatively if full restaurants were allowed at wineries, but okay with food services such as catering at the wineries
- Most important: Ability to have food services implemented to permits on AG lands.
- Food should be paired with wine
- Define what constitutes a full meal.
- For food service, if there is an onsite chef, it would be part of normal business. The main distinction was catering.
- Food and wine go together. To sell wine you want to show the correlation between the two. Concern about DUI-by offering food not only are customers able to appreciate the product more but we are protecting their physical being by having full meals served and should be normal operations. It is an entitlement (what is permitted) that is too limited for the wineries.
- Terminology around 'full-meal' served needs to be defined/clarified carefully. If you don't serve dessert, does that constitute a full meal?

Guidelines General

- Guidelines for siting criteria like parcel size, parking and design
 - Parcel size ties into defining event
 - Concentration
 - Scalability
- Need to be careful of the guidelines, prefer hard and fast guidelines, glad that each one will be reviewed individually, standard is a rule.
- Guidelines first then become standards after the standards
- Need flexibility
- Guidelines not so wide that the individual site approvals are predictable
- Concerns about water consumption and pollution
- Water issues-environmental issues are missing in the guidelines. They might fall under the siting criteria and should be stated.
- Water issue-long term drought, overall use of water for the watershed and the productivity and protection is of paramount importance. No mention of wastewater treatment, management the toxic elements of herbicides, by-products, pesticides need to be kept out of the water for the planet and human health.
- Sustainable development should be considered as part of design
- Addressing greenhouse gas generation and traffic impacts were specific concerns

- Group agreed that parcel size should be considered, but cautioned against just giving very large parcels carte blanche because they are large (i.e., sound still carries across large parcels, depending on site-specific topography, surrounding land uses, etc.)
- Draft framework is adequate.
- Environmental impacts and water use missing from framework
- Believes that there should be expanded and adopted definitions for things like events, number of events, gathering (to name a few) so that everyone is on the same page.
- Location specific
- Business is harder than ever, idea of implementing further restrictions is worrisome
- Concerns expressed for inclusion in draft guidelines:
 - Groundwater impacts
 - Handling Solid waste and wastewater impacts
 - Parking management, onstreet parking and spillover
 - Safety concerns regarding drinking and driving
 - Some say tasting rooms should be tied to onsite production
 - Others: Shouldn't have a constraint to produce wine onsite, a winery actually produces more traffic than a tasting room alone.
- The majority of the group feel that the criteria for limiting events should be based on the physical components of the property. For example if the property is 10 acres and has a large tasting room and plenty of parking they should be allowed to host as many people and events as that space can handle.
- There is a strong desire to have the criteria have a built in flexibility component related to the physical components of the parcel site (size, location, structures).
- The question came up regarding guidelines and criteria for site/ wineries located in areas of concentration vs. areas that are not concentrated. The group thinks that there should be a difference in guidelines between these two areas.
 - Small family winery side of concerns, there is a lack of clarity in small family wineries regulations vs the new wineries that come in.
- Want to make sure that they can stay in business by knowing what an older permit holder can and cannot do with their winery as it seems to be in more of a grey area with the older permits, and the newer permits seem a lot clearer cut to operation limitations.
- A need for clarity in Use Permit operation standards vs the guidelines, and which are needed to be followed.
- Clarity in Use Permit operations standards vs the Winery events guidelines, which will wineries need to abide by.
- Newer Use permits are now clearer to what they can and cannot do now VS older use permits which are more unclear to operation standards and in a grey area that permit holder are a little more unclear on
- Operational criteria: Need to look at the production capacity of winery (from own grapes) in proportion to the number of visitors and visitor services (could a winery be much larger than it's own production could provide and have significant visitor serving activities?)

- Operational criteria: Traffic analysis should be focused on access to public transportation arteries - distance from public transportation (not just vehicle traffic)
Include that in VMT
- This framework assumes a static group of wineries but the guidelines should also apply to other event type venues, not just static wineries
- We need to think about how 1) this framework could be expanded to other industries and also that 2) the wine industry has grown and there may be an assumed level of what's acceptable regarding events
- There is a need for community notification (residents specifically); participant had no notification of when an event center was approved. He recommends Next Door would be a great tool to notify residents so that they don't need to monitor PRMD website or BOS agendas.
- Regulate after hours impacts, not during business hours
- Should right size the ordinance to take varying sized into account
- What about cannabis?
- Needs guidelines to be flexible for a number of reasons – evolving industry, local economic impacts
- Conservation should be critical
- Disagreement on General Plan consistency using ag land
- Question is about what is ag vs commercial... more importantly, what is commercial?
- Missing component – number of people
- Missing component – monitoring alcoholic consumption
- Consensus of the group that no major components are missing from the proposed framework
- How will this effect existing use permits for winery's currently in operation?
- I would hate to see this go down policy road being driven by organizations within the sub-areas - everything should be site specific analysis
- Wineries are generally respectful of one another and still need the ability to thrive as a business with the adoption of this framework.
- We should be focusing on expanding the wine industry and being business friendly as the more restrictions we place on this industry we are going to begin to lose our Sonoma county tourism surrounding the wine industry.
- Wildfire risk must be considered. Roads, on-site mitigation, etc.
- Rural Character must be preserved. Relating to size of operation and some aesthetic concerns. SR overlays - winery operations must be in harmony with SR requirements
- Cumulative Impacts:
 - Air travel to area must be considered with Environmental review
 - Road impacts from traffic volume and large vehicles (buses, limo, etc.)
 - Limit the size of industry-wide events to reduce impacts
 - Events coordinator role to require scheduling of events to reduce impacts
 - Greater review of traffic related safety issues including a focus on site distance from driveways
- Sonoma County has allowed more wineries than contemplated by the General Plan.
- Guidelines seem complete; policy vs ordinance?

- Assessment of business model – reliance on tasting room to support the business model
Appointment only (brand, premium) vs party hub, large groups outdoor games, vs creating a brand
How much are wineries depending on tasting vs other revenues.
- Traffic mitigation: consider bicycles; passenger vehicles; farm equipment, all sharing small rural road; inherently unsafe
 - Pressure is on wineries for safety
 - Permits for bicyclists, specially during harvest and industry events
 - Support for this comment
- Quite a few thought with the advances in mitigation measures there should be greater flexibility and less hard and fast rules.
- General plan and 50 db
- Get away from event or ops, but focus on impact of the activity

Minimum Site Area

- The size of the property should be considered because they could be
- Number of people to be served is important in relation to site context and constraints
- Group agreed that parcel size should be considered, but cautioned against just giving very large parcels carte blanche because they are large (i.e., sound still carries across large parcels, depending on site-specific topography, surrounding land uses, etc.)
- Does not like large structures that over the ag land and cause flooding.
- Minimum parcel size for winery = GP/zoning minimum (i.e. LIA - 20 acre)

Monitoring and Enforcement

- Wants review with a view of cumulative impact. Wants standards rather than guidelines so that there is enforcement.
- Need for more law enforcement activity
- Ability to monitor and enforce is important
- Monitoring and enforcement. Events need to be registered in order for the county to monitor wineries, to ensure the wineries hold their activities/events in compliance with the permitted use permit. Lack of monitoring and enforcement results in direct negative impacts to neighbors and contributes to negative cumulative effects. Monitoring will help the county measure and understand the cumulative effects of winery events and tasting room activities.
- Why does PRMD ignore complaints of the surrounding citizens and the 'little guys' that are negatively affected by winery events?
- Enforcement aspect of events in the past was of great concern as it virtually wasn't there. How will enforcement will be handled in the future?
- Numerous events happening the same day with no oversight, wine clubs have picks on same. No over sights as to who is having events and when.
- How will enforcement be handled in the future, there has been a lack in enforcement in the past with multiple events happening on the same day as regular operations.

- Enforcement Criteria: What happens when people get permits - and those who don't get permits and aren't operating in compliance - what is the punitive damage - how does that factor into all of this?
- Enforcement Criteria? What happens to those who are not permitting - where does that factor into all of this
- If Permit Sonoma focused on those wineries not operating in compliance this alone might solve some of the cumulative issues surrounding wineries and events.

Normal Operations

- Group also placed special emphasis on timing of the visitor-serving activity as being at least equally important to what the activity is, i.e., the same activity could be considered an event if outside regular hours.
- We had some discussion on whether the final guidelines should identify so many types of activities or if activity categories should be more general, and although it took a while to get there, the consensus was to be lumpers rather than splitters (i.e., fewer, more inclusive general categories better than a long list of specific activities).
- Wine trade is not an event. It's usually outside of normal tasting room hours.
- If you can accommodate the amount of people, then it's normal operations
- During business hours it is normal ops
- Picking up is not an event
- Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties: Very different issues-wine industry and staff seminars can be various sizes, these are staff events and are necessary are part of normal operations.
- Standard selling activities include wine tasting room, food and wine educational experience, wine club pick up party, new release activity, educational seminars including wine pairing
- Wine industry seminars attended by wine industry members and harvest parties held for employees can be considered part of normal tasting room activities.
- If the activity is appropriately scaled in proper proportion with the site and preapproved uses, with no increase in typical water, septic, parking and traffic needs, the activity should not be considered an event.
- Wine tasting is just one of many wine selling activities - participants felt like County sees activities other than wine selling as optional while the participants view these as standard/essential practices and no optional or "extra"
- Biggest concern - normal winery operations are starting to be regulated. A lot of these activities are normal to survive.
- The majority of the group agreed that Visitor Serving Activities that are part of normal operations focus on the relationship with the consumer as they enjoy the product that is produced as part of the daily operations of the winery. As opposed to things not directly related to the daily operations/ wine relations. For example weddings or restaurant.
- Picnic for two – normal ops
- During business hours is normal ops
- Normal Operations:

- Sales/tours
- Visitors
- Sound OK on weekends
- Staff seminars
- Member parties during normal operation hours (possibly including harvest parties)
- Full meals during COVID
- Amplified sound if part of ambience is okay

Other

- Setbacks from residential and other uses pre-defined by code, not based on impacts/technical reports
- Question - Whether there is a density standard for tasting rooms
- After hours criteria?
- Concerned with cannabis increasing the number of events.
- 4 years trying to get a winery permit that will sell 400 cases. Use only for industry events need to grade and pave their dirt road access. Will have to overly commercialize/hurt ag character in order to accommodate the uses. Currently entitled to two events a year
- There are wineries with older/grandfathered use permits and we want to know about their eligibility for industry wide events.
- Old Use Permits not clear on what they can and cannot do.
- Winery existing in a residential zone, not a retail zone.

Parking

- Parking availability - site specific analysis rather than a general ratio/standard
- Participants confused by 2.5 visitor-per-vehicle standard and were not aware that is not codified
- Off-site parking requirements - Think about requiring shuttles (comment: contradictory to rural character, road impacts, etc.)

Promotional Activities General

- Concerns about noise and traffic levels
- Risks to cyclists from traffic and drunk driving
- Need for established quiet hours
- Some caterers have implemented soft shutdowns prior to quiet hours so that there is a hard shutdown by the start of quiet hours
- Concerned with safety since people are drinking.
- Reliance on tasting rooms for business – yes direct marketing is key. Direct vs going through distributor; more profit with direct sales.
- Pick up bar is dying. Many going appointment only. This year is bad. Tasting rooms are closing.
- Small wineries depend on tasting room customers.
- Discussion also on how the wine touring industry has changed over the years so that when early use permits were issued, tasting was really the only thing offered (and mostly free!), whereas now competition between so many wineries has required them to expand their visitor-

serving/product promotion offerings to include all sorts of other activities, which almost all wineries do now as part of normal operations. Everyone agreed that this is occurring.

- There was an interesting split between the wine industry and non-industry, that all the new normal operations should be allowed by right for a permitted winery vs. are an unpermitted expansion and should all be permitted separately.
- Industry changes due to COVID
- There's wine making and wine selling
- Different clients include walk-in consumers, wine club members, trade / wine buyers, media/ reviewers
- For the most part - member recognition such as wine club member parties or pick up - are generally not for profit business models or cost centers - Wineries can only support so many events as they are not the primary function - primary function is to run wine production and tastings.
- The topic of events and visitor serving activities shouldn't be considered a permit issue rather a business operations issue.
- When there are a lot of people, traffic, noise at night, lights - greater impacts.
- Concern raised about drunken drivers with the thought that more people allowed, the bigger the problem.
- Limits on attendees – dependent on case by case basis site specific
- That there must be flexibility of designations based on winery space, parking , road capacity, septic capacity, noise
- Invitation v not invitation drop ins are not appropriate without large impact the invitation shouldn't be a problem
- Outside of normal business hours networking is important
- Majority of small group participants don't think distinguishing between activities is useful/logical

Table Surveys: Normal Operations vs Event

About half of the breakout groups (11 out of 21) completed table surveys during the 30-minute small group discussion. The other breakout groups focused their conversation on the Discussion Questions, Guideline Framework, and/or the Winery Events Policy in general rather than completing a table survey.

Type of Visitor serving activity	Normal Operations	Event
Full meal served	7	1
Outdoor amplified sound	7	1
Parties during business hours	8	0
Parties after business hours	7	1
Industry-wide events	2	5
Wine industry meetings/parties	8	0

Type of Visitor serving activity	Normal Operations	Event	Notes
Full meal served		X	
Outdoor amplified sound		X	
Parties during business hours	X		
Parties after business hours			Depends on # of attendees
Industry-wide events			Depends on # of attendees
Wine industry meetings/parties			Depends on # of attendees

Type of Visitor-Serving Activity	Normal Operations	Winery Event
Full meal served	x	
Outdoor amplified sound	x	x
Wine club member parties during typical business hours	x	
Wine club member parties after typical business hours	x	x
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events	x	x
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties	x	x

Type of Visitor serving activity	Normal Operations	Event	Notes
Full meal served	x		Could be both normal and should be considered normal if that food service is secondary. Food highlighting agricultural which is good
Outdoor amplified sound			Depends, look at location, based on impact to neighbors
Parties during business hours	x		Normal if during normal business hours. Also a big gathering for a long time could be an event vs. normal.
Parties after business hours			
Industry-wide events			Winery event depending on size and impact on neighbors.
Wine industry meetings/parties		x	Winery event depending on size and impact on neighbors

Type of Visitor-Serving Activity*	Normal Operations	Winery Event
Full meal served		6
Outdoor amplified sound	5	1
Wine club member parties during typical business hours	6	1
Wine club member parties after typical business hours		7
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events	6	1
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties	6	1

Type of Visitor-Serving Activity*	Normal Operations	Winery Event
Full meal served	12	1121
Outdoor amplified sound		111111
Wine club member parties during typical business hours	11122	1221
Wine club member parties after typical business hours	1	11111
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events	1	11111
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties	12	11121

Discussion comments for Table above:

- “2” in the table represent counts of people who thought “it depends” on variables whether it is normal operations or an event.
- Number of attendees, time of day are more important criteria.
- Neighbors cannot distinguish who is attending events, industry/staff/club/ general public.
- Wine tasting, 20-30 people onsite is fine. Pickups are 100+, so it is an event.
- Club parties are events depending on size.
 - Some think that full meals depend on size. 20-30 ppl are normal operations
 - Others think that full meals cannot occur after regular business hours or it is an event.
- Staff/harvest parties depends on size, time of day, and day of week.
- Industry events after hours are necessary to maintain regular work hours.

Type of Visitor serving activity	Normal Operations	Event	Other
Full meal served	2	2	
Outdoor amplified sound	1	2	Either
Parties during business hours	4		
Parties after business hours	2	2	
Industry-wide	1	3	
Wine industry meetings/parties	3		?

Type of Visitor serving activity	Normal Operations	Winery event
Full Meal Served	1	5
Outdoor Amplified Sound	4	3
Wine Club member parties during typical business hours	3	3
Wine Club parties after typical business hours	0	6
Industry wide (Association sponsored) events	2	3
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties * Important to note that these activities were thought of as only allowing staff and not members of the general public by the group.	4	1

Discussion comments for Table above:

- Group seemed to either tie in thought process or to lean way one way or the other in regards to normal operations to an event.
- Full meals served were essentially considered an event with only one person voting for normal operations.
- Outdoor amplified sound was more of a stalemate. The point of location was brought up for the thought of event vs normal operation, some wineries are located way out in AG lands where there are not as many neighbors such as those wineries in downtown Geyserville for example. So the presence of outdoor amplified sound like music through a speaker in wineries out in those AG lands wouldn't be as much of an impact.
- Wine club member parties during business hours was a dead even vote. Wine club parties after typical business hours were considered an event with all participants voting unanimously for this option.
- Industry wide events was again a close vote with an ultimate vote as being considered a winery event.
- The last question the point was raised that this should be clarified if this is staff exclusive or if members of the general public would be allowed to attend. For our purposes we looked at the

question as staff exclusive with no members of the general public in attendance. The group consensus was that in this sense this activity was considered more of normal operation standards, rather than an event.

Type of Visitor-Serving Activity*	Normal Operations	Winery Event	Notes
Full meal served	2	4/5	Depends on who you are serving? How many people? Why? If hosting associates or distributors, then normal operations. This is an activity that can fulfill both categories (wine and food pairings is doing business as usual but full catering at a wedding is an event). Depends on size of group and when (wedding is outside of normal business hours); small gathering of industry for lunch is different. Facilities meal is prepared in (boxed lunch is one thing but winery kitchen is a restaurant); Way to get around that is catering kitchen only. Commercial kitchen is sometimes required by the county which upsets the community. Need to define full meal.
Outdoor amplified sound		6	
Wine club member parties during typical business hours	4	2	Depends on number of people (intensifies impacts)
Wine club member parties after typical business hours			Did not have time to discuss.
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events			Did not have time to discuss.
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties			Did not have time to discuss.

Type of Visitor-Serving Activity*	Normal Operations	Winery Event	Notes
Full meal served	X		Representative from B.R Cohn – all considered normal operations Representative from Deletto vineyards – all considered normal operations Mitch – normal operations – qualified with the impacts of the area – winery in a residential area would pose different impacts than one in an area of other wineries or commercial uses. Question: How will an existing
Outdoor amplified sound	X		Limit on dB(s) is an appropriate approach – there is a difference between background noise and a live metal band, background music at a low dB should be considered a component of normal operations. Potential live music, events associated with music should be considered in analysis of project in regards to impacts of offsite noise. Reasonable outdoor noise.
Wine club member parties during typical business hours	X		Wine club member party's usually consist of wine club pick up events which can be considered an essential part of doing business and winery function.
Wine club member parties after typical business hours	X		Hours of activity's after 'typical business hours' need to be limited to reasonable hours to limit any potential off site impacts. Existing use permits – at various wineries – have
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events	X		Industry wide event framework – should be much looser in the requirements than other winery activities – as it is expected that the whole area is participating in this event and should be considered a less of an impact to an area as people are rotating and not all at one winery at one time.
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties	X		Harvest parties – generally only consist of growers and workers – rarely do they include invitations to the general public.

Winery Events Policy

February 18, 2021 Virtual Public Workshop

Public Comments Made in Breakout Group Discussions

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Type of Visitor-Serving Activity*	Normal Operations	Winery Event	Notes
Full meal served		X	
Outdoor amplified sound		X	
Wine club member parties during typical business hours		X	1 participant did not agree that this constituted an event.
Wine club member parties after typical business hours		X	
Industry-wide (Association sponsored) events		X	*Fundraisers should be included in this category. * No 3 rd -party rentals
Wine industry/staff seminars or harvest parties		X	

Attachment 5

Public Comments Received from January 28, 2021 - May 12, 2021

From: Padi Selwyn <padi.selwyn10@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 11:17 AM

To: Tennis Wick <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>; Lynda Hopkins <Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org>; James.gore@sonoma-county.org; Chris Coursey <Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org>; David Rabbitt <David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>; Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Request for Delay of Feb 18 Winery Event Ordinance - TIME SENSITIVE

***** TIME SENSITIVE *****

Dear Supervisors and Tennis Wick:

We are writing to respectfully request that the February 18 workshop for the Winery Event Policy be cancelled and rescheduled for a later date for the reasons below.

Here's why:

1. In 2016, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to pass a **Winery Event Ordinance** to mitigate the negative cumulative impacts of nearly 500 wineries and tasting rooms and their multitude of events. Impacts to public safety and quality of life in neighborhoods where some tasting rooms were permitted were key drivers.

Our question: when and how did the Ordinance morph into a Policy?

If this is not an error, the Board needs to vote to change the Ordinance into a policy, not the Permit department. The October 2016 resolution set the understanding that the Staff would develop and the Board adopt an County-wide ordinance and also standards/ guidelines for areas of local concentration. This discrepancy between approved Board direction and new direction needs to be settled by the Board of Supervisors prior to any public workshop on the "policy" option.

2. The Sonoma Valley Advisory Group has not completed their standard and checklist item recommendations for the Sonoma Valley Guidelines. Without the input from one of the most impacted regions of the county, it is unacceptable, disrespectful and irresponsible to hold a workshop until

they complete their work.

3. The May 2020 Supervisors Workshop agenda included a briefing on the Technical studies. This did not happen, and the technical study findings need to be presented to the public prior to the workshop. These studies have not been made available – public input has not been incorporated into the studies and thus, they must be reviewed to inform the public prior to any public workshop.

4. For the month of February, the County has scheduled within days of each other, critical reviews of a number of important environmental issues besides the Winery Event proposal. A) The Cannabis Part 2 – which has morphed from an Ordinance to a General Plan Amendment – another unexplained change in direction with little public notice. B) The Board of Forestry is requiring comments on the new SRA Regulations for Fire Safe Roads. C) The community has just learned of the “Healthy Trees Initiative” (and its Biogeneration component).

Bottom Line: The environmental community expects to participate in governmental actions in a meaningful way regarding these issues – which means we need time to review documents and respond in a constructive manner. PRSC and our coalition groups participated in the 2015 stakeholder group and public hearings prior to the October 2016 Board Resolution. The tax paying residents of Sonoma County have waited five long years for a Winery Event ORDINANCE that prevents future areas of concentration, and provides protective standards for existing areas of concentration. Rushing to conduct a public workshop at this time, when the above issues must first be addressed, is not in the best interests of the county or its residents.

Please advise us by February 5th if you will postpone this workshop as we must inform our membership.

Thank you,

Padi Selwyn

Co-chair

Padi Selwyn
(707) 569-6876

PRESERVE RURAL SONOMA COUNTY

Visit our website at - <http://www.preserveruralsonomacounty.org>

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From: [Jennifer LaPorta](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Events mtg 2/18
Date: Saturday, February 13, 2021 11:54:05 AM



Please STOP permitting winery events in Sonoma County.
Actually, STOP permitting any more wineries!
We have too many, and you haven't been doing your job vis a vis
the General Plan to keep their #s down.
Too much traffic, too much burden on emergency services,
too much groundwater use, too much!!!

Jennifer LaPorta
BS Environmental Health
Santa Rosa

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From: [Chris Koch](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Virtual Public Workshop on the Draft County Winery Events Policy Confirmation
Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 12:19:56 PM



You are creating ambiguity and confusion with definitions, particularly “events” and “activities”. The wine industry will want to pack the term “activities” and the neighboring communities will resent that.

Events include activities held after hours, that provide food service other than wine pairing bites, that have amplified sound, that charge admission, or that are advertised. There may be some de minimis size criteria that could be used to keep an activity from being an event (e.g., no more than 10 people), but great care needs to be exercised here.

You also need to be clear about what these guidelines apply to. Is it just new permit applications? Or do existing wineries with use permits get to jump up to the new limits being considered? That could be a problem.



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From: [Nancy and Brantly Richardson](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: WINERY EVENTS WORKSHOP
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:52:51 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

This workshop boils down to providing a definition of an “event”. Now bowing to pressure from the wine industry the County wants redefine the term to allow “events” in all the Ag zones. Clearly the wineries must not be making it financially so they must now be allowed to have unfettered promotional activities which have nothing to do with agriculture. These events can cause serious problems for the environment and for the residents who live nearby. It is very shortsighted for the wine industry to promote this redefinition and for the County to support it. The wineries in Napa County limit the events and realize that allowing overnight stays, parties, amplified music, admission charges, after hours promotional uses and other such events is detrimental to the overall health of the wine industry. Obviously Napa cares more about the industry than does Sonoma County’s myopic wine industry and equally myopic County officials. What kind of future do you all foresee? It ain’t pretty! Allowing more event competition among the 400 or so wineries is not a healthy solution to their financial health.

Nancy Richardson

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From: [Eris Weaver](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Preserve Rural Sonoma County](#)
Subject: public workshop tomorrow Feb 18
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 2:31:47 PM
Attachments: [image006.png](#)
[image009.png](#)
[Guidelines_Winery_Events_Workshop_Feb_2021_3_SCBC_COMMENTS.pdf](#)

Hello! I've signed up for this workshop, but there are two other meetings happening at the same time so I may not make all of it. I thought I would offer my comments in advance.

The Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition's chief concern about winery events are echoed in your traffic studies – the increase in vehicular traffic at the same time that many cyclists are out on these roads, which were NOT built for the level of traffic that they sustain during peak periods. Several of the activities that are listed as “visitor-serving activities” in your Draft Framework document (I've attached one with my comments) are still, to my mind, EVENTS...they bring a large number of people to the site at the same time for a specific purpose. I also think the LENGTH of an event – and thus how much attendees are likely to drink during that time period – is also a consideration for traffic safety.

Under traffic management, we would want wineries to be prohibited from obstructing the bike lanes, site lines, etc. with signs, people directing traffic, etc. You should also prohibit on-street parking, as it interferes with cyclist access to the shoulder. (That might mean limiting event size!) I would like to see some sort of enforcement mechanism in this regard, not just for these events but in general: when I have registered complaints about signs, etc. obstructing bike lanes, no matter who I direct them to (PRMD, Sheriff, TPW, etc.) I am told that “we don't handle that, it's [somebody else]'s job.”

I would also advocate to limiting industry-wide events as those are the WORST for traffic safety!! If we're not going to re-engineer our roads to handle more capacity – and personally I'm not sure we should – we need to limit events that draw more participants than those roads can handle safely.

Thank you for your consideration.

Eris Weaver



Eris Weaver, Executive Director
Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
eris@bikesonoma.org
707-545-0153 office • 707-338-8589 cell
www.bikesonoma.org



[Take the pledge!](#)

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Draft Framework for County Winery Events Guidelines

1. What is a visitor-serving activity vs. a winery event?

Winery Visitor-Serving Activities		Hours of Operation	Attendees	Food Service	Outdoor Amplified Sound
TYPE	EXAMPLES				
SALES	Wine tasting, tours, food and wine pairing, by invitation release days, pickup parties				
WINE TRADE	By invitation meetings or seminars				
Winery Events					
TYPE	EXAMPLES				
AGRICULTURAL PROMOTIONAL	Winemaker lunches & dinners, release parties, club parties				
OTHER	By-invitation meetings or harvest parties, Association-sponsored				

2. Guidelines for Siting Criteria

- Min parcel size
- Access (fire safety)
- Setbacks
- # of tasting rooms
- On-site parking
- Design

3. Guidelines for Operations

- Food service
- Event coordination and traffic management
- Noise standards

Refrain from obstructing the bike lanes, site lines, How are these things I've struck out not EVENTS?etc. with signs, people directing traffic, etc.They bring a larger group to the site for a special purpose, and most important from OUR perspective, increase vehicular

From: [Nancy Citro](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Fwd: What is a winery event
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 3:51:06 PM
Attachments: [ORD16-0001 Winery Events BOS Summary 07-12-2016.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

>

> Thank you for the opportunity to join the Zoom Workshop tomorrow. I look forward to it. I would like to submit this attached document as reference to the question to be discussed. The attached report from 2016 is titled Winery Events Study Session. In it, the report from the working winery group defines event. In this review of each audit and review of every winery use permit, an event is “any activity conducted at a winery or tasting room for the education, marketing, sale and promotion of wine involving groups other than drop-in or by-appointment tasting involving any of the following:

- > Service of full meals
- > Outside the tasting room hours of operation
- > Fee for event
- > Entertainment, music, outdoor amplified sound, or similar activities or
- > Advertised to consumer”

>

> Please refer to attached PDF for event definition on page ten. Why are we back to answering this question five years later? The definition of an event work has already been accomplished through the process of approving all our use permits!

> Regarding the hours of operation, attendees food service and outdoor amplified sound considerations, is this for new use permits, or all use permits regardless of their language or age that we are considering? I hope this is clarified in the workshop.

> Look at the big picture regarding hours food music and look at all of the cumulative impacts in our neighborhood so that all visitors can share in the enjoyment of our beautiful valleys. Chairwoman Hopkins mentioned wanting events for small farmers. Don’t forget cannabis growers want events, the recreational boater, recreational biking tours, pro races, count everyone. Don’t forget to include farming and most important, harvest traffic. Add up all the parts of the sum and then divide them up. Give grape growers the priority on LIA parcels, no events during harvest. I have seen the danger of bike events during harvest mornings! Keep our roads safe, Westside Road does not meet rural collector road capacity design standards, nor do the others in your threshold traffic study. No paved shoulders with a “significant portions of Westside Rd clearance from the edge of the traveled way to unyielding objects average clearance 1 to 7 feet!

Amplified music is NOT farming noise.

Best,
Nancy Citro
4160 Westside Road
Healdsburg, Ca 95448

> Thank you
> Nancy Citro
> <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=2147548917>
>

>

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> Sent from my iPad

From: [Wendy Krupnick](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [district5](#); [district3](#); [district4](#); [Susan Gorin](#); [David Rabbitt](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#)
Subject: Winery Events Ordinance Workshop
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:01:53 AM
Attachments: [WineryEvents intro 2-18-21.pdf](#)

Good morning Sonoma County Supervisors and Planning Staff.

Attached please find an introductory letter from Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) Sonoma County regarding this afternoon's workshop on the proposed Winery Events Ordinance.

We have submitted extensive comments and suggestions for this much-needed ordinance in recent years and will be doing so again after we learn more at today's workshop. As stated in our letter, we are also requesting a meeting with staff to discuss the ordinance and our suggestions further.

Thank you for considering our views.

Wendy Krupnick, Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County

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From: [tl](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: todays winery events meeting- comment
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:06:22 AM

Dear PRMD,

We need limitations on the number of events, wine or cannabis related. Our roads aren't built for much more traffic, our neighbors want quiet enjoyment of their own homes, and being overrun on weekends has been happening for years. Don't let it get any worse than it was pre-Covid.

thanks,

Tom Laporte

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From: [Nicole Bacigalupi](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Pam Bacigalupi](#)
Subject: question/comment for tonight's virtual workshop
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:23:07 AM

Hello - I am born and raised on Westside Road and currently work at our family winery/vineyard here. There is an issue with traffic and safety on the road - however I don't believe it can only be attributed to winery events. It is the culmination of ag vehicles, cars and bicycles all sharing a one lane, rural road with no shoulder. The congestion is further escalated during certain times a year - especially at harvest time. I feel that wineries and growers have done their part by obtaining the appropriate permits, paying the fees and in general being good neighbors. I see one of the primary issues being the influx of cyclists - not riding single file and in general making it dangerous to pass and drive on a one lane road.

I would like to propose that individuals who cycle down the primarily agricultural roads i.e Westside etc - should obtain a permit from the county for a given day. Similar to visiting a public park and purchasing a permit for a day use. Only a certain number of permits are issued for the day and once the permits are gone that is the number of bikes allowed on the road. This would mitigate so much congestion that is a reoccurring issue on these back roads.

I would suggest further restricting the number of passes issued on certain weekend (i.e holidays) as well as harvest time when the roads are already congested. Wineries should not be the only group taking responsibility for the traffic issue - all parties should contribute to solving the problem.

Has this been considered by the committee as a way of mitigating this issue?

Thank you for your time
Nicole

Nicole Bacigalupi
Bacigalupi Vineyards
707-473-0115
BacigalupiVineyards.com

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From: [Kallen, Christian](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Input from Feb. 18
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 6:54:59 PM



I'm wondering why wineries are in a "silo" category, or it seem to be –

If they serve full meals they should be licensed as a restaurant.

If they have business promotional events they should be in a business district.

Are they not subject to these other regulations?

Christian Kallen, Reporter
Sonoma Index-Tribune
www.sonomanews.com
(707) 933-2732

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From: [Jim Olmsted](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Events
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 7:10:26 PM

Hi:

Interesting workshop 2/18.

My comment: 1) Establish some amnesty period for existing wineries to achieve compliance with whatever new criteria that is established/adopted. Consider some subset of standards to allow them to achieve compliance. 2) Establish a "grandfather" clause that permits existing wineries that have very loose conditions of approval (that might be unenforceable now but may run afoul of new criteria) such that they do not fall into non compliance. It would be a particular burden (especially now in pandemic) to penalize those wineries. This is so even if they are borderline compliant/noncompliant. Timing here is everything for many of these smaller producing wineries. Staff needs to be cognizant of that burden.

Later,

Jim

Olmsted & Associates
Planning Consultants

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From: [Dana Britomaris](#)
Subject: Re: Winery Events rules
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 7:18:45 PM

I've just been taking part in the Winery Events Workshop and would like to mention two considerations that are related to wineries but were not part of the purpose of the workshop. I hope you will put these principles into the county's criteria in such a way that they will be taken into account in any decisions about wineries:

Always formulate rules in such a way as to minimize insecticide residue runoff. Organic wineries can be run affordably by using neem oil diluted in several times the volume of vegetable oil.

Always formulate rules in such a way as to encourage the widest possible diversity in what's cultivated. I was living in Hawai'i Island's Puna district when the papaya-worm infestation came about. It was heartbreaking, and that's no exaggeration. Very many people had taken out loans for land, trees, equipment and supplies, thinking they would pay off the loans, send their children to college and then have a comfortable retirement. Instead, they were homeless--some drinking heavily, which didn't help the family finances; a few, in desperation, switched to making meth (Quick--which is better for you, a papaya or a hit of meth?) Monoculture is a very high stakes gamble, and I want Sonoma County never to lose the way the Puna did.

Dana Bellwether

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From: [Reuben Weinzev](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery event ordinance
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:51:50 AM



Dear PRMD staff:

During the presentation, your slide shows that the policies apply to **new** winery applications; my question is what about applications for changes in current permits and permits of existing wineries? I am interested in if your policies (ordinance) will apply if a winery applies for more events, larger events, increased production of wine?

Would water requirements be reviewed at that time as well as safety elements?

Thank you for your time and consideration of my questions.

Reuben Weinzev

reubenw22@gmail.com

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From: [Christina Meyer](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Public comments
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 1:48:48 PM

EXTERNAL

At the event workshop last night our group did not get t the 3rd agenda item so please find below comments on this agenda item:

Guidelines for Siting Criteria:

- a. Minimum parcel size-20 acre minimum
- b. Access(fire safety)-20 foot minimum road width, driveway safe sight distance (for curves, intersections)
- c. Setbacks-Setbacks for scenic corridors
- d. Number of tasting rooms-Density standard of no more than 2 1/2 miles
- e. On site parking required

Guidelines for Operations

- a. Food service-small appetizer-sized bites for wine paring, all other food service types for events only
- b. Event coordination with traffic management mandatory
- c. Noise standards-sound measured at the property line per County standards. No Sound Wall mitigations

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From: [Terry Crisler](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Terry Crisler](#)
Subject: Winery Event Workshop comments
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 10:09:14 AM

To Whom it may concern,

I'd like to comment on the questions asked Friday night at the Winery Event Workshop. In my opinion, the questions are too vague and we must look at each winery site individually, and allow the **right entitlements for the right property**. A small one acre winery one acre near residential properties is much different from a large volume winery with large production and large vineyards, and their needs and impact upon their neighbors and the community are different. I listened carefully as several anti-winery citizens voiced their desire for extreme measures that would be punitive for this one industry alone. The two specific items I would like to address are regarding "meals" and "industry events".

- I believe strongly that the current stringent policy regarding food needs to be relaxed, and **food should be allowed to be served** at wineries and tasting rooms. First of all, wine flavors are enhanced by food and are a natural part of the tasting experience. Secondly, we are all hyper aware of the risks of intoxication. By serving food, it slows down the consumption process for the inexperienced taster and allows for a safer (and more pleasurable) experience. The current permit system that does not allow food service is unfair and archaic. The question then becomes, what is appropriate without impacting the neighbors? How about allowing indoor food service permit (quiet and undistruptive to neighbors) up to a certain capacity based on size and infrastructure, and a separate outdoor food service permit that would operate based on likelihood of impacting neighbors. That would allow the little guy to have a taco truck or BBQ on weekends without disturbing his neighbors, and the larger facilities with their own chef and kitchen to do more extensive service. Regarding **"full meals served" to the trade, and "industry events"**...Due to the three tier system in our country, these **trade visitors are our outsourced sales and marketing staff**. Providing education includes experiencing food and wines together as part of normal business operations is vital.

Thank you,
Terry Crisler

Terry Crisler
Sotheby's International Realty - Wine Country
DRE# 01727571
Mobil 707-509-9533
Terry.Crisler@yahoo.com
Terry.Crisler@sothebyshomes.com
www.terrycrisler.com

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From: [Mike Martini](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#); ["Michael Haney"](#)
Subject: Definitions and Guidelines
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 10:22:09 AM
Attachments: [Winery Guidance and Definitions 7 27 2020 Final.docx](#)

I want to acknowledge the effort on obtaining community input related to winery activities and the creation of guidelines for future winery applications at the Workshop held last Thursday the 18th. It was impressive in the number of people who participated. It is obvious that a lot of people are concerned with what Permit brings back to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Unfortunately, the large number of people trying to provide direction make it difficult to drill down to the important issues of definitions and guidelines.

The Sonoma Vintners have taken a lot of time and effort to work with its membership to prepare a draft a Winery Guidance and Definitions that we have previously submitted to Tennis and Georgia. I have attached it here as well so it may become part of the record as you continue your efforts to get community input.

I am available to answer any questions if you need any clarification on either the definitions or the guidelines.

Thank you,

Mike Martini
Taft Street Winery

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Winery Use Permit Policy, Parameters & Definitions

Section 1 – Background

Winery

The establishment and operation of a winery involves many levels of regulation and compliance as it involves the production of an alcoholic beverage subject to state and federal excise tax.

Permits are required from the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (Bonded Winery Permit) and the California Alcoholic Beverage Commission (Winegrower – Type 02 License). This license defines the allowable operations to include:

- the conversion of fruit into wine,
- the sale of wine to consumers for consumption on the licensed property,
- the sale of wine to consumers to remove from the licensed property,
- the sale of wine to licensed retail and restaurants for resale to their customers,
- the sale of wine to licensed distributors for resale to licensed retail and restaurants, and
- the sale of wine to licensed distillers or vinegar producers.

Sonoma County General Plan

The Sonoma County General Plan (in its Agricultural Resources Elements) has many goals, objectives and policies specifically supporting the multi-generational agricultural heritage of Sonoma County and the stabilization of the farmer's economic situation. These goals represent the growing of agricultural crops, the processing of the crop as well as the sales and marketing of the product. Wineries are part of that processing.

Specific goals of note include:

- **GOAL AR-4:** Allow farmers to manage their operations in an efficient, economic manner with minimal conflict with nonagricultural uses.
- **GOAL AR-9:** Provide agricultural permit processing procedures that are rapid and efficient.

Specific policies of note include:

- **Policy AR-4a:** The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.
- **Policy AR-4d:** Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.
- **Policy AR-8b:** Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County

Sonoma County Zoning Code

The Sonoma County Zoning Code describes the uses allowed by right in the Land Use Designations described in the General Plan as well as those uses allowed by application for and approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The CUP outlines the conditions for approval and helps to mitigate and protect underlying goals and policies of the General Plan.

Wineries and Tasting Rooms are allowed by Conditional Use Permit in the three major agricultural land use designations: Land Intensive Agriculture (LIA) Sec 26-04-020; Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA) Sec 26-06-020; and Diverse Agriculture (DA) Sec 26-08-020.

Winery Business Activities

As described in Winery above, a Winery is permitted to sell its products through several channels from directly to a consumer, to a distributor in another state. The General Plan Policy AR-8b “encourages programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products”. This today results in a wide range of sales, marketing and promotion activities associated with a Winery that are a normal part of managing the business.

All wineries, even those without public tasting rooms, must engage in these business activities to survive and be viable.

Non-Winery Events

A Winery is an attractive site for reasons of its location in an agricultural region, its association with food and wine and, very often, interesting architecture and design. As such, these sites are often sought out for events not related to the Winery operation or its sales and marketing of its products.

Section 2 - Parameters

Consideration of an application for a Conditional Use Permit for Winery operation recognizes and incorporates three specific parameters for operation:

- **Production:** This parameter sets the production limits of the winery in terms of cases per year and is determined by facility capacity and production area.
- **Hours:** This parameter sets the hours that the winery may operate and recognizes Production Hours, Business Hours, and Public Access/Serving Hours
- **Capacity:** This parameter sets the Maximum Persons at One Time allowed at the winery, and is determined by floor area, parking, septic, site area and access.

Additional parameters related to compliance with other regulatory agencies including water, hazardous materials, public works/roads, access, and public health are also incorporated into the Conditional Use Permit.

Section 3 - Guidelines

Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for a Winery assumes that the winery operation will include Winery Business Activities. However, in addition, a Conditional Use Permit should also speak to the Winery's impactful usage: Production Activities, Public Access/Serving Activities (activities open to public), and Winery Business Activities (limited to staff, consultants, sales partners). This will enable the winery to evolve its business while ensuring that it remains a good neighbor.

The following guidelines will be followed in the review and approval of the application:

1. Winery Business Activities within the parameters for Hours and Capacity are not limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number.
2. Winery Business Activities within the parameters for Hours but outside of Capacity are not limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number, but may be subject to additional mitigation such as porta portable bathrooms, parking attendants, offsite parking or provided transportation.
3. Winery Business Activities within the parameters for Capacity but outside of Hours are not limited in Conditional Use Permit as to number but may be subject to additional mitigation.
4. Winery Business Activities outside of the parameters of Hours and Capacity, as well as Activities that are not winery specific (such as wine industry events) may be limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number and may be subject to additional mitigation.
5. Non-Winery Events event may be limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number and may be subject to additional mitigation.

Specific Area Guidelines

Sonoma County has identified three areas that have asked for and received special attention in the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee to develop, review and recommend specific guidelines for that area. They include Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma Valley and Westside Road (pending). Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for a Winery in one of these areas are subject to recommended guidelines developed for that area but will not be less rigid than the Guidelines described above. No authority is delegated to Citizen Advisory Committees to modify standards or regulations set forth in the General Plan or Zoning Ordinance.

Section 4 – Definitions

Winery

Facilities and equipment for the conversion of fruit into wine and engage in the production and sale of wine (from CA ABC).

Maximum Persons at One Time (MPOT)

Maximum Persons at One Time is the total number of people that can be accommodated on site based on standard calculations of floor area, parking spaces, septic and ingress/egress constraints. The number shall be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Business Hours

Business Hours are the hours that normal winery business is conducted on site covering issues of operations, finance & accounting, human resources, and sales & marketing. Business Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Public Access/Serving Hours

Public Access/Serving Hours are the hours that the winery is open to the public and may offer public tasting and sales of wine to the public. Public Access/Serving Hours may include weekend hours and be adjusted seasonally to reflect Daylight Savings Time. Public Access/Serving Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Production Hours

Production Hours are the hours of winery production and reflect the necessity of production activity based on harvest issues. Production Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Winery Business Activities

Winery Business Activities are any activities taking place at the winery within Business Hours, not open to the public, specifically focused on the production, sale and promotion of wine (an agricultural product), and are within the MPOT described in the Use Permit Application.

Winery Business Activities include, but are not limited to: business to business meetings, trade partner/distributor meetings, sales meetings, wine trade events, wine education/seminars, trade tours and tastings, media tours & tastings, grower relations meetings, employee appreciation activities, and industry receptions. Food including meals may be served in conjunction with these activities as described in “Food Service” below.

In addition, Business Activities include administrative activities such as staff meetings, accounting and finance, and human resources.

Public Access/Serving Activities

Public Access/Serving Activities are any activities taking place at the winery during Public Access Sales Hours open to the public, specifically focused on the sale and promotion of wine (an agricultural product), and are within the MPOT described in the Use Permit Application.

Public Access/Serving Activities include but are not limited to: wine tasting, wine club pick up, new releases, open house, food & wine education, tours & tastings and, tasting room sales.

Food, including meals may be served in conjunction with these activities as described in “Food Service” below.

Non-Winery Events

Non-Winery Activities are any activities that are not directly associated with the sales and marketing of the wine produced at the Winery. Non-Winery Activities will be limited by the Use Permit and may have restrictions on number, hours, and amplified music. Non-Winery Activities will require evidence of mitigation of impacts in the form of notice to neighbors, additional parking, parking attendants, or portable toilets.

Non-Winery Activities include political and charitable fundraising activities; association sponsored events; corporate events and weddings.

Amplified Sound

All activities on a permitted winery are subject to the Noise Element of the Sonoma County General Plan.

Food Service

Food Service is the service of food specifically prepared and paired with the service of the wine in conjunction with Business Activities and Public Access/Serving Activities. Meal Service may be provided by Third Party Vendors (caterers or food trucks) or by onsite kitchens. Third Party Vendors must have required permits from County Public Health. onsite kitchens are subject to compliance with County Public Health as conditioned in the Use Permit.

Food Service is allowed as part of Business Activities and Public Access/Serving Activities.

Effect of Winery Parameters and Definitions

The parameters and definitions provided herein apply prospectively to new winery applications. There is no intent to render any existing winery use non-conforming.

July 27, 2020

From: [Nick Frey](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: FW: Response to the Public Workshop on Winery Events
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 1:04:34 PM

resending

From: Nick Frey
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 1:02 PM
To: PRMD-wineryevents@sonoma-county.org
Cc: John Balletto <john@ballettovineyards.com>; Mike Martini (mikem@taftstreetwinery.com) <mikem@taftstreetwinery.com>; Michael Haney (michael@sonomawine.com) <michael@sonomawine.com>; Tennis Wick <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>; Lynda Hopkins - Supervisor (Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org) <lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Response to the Public Workshop on Winery Events

Permit Sonoma implies you will permit Sonoma County business to successfully operate in the county. You certainly have requirements for issuing permits that specify parking, traffic, septic and visitor capacity at permitted sites..

Permitting is different than trying to manage business operations through your “permitting” process. That is what some members of the community are asking you to do. Look at the number of enforcement actions your department has taken against wineries in the last 2 years. There are few and the industry supports your enforcement against wineries that are operating outside permit specifications listed above. Permits specify visitor serving hours. Activities to host visitors for any business purpose as long as the facility capacities are sufficient for the number of people being hosted at any given hour during the visitor serving hours are “permitted”. Those business purposes are to sell wines to consumers.

There are business needs beyond selling direct to consumers, although direct sales are the lifeblood of smaller wineries.. Those business activities include hosting distributors, wine retailers and restaurant staff who sell our wines on- and off-premise. These are essential activities, not events. Business associates who visit any business expect to be hosted. At a winery, they expect to be hosted at the winery if possible. At other businesses they host at local restaurants or cater in a lunch or dinner. Most wineries do not have a chef on staff, so they too cater meals with local restaurants or caterers. Wineries support our local hospitality partners in order to conduct our business operations while supporting their businesses. The taxes that the wineries and hospitality partners generate are critical contributors to our local governments as well as the local economy. It is important that you “permit” us to carry out our business as best we can to survive in a very competitive market place.

Part of being a successful business is to adapt the ever changing market place. The COVID shelter in place restrictions have likely changed the tasting room business model forever. More wineries are

tasting by appointment only. This regulates traffic to wineries. Wine and food pairings are expected by many visitors. Most wineries have no interest or ability to build resorts or open restaurants and county zoning prevents that in all but a few properties that were permitted years ago. Loud voices do not necessarily suggest a system is not working. Permit Sonoma has the tools today through current permitting requirements and enforcement authority to prevent abuses to the community at large. Furthermore the industry has offered a framework that defines business activities and events that need special permitting. I urge you to work with the industry and not go down the road of micromanaging winery businesses. You do not do that for businesses like Harmony Farm Supply, Action Rents in Fulton, etc. You permit businesses in the county that comply with activities that fall within permitting requirements, most of which relate to public health and safety. I urge you to take that same approach to winery businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.



NICK FREY

PR & Brand Ambassador

Nick@ballettovineyards.com

cell: 707.291.2857

5700 Occidental Rd. | Santa Rosa, CA 95401

ballettovineyards.com



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From: [Nancy Citro](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#)
Subject: Winery Event Workshop - comments
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 1:03:14 PM

Good afternoon Georgia,

Thank you PRMD for the public workshop on winery events. I enjoyed participating in it.

While preparing for the workshop, I read the draft capacity threshold study for Dry Creek and Westside Road. The section 2.1.2 Winery Events has inconsistencies and a significant , misleading error(s).

This section states that "...along Westside Road in the Russian River Valley, the maximum allowed persons per event increases to 600."

The winery use permit (4035 Westside) does **NOT** sanction 600 person winery events. The use permit states 3 events of 600, BUT in the same sentence it clarifies....."three events up to 600 people, **over a period of 8 hours.** " This permit approves three industry events annually.

When reviewing the staff report, you will see it's Sigrid's due diligence in recognizing a new kinds of event.... industry events held **over the day**. She discusses it in the staff report and then describes them in the conditions of the permit. This use permit is not for three time certain winery events for 600. It is to permit 3 industry events in addition to the other winery events she outlines. I searched and found this info on microfilm at PRMD pre COVID.

Could the references to the Dry Creek Valley (DCV) winery events up to 500 also be mis-categorized? Depending on the year and language, it could have been your go to winery planner at the time, Sigrid once again doing her due diligence, acknowledging both winery and industry events.

Table 2.2 shows the max capacity at DCV events as 200 and 140, not the 500 mentioned in the paragraph above the Table. Could you check the actual language in use permits mentioning "500 person events"? Are they described as time certain events or industry events occurring over the period of 8 hours?

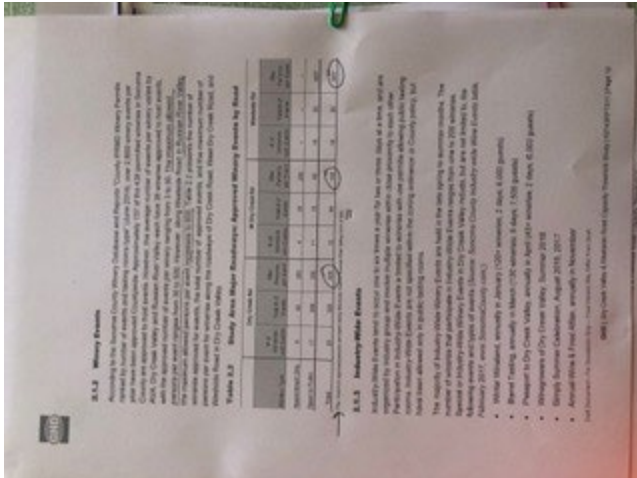
Looking back at recent project permitted on Westside Road, Ramey Project asked for and was denied the largest size of the events requested. Our Sonoma County planning commission did not approve them, in fact Cameron 4th district specifically rejected the idea of 300 people plus events during a hearing that was packed in favor of the project. I think the few largest size events were really the only thing Mr Ramey didn't get approved in his use permit!

Finally, this draft study is using 2014 data for winery events. Can GHD address these concerns regarding the questionable data and update to include event data more current than 2014?

Thank you for your time and attention, it is greatly appreciated. I look forward to the next steps. Also, I wanted to thank you for calendaring by month, the subjects the BOS will be address at their meetings. This is a great feature and really helps to have the timelines, dates

and hours calendared for what's coming up on the agendas for the year.

Kind regards
Nancy Citro



Sent from my iPad

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From: [Janus MATTHES](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [district4](#); [David Rabbitt](#); [district5](#); [Susan Gorin](#); [Chris Coursey](#); [Tennis Wick](#)
Subject: Winery Event Workshop Comments
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 1:58:41 PM
Attachments: [WWW letter Winery Events.docx](#)

www.winewaterwatch.org

February 21, 2021

PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org

To: Permit Sonoma & Sonoma County Supervisors: _

RE: Winery Event Ordinance

Wine and Water Watch is a local organization of over 300 citizens concerned with the overdevelopment of the wine tourism industry and promotes ethical land and water use. We oppose the industrialization of agricultural lands not growing food, medicine, fiber or silage and advocate agricultural practices that are ecologically regenerative. The bias shown at the recent workshop allowing the wine industry to have free reign over rewriting regulations in this County is unacceptable. After the breakout sessions, reports were given and many comments on impacts were omitted as it did not fit the county's narrative. Those not in your preferred industry circle of influence found this workshop was little more than to check off your to do list as far as public participations was concerned. Very disingenuous. What was obvious from the workshop is that the majority of residents favor meaningful limitations on winery hospitality uses – not the roll-back of regulations, but cleverly renaming events as business operations, that the wine industry has been pushing for the last seven years.

More tourism is not an economic cure all. The recent Economic Development Plan, pre-pandemic clearly shows that tourism is not that important of an economic generator (6.5%) in the overall picture. It has been shown that governments that cater to tourism are the first to crash and last to recover from an economic downturn. We deserve better.

You are choosing economic winners and losers which is not your job. In a capitalist system rewards go to innovators and destroys those who do not adapt. Changing definitions to allow the bloated and failing wine industry to write their own rules is not governing, it is submission to an industry that cannot possibly maintain its current operating model that favors large corporate interest. Instead of changing to adapt to the new climate and economic realities, the wine industry continues to claim local businesses as collateral damage.

A pattern has formed in our local government that promotes wine industry interest over local enterprise. We site kitchen permits given freely by Permit Sonoma and the gradual deterioration of food security, 96% of all food is imported. Local restaurants are fighting to stay alive as are food farmers. The hotel industry appears to be the next ask of this bloated industry.

We continue to believe strict regulations on events both size, number, definition and timing with high traffic events should be created. The fact is the County already has such a policy and it should be included in the ordinance. Weddings, parties, and business meetings are not agriculture promotions but rather corporate event

productions and not ag. Up to date traffic studies, no more than 2 years old, need to be created to map out potential problems due to binge tourism. We are tired of “right turn only” season that this inflated industry creates is both a safety issue and a quality-of-life issue.

Permit Sonoma, you need to go back to the drawing board. Tourism should be supportive to local communities and not dislocate the local population with traditionally low wages, unaffordable housing due to investors, sacrificing our local mom-and-pop businesses that service the residents needs and require more taxes to fix the overtaxed infrastructure. No more wine industry expansion. They are bad neighbors.

We suggest that if the wine industry needs more events to survive that as a community, they work together to build a large center that can cater to all wineries and events and has the infrastructure to support the added pressure to our community. The wine industry should be paying for this not more tax increases and aggravation born by residents. Luther Burbank Center type of property close to a major thoroughfare should be the goal not scattered winery events all over the county. If the County is serious in propping up this diminished industry, why not create a center perhaps on Chanate property that can house a winery event center, showcasing all wineries large to small in an even platform?

You need to think outside the box unlike the wine industry and make this work for everyone.

Agriculture in this county has had plenty of changes over the years. From potatoes, to hops, prunes, peaches, apples, poultry, pears, hay, dairy, cattle and sheep. Dairy and cattle remain as do some poultry business but pared down into a realistic size industry. With diminished sales, wine grape glut and lowered worldwide demand, changing tastes and new online marketing, time for this industry to adjust or die. Those eras did not have the same issues we face today: climate change impacts that may cause our own extinction, scarce water, changing cultural tastes, unaffordable land, social inequality to name a few.

A serious discussion and studies need to be made on the ever-expanding wine industry impacts that are adding considerable amounts of GHG exasperating climate change in search of customers, depleting our aquifers for future generations and the onslaught of chemical based ag. We have paid the price for their endless assaults on our environment. Time for them to make the changes as we all have already sacrificed way too much for their pursuit of profit.

A full Cumulative Impact Report should be made before any changes to the winery event regulations and climate change has to be addressed. We need current information to make such generational decisions. We look forward to action on this matter *that reflects the public not the wine industry wants*. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wine & Water Watch Board

Janus Matthes, Deb Preston, Merrilyn Joyce, Pamela Singer, Dr. Shepherd Bliss, Charlotte Williams, Sarah Ryan, Tom Conlon, Judith Joinville

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www.winewaterwatch.org

February 21, 2021

PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org

To: Permit Sonoma & Sonoma County Supervisors:

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Sincerely,

Wine & Water Watch Board

Janus Matthes, Deb Preston, Merrilyn Joyce, Pamela Singer, Dr. Shepherd Bliss, Charlotte Williams, Sarah Ryan, Tom Conlon

From: [Wendy Krupnick](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Cc: [Brian Oh](#); [Scott Orr](#); [Tennis Wick](#); [Lynda Hopkins](#); [Leo Chyi](#)
Subject: CAFF meeting re Winery Events
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 9:30:03 PM
Attachments: [WineryEvents intro 2-18-21.pdf](#)

Greetings Permit Sonoma Planners re Winery Event Ordinance.

As per the email and letter submitted by CAFF Sonoma County on February 18, 2021, (attached again here), we are requesting to meet with you at your soonest convenience, but prior to the Planning Commission meeting where this topic and your draft ordinance will be reviewed.

As mentioned, we will be submitting detailed suggestions by your March 1 deadline but feel that it is also important to discuss these and our concerns with you.

Please let us know of some possible dates and times so we can find one that works for a couple of people from our chapter.

Thanks for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Wendy Krupnick

Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County

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From: [Laura Morgan](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Feed-back on the winery events hearing of 2/18/21
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 7:28:57 AM



Dear friends,

We are 50-year Sonoma County residents, both physicians, who were unable to attend the hearing due to Covid-related work.

We have strong feelings against the unregulated proliferation of wineries, vineyard plantings and now a push by the viticulture industry to pre-emptively loosen regulations for future events or “activities”.

We request that PRMD hold to basic precepts that protect tax-paying residents from impacts of wineries in residential areas. All activities other than wine-tasting are functionally events and have adverse impacts on neighborhood properties.

Our recommendations are as follows:

Determine winery events or activities based on the number of attendees.

Regulate after-hours activities as events.

Designate meal service as events.

Consider all forms of amplified sound as events, whether inside or outside.

Define observable criteria for violations of an ordinance, which determine enforcement.

We also request that the County implement the following **guidelines for Siting Criteria**:

- a. Minimum parcel size for new wineries with tasting rooms should be 20 acres
- b. Access must provide for fire safety and road safety considerations. Safe access by emergency vehicles while visitors are exiting requires 20' min. road width, as well as driveway (intersection) safe sight distance
- c. Setbacks - Setbacks for Scenic Roads (all buildings and parking out of scenic corridor). Design and location considerations for Scenic Landscape Units
- d. Density standard of no more than two tasting rooms/ event centers within a half mile – this will help prevent further over-concentration and multiple driveway road safety impacts; and
- e. Traffic flow on to site and on-site parking sufficient to prevent visitors from backing up on roadways or parking alongside roads - impeding traffic and creating safety hazards.

As cyclists, wine-tasters and physicians, we have first-hand experience of the dangers involved in combining these activities without an ordinance that protects and balances the interests of all involved.

Sincerely,

Laura Morgan and Jim Seward, MDs,
Sebastopol

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From: [Judith Olney](#)
To: [Tennis Wick](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Fwd: PRSC Input on Feb 18,2021 Winery Event Public Workshop
Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021 8:24:25 PM
Attachments: [Feb 18 BreakOut Themes Final.pdf](#)
[PRMDPitchDeck v10 final 052716.pdf](#)

Just realized I didn't include you on the cc line - here's PRSC's input on the Workshop.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Judith Olney <milestonesmet@gmail.com>
Date: February 25, 2021 at 3:48:28 PM PST
To: Fifth District Supervisor Lynda Hopkins <lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org>, Susan Gorin <susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org>, David Rabbitt <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>, Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org, District4 <district4@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: PRSC Input on Feb 18,2021 Winery Event Public Workshop

February 24, 2021

To: Honorable Supervisors
From: Preserve Rural Sonoma County
cc: Tennis Wick and Georgia McDaniels

Honorable Supervisors,

Attached is Preserve Rural Sonoma County's (PRSC) input to the Administrative Record regarding Permit Sonoma's February 18th Winery Event Ordinance workshop. The general consensus is that common sense criteria versus semantics and wordplay prevailed.

The need for the Winery Event Ordinance grew out of concerns by local residents that the proliferation of tasting rooms and events in rural areas had gotten out of hand – resulting in significant public safety and environmental impacts. The objective was to address unauthorized promotional uses and create clear standards going forward to manage the scale and intensity of hospitality and events in Ag zones.

PRSC appreciates the efforts of Permit Sonoma, Planning Commissioners and the Supervisors to continue regulation of promotional uses in project approvals by clearly specifying the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting. Citizens rely on these criteria and standards to maintain the peace, safety, and wellbeing of our roads and neighborhoods.

To date, the wine industry has been unsuccessful in getting the County to roll-back or eliminate protective criteria and standards by reclassifying events as merely "tasting room activities," allowing daily events irrespective of tasting room hours. Such a reclassification would represent a significant expansion of entitlements for promotional uses over what is currently allowed in hundreds of Use Permits approved over the last several decades.

At the workshop, the public voiced a strong preference for continuing the County's current criteria and standards to classify events: 1. after tasting room hours, 2. amplified sound, 3. service of a meal, 4.

advertised to consumers, or 5. an admission fee. Also, the public voiced strong support for an additional criterion as to event size.

This workshop was attended by PRSC members familiar with the issue, as well as other neighbors and environmental advocates who viewed the issue from different perspectives. After gathering input from nearly all the breakout groups, the preponderance of evidence made the public's position abundantly clear. The Winery Event Ordinance must codify the County's long-standing practices for defining and specifying events in Use Permits or limited, periodic Zoning Permits that do not run with the land.

There is no justification to roll back standards by exempting large categories of promotional gatherings from regulation by simply changing the name. PRSC trusts the Chapter 26 zoning code update will reflect these protective criteria and standards.

Attachments:

1. PRSC Feb 18 Break-out Themes_Final. Pdf and
2. Vintner PRMD Pitch Deck v10_final_052716

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Themes from Breakout Sessions: Input to Countywide Ordinance with Definitions and Guidelines

Summary: Preserve Rural Sonoma County's (PRSC) input to the Administrative Record regarding Permit Sonoma's February 18th Winery Event Ordinance workshop. The general consensus is that common sense criteria versus semantics and wordplay prevailed.

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There is no justification to roll back standards by exempting large categories of promotional gatherings from regulation by simply changing the name. PRSC trusts the Chapter 26 zoning code update will reflect these protective criteria and standards.

Detailed PRSC Input: Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) invited its members and other coalition groups to the workshop, which resulted in several perspectives: 1) people involved since 2015; 2) neighbors with no history in winery events; and 3) advocates from environmental groups.

Problems with sign-in: Not all the people who wanted to attend could get the link or re-registration processes to work. Many of the people we invited were not able to attend.

PRSC is entering these themes into the Administrative Record as the breakout session report outs were rushed and may not have offered the full range of discussion.

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Summary: Preserve Rural Sonoma County's (PRSC) input to the Administrative Record regarding Permit Sonoma's February 18th Winery Event Ordinance workshop. The general consensus is that common sense criteria versus semantics and wordplay prevailed.

The need for the Winery Event Ordinance grew out of concerns by local residents that the proliferation of tasting rooms and events in rural areas had gotten out of hand – resulting in significant public safety and environmental impacts. The objective was to address unauthorized promotional uses and create clear standards going forward to manage the scale and intensity of hospitality and events in Ag zones. PRSC appreciates the efforts of Permit Sonoma, Planning Commissioners and the Supervisors to continue regulation of promotional uses in project approvals by clearly specifying the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting. Citizens rely on these criteria and standards to maintain the peace, safety, and wellbeing of our roads and neighborhoods.

To date, the wine industry has been unsuccessful in getting the County to roll-back or eliminate protective criteria and standards by reclassifying events as merely “tasting room activities,” allowing daily events irrespective of tasting room hours. Such a reclassification would represent a significant expansion of entitlements for promotional uses over what is currently allowed in hundreds of Use Permits approved over the last several decades.

At the workshop, the public voiced a strong preference for continuing the County's current criteria and standards to classify events: 1. after tasting room hours, 2. amplified sound, 3. service of a meal, 4. advertised to consumers, or 5. an admission fee. Also, the public voiced strong support for an additional criterion as to event size.

This workshop was attended by PRSC members familiar with the issue, as well as other neighbors and environmental advocates who viewed the issue from different perspectives. After gathering input from nearly all the breakout groups, the preponderance of evidence made the public's position abundantly clear. The Winery Event Ordinance must codify the County's long-standing practices for defining and specifying events in Use Permits or limited, periodic Zoning Permits that do not run with the land.

There is no justification to roll back standards by exempting large categories of promotional gatherings from regulation by simply changing the name. PRSC trusts the Chapter 26 zoning code update will reflect these protective criteria and standards.

Detailed PRSC Input: Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) invited its members and other coalition groups to the workshop, which resulted in several perspectives: 1) people involved since 2015; 2) neighbors with no history in winery events; and 3) advocates from environmental groups.

Problems with sign-in: Not all the people who wanted to attend could get the link or re-registration processes to work. Many of the people we invited were not able to attend.

PRSC is entering these themes into the Administrative Record as the breakout session report outs were rushed and may not have offered the full range of discussion.

Our debriefs included people from almost every break out group; we also learned that many of the small winery owner perspectives align with common sense event criteria. PRSC noted that only a few report outs, presumably from groups composed of winery representatives, voiced the “wine Industry definitions.”

PRSC poses two concerns:

1. Facilitators for these three groups were Tennis Wick, Georgia McDaniel, and Brian Oh, interestingly, key staff reiterated the wine industry position; (See Appendix A: Vintner July 2016 presentation to Supervisors) and
2. Winery owners and staff may be working with yesterday’s “direct-to-consumer” business model – not the evolving less-impactful models based on new demographics. (See Silicon Valley Bank reports from 2015 to present, including 20-year wrap-up [2021 State of the Wine Industry Report](#)). This is yesterday’s business model: the most recent changes, as noted by winery analysts, are away from on-site sales and into digital channels. Also, a change in demographics – smaller market as baby-boomers age and millennials are not at mid-30 wine drinking age yet.

PRSC debriefs revealed that those new to the debate - neighbors and environmental leaders - were a bit taken aback; they felt the framework left many of the more important issues. And, the consensus of environmental advocates was merely having CACs write guidelines does not exempt this work from CEQA review. Quotes from environmental advocates are in Appendix B.

County regulations regarding public safety and nuisances must be written by professionals with standards and guidelines to reduce impacts. Currently, it appears that only a few members of the wine industry are advocating that virtually nothing counts as an event; and the workshop provided more balanced input. In short, “... *discussion needs to be broader than just winery events... especially with cannabis wanting to join in the party...*”

History: In 2014, the wine industry was tasked to write their own rules on how to meet the General Plan requirement that the zoning code address the size, scale and intensity of hospitality uses on Ag lands. The industry prepared a position (see Appendix A) that basically exempts all hospitality uses except weddings, conventions, concerts and industry-wide event days from county oversight. In 2015, the County held Stakeholder group discussions and in 2017 professional-planning staff synthesized County findings in a presentation to the Planning Commission.

To this day, Use Permits generally use the long-standing definition of events: **An event is a hospitality use conducted at a winery or tasting room other than drop in or by appointment tasting, which involves any of the following criteria: service of a meal; after tasting room hours; admission fee charged; amplified sound or advertised to consumers.**

February 18, 2021 - Draft Framework: Questions for participants:

Q 1: what is missing from the draft Framework?

Q 2: what is a visitor-serving activity vs. a winery event?

The draft Framework sent out before the Feb 18th session was slightly different from the one used during the breakout sessions. The Framework presented in the breakouts (items 3 & 4) had a stronger bias to the wine industry position versus long-standing criteria and standards used by the County:

1) Placed “by-invitation release days and pickup parties” as “Visitor Serving Activities;”

2) Continued the allegation that “wine trade” meetings should have a categorical exemption regardless of size, scale or intensity – if it’s a tasting focused meeting, then why serve a meal vs. tasting bites.

3) Modified “meetings and harvest parties” with the word “staff” – a bit of a “red herring” as Staff-only gatherings (i.e., winery and vineyard staff sharing a beer and burger at picnic tables) have never been an issue. Harvest parties are events, whether members of wine club, trade, or public – consumers are coming to the winery/event center for wine tasting, food, hospitality and possibly music.

4) Changed long-standing zoning code language from “amplified sound” to a much narrower “outdoor amplified sound.”

Themes: Given the recaps were rushed, and break out groups composed differently, PRSC reached out to our coalition members who provided specific feedback on their break out room experience, what other stakeholders were in the group and the “take aways.” Most stated that small winery owners in their groups were reasonable, and large wineries sent business representatives.

Themes from 21 break out groups: about 17 appeared to be “balanced” with community members and small winery/tasting room owners, and 3-4 reported out the wine industry representative messages (Wine industry themes are in a separate listing below.

Balanced group themes, organized by frequency mentioned, include:

1. **Event defined by size - number of people is a key factor** – no matter what their business card or what time of day: A small table of people, be they restaurateurs or public, with tasting and small bite appetizers versus 30-50 “wine trade” members served a full meal, even at lunchtime. Significant logistical needs and advertising = an event.
2. **Pick up parties and release days are Events:** not a “day to day” tasting room activity – they are scheduled for date certain with invitations and “drop in” by large numbers of people. Even if they involve the opportunity to “taste” the wine – the size of the group and invitations signal an event. Industry event is definitely an event (overwhelming).
3. **Hours of Operation:** By definition, a tasting room event happens within tasting room hours and involves drop in and by appointment small groups. After hours is an event.
4. **Amplified Sound**, which should have been framed as Amplified Sound, definitely signals an event. One group noted that at after-hours events with even quiet acoustical music can be a problem.
5. **Road Safety:** Standards to consider impacts on joint use by bicycles and road safety issues created by long-duration drinking, especially drinking through the cocktail hour and up to 10 pm at night. Narrow, rural roads with speeding and impaired driving.
At least four groups brought up drinking and driving and road safety concerns. Data on Sonoma County’s DUI accident and death rates which trend twice the California average. Information on safety impacts to cyclists and fire safe road requirements. And, 1 group brought up Shuttles as a mitigation.
6. **Service of a Meal:** As food and wine go together, wine tasting is now preferred to be accompanied by food. (Note: 1996 change to zoning code was for small bite and pre-prepared appetizers). Noted that staff meals and small distributor meetings are not the issue. –Concerns expressed for local restaurants (2 groups), especially if meals are considered business operations vs. service at a specified number of events
7. **No enforcement – no monitoring of concentration of events:** Cumulative impact of events – no oversight as to over-concentration – no enforcement of traffic, after hours noise, number of events.

Event Coordination Software/ tracking requirement in Winery Use Permits – Staff referenced, yet has NOT been implemented: Event Coordination Software – County paid to create this program, which has been “piloted” in the Sonoma Valley Visitor’s Bureau and unused by wine industry in the Sonoma Valley Visitor’s Bureau

8. **Other Issues not directly related to Events:** 4 groups: **Groundwater Impacts** and at least 1 group: **Tasting room only permits** – usually on parcels under 5 acres - where the grapes are not processed on-site or wine is purchased elsewhere for sale in Sonoma County

Comments that don’t comply with General Plan – or meet red face test:

- Covid requirements – we have to serve a meal; thus, heretofore, meals are not an event: the ordinance should not take a temporary situation and codify it in perpetuity
- Wineries with chefs can serve meals all day and these are not events: General Plan is clear: restaurants, hotels and resorts are prohibited in Ag zones.

Themes from 3-4 wine industry-dominated groups: Perhaps it was by design that the facilitators were **Tennis Wick – Georgia McDaniels – Brian Oh** so report outs for industry-dominated groups stated the wine industry position.

3. **2 groups including Tennis: Numeric Criteria for events with physical offsite impact:** Industry-wide events, weddings, dances...**reiterated the Wine Industry position – only weddings etc. (non ag promotion events) are the only events that the County can regulate.**
4. **No Regulations – Flexibility, but all entitlements run in perpetuity: County shouldn’t restrict and is clueless at how hard it is to run a winery.** Unleashing more destructive competition is hurting winery bottom lines – Napa county exemplifies how regulation benefits business viability.
Quote: “...my group never even got around to discussion of “what is an event” as they spent the entire time canoodling one another and crying about how hard it was to be regulated.”
5. **Three groups stated: Size of parcel and scale of winery production should dictate standards.** Large properties or those located near major highways request a focus on off-site impacts. The County already specifies a larger number of events based on location and site characteristics.
6. **Some Use Permits are “silent” and should be Grandfathered** – State Zoning code is clear silence is not permission. Many were written when events were prohibited – should require a Use Permit Modification.
7. **Focus on Industry-wide Events, which is not the issue. The issue is large or a concentration of individual winery events – Size of parcel, Parking and Scale of Facility matter:** Generally, the public has not complained as much about the 10-15 industry wide event days – other than on-road parking and congestion.

Q 2: Siting Criteria: Few groups got into siting criteria yet noted the criteria missed information on:

- environmental impacts (water, GHGs, wastewater, herbicides)
- neighborhood compatibility – “peaceful enjoyment of one’s land,
- road safety/ traffic, and parking - need to consider safety: cyclists’ safety and safety from DUIs
- scenic corridor and rural character
- need better plan for monitoring and enforcement; enforcement criteria
- need to look at cumulative impacts

Appendix A – Vintner July 2016 Presentation to the Board of Supervisors

Appendix B – Concerns about broader General Plan and need for CEQA review Quotes:

“...it is about the original intent of the General Plan. People buy property and establish themselves according to the zoning and what it allows. Developers and the County treat the GP as a rule set to be "gamed" instead of a serious boundary demarcation to be adhered to.”

“Notably I said that there is no good reason to have promotional events at the wineries. They should be conducted in hotels, restaurants and convention centers away from the production facilities, which should be limited to production only, notwithstanding environmental impacts, pesticides, drought, etc, etc. ... the county has grossly failed to observe Gen Plan limits on wine production - that should become the larger issue in the debate and before CEQA vs. so-called “entitlements” or not.”

“ ...realized the workshop was about how to conduct the business of wine events and, apparently, not getting feedback on how to address the social and environmental impacts...pertinent issues were not even being addressed for discussion. In CEQA, there are two important issues besides addressing localized impacts— cumulative impacts watershed-wide and the assessment of viable alternatives to the winery events. Are there alternatives to having wine events on-site and what are they?”

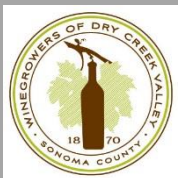
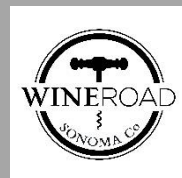
“...the issue is what measures should be adopted to “minimize” all the local, regional, county-wide impacts. There seems to be winery biz bubble where serious impacts don’t happen or matter outside their business model.”

“Will this ordinance go through CEQA? Apparently, the sole task of the workshop was to define “event.” The industry hopes for no regulation of “gatherings and activities” - It’s all “ag-related” per industry’s modern economic model...if about Ag, strange we were NOT supposed to discuss the “key issues” of commercialization of ag lands, preservation of rural character, neighborhood compatibility, or water/noise/traffic...quoting from County’s slide, which ticked off those items as mere background to the real task at hand... What?! Many of us raised these issues anyway.”

We Are Sonoma County

SONOMA
COUNTY

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, July 2016



Objective

Ensure long-term preservation of agriculture in Sonoma County by effectively managing impacts of agricultural promotional events and tourism.

- Accept and adopt Activities and Events definitions.
- Adopt and promote Best Practices for winery Activities and Events.
- Create position of Oversight and Compliance Manager to respond to community impact concerns and resolve disputes.



Importance of Agriculture Heritage in the County



- **Agriculture Heritage – wine continues this heritage**
 - *“It is the declared policy of this county to conserve, protect, enhance, and encourage agricultural operations on agricultural land within the unincorporated area of the county. Further, it is the intent of this county to provide its residents proper notification of the county's recognition and support, through this article, of the right to farm”*
 - 1999 Sonoma County Right To Farm Ordinance (Ord. No. 5203, Findings)
- **“Commercial Agriculture”** - must be commercial for the land to stay in farming
- **6% of Sonoma County (58,280 acres) is planted in vineyards**
- **80% of vineyard properties are 100 acres or less**
- **40% of vineyards are 20 acres or less**
- **71% of Sonoma County farms are 50 acres or less**
- **85% of Sonoma County vineyards are family owned**
 - Source: 2nd Annual Sonoma County Winegrowers Sustainability report.

Is Rural Character Defined by Agriculture or Residential Use?

- Preservation of agricultural land preserves rural character
- Issue is residential use of agricultural land
- Issue is not use of agricultural land for selling agricultural products



Economic Impact

- **\$13.4 billion** contribution by wineries and grape growers to the local economy in 2012
- **54,297 full-time** equivalent jobs
- **\$3.2 billion** in total **wages** paid
- **\$1.82 billion** spent in 2014 by **visitors**
- **\$25+ million** contributed by Sonoma County wineries and winegrowers to over **125 local charitable** causes and organizations
- **\$4.3 million** contributed the last three years for *Sonoma Wine Country Weekend's "Fund The Future" Literacy Fund*

Sources:

- Visit California 2015 "California Travel Impacts, 1992-2014" by Dean Runyon Associates
- Annual Tourism Report, 2015 Sonoma County Economic Development Board
- Stonebridge Research, 2012 Sonoma County Economic Impact Study
- 2nd Annual Sonoma County Winegrowers Sustainability Report
- Sonoma Wine Country Weekend
- Santa Rosa Press Democrat, January 2016



General Public Opinion

2015 Survey of Registered Voters Conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates:

- *“Do you feel that local vineyards and wineries have an overall positive or negative impact on the quality of life Sonoma County?”*
 - 81% of registered voters “feel strongly that the wine industry has an overall positive impact on the local quality of life.”
- *“Sonoma County vineyards and wineries play an important role in strengthening the local economy and providing jobs?”*
 - 91% of respondents strongly or somewhat agree with this statement.

2015 Sonoma State University Study:

- 83% of respondents said that wine businesses help to create a mostly positive image for Sonoma County.
- 88% of respondents said that wineries have a very positive or positive impact on the quality of life in Sonoma County.

Sources:

- Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates survey, 2015 (401 Interviews with registered voters)
- Sonoma State University, 2015 (221 respondents)



Shift In Sales Model

Wineries of all sizes need Activities and Events to support sales and distribution

Constricted Three Tier Distribution Channel:
(Winery – Wholesaler - Restaurant / Retailer)

- Fewer distributors
 - 20 years ago, 3000 distributors, now 675, forcing extreme competitive landscape
 - Vast majority of wineries can't get distribution

Direct to Consumer (DTC) – (Tasting Room – Wine Clubs – Consumer)

- Dramatic changes in DTC sales since 2005 United States Supreme Court ruling (*Granholm v. Heald*) which opened up DTC sales across the country
- 60% of smaller winery sales rely on DTC
- Increasing importance of consumer experience

“Direct-to-Consumer sales will continue as the largest growth channel for most wineries.”

Silicon Valley Bank - State of the Wine Industry 2016

- Source: Moss Adams Winery & Grower Report, 2015



Sonoma County General Plan

2020 – Agricultural Resources Element

- 2.1 Assist in the Marketing and promotion of Sonoma Counties Agricultural Products: “Successful promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in Sonoma County can both enhance the County’s image and reduce economic pressure on farmers and ranchers to subdivide or convert the land to nonagricultural uses.”
- GOAL AR-1: Promote a healthy and competitive agricultural industry whose products are recognized as being produced in Sonoma County.
- Objective AR-1.1: Create and facilitate opportunities to promote and market all agricultural products grown or processed in Sonoma County.
- Objective AR-1.2: Permit marketing of products grown and/or processed in Sonoma County in all areas designated for agricultural use.
- The following policies shall be used to achieve these objectives:
- Policy AR-1a: Permit a wide variety of promotional and marketing activities of County grown and processed products.

Clear Definitions are Needed

- The **Wine Community** proposes a standard set of definitions that clarifies the distinction between an Activity and an Event.
- An **“Activity”** is a core business function. Activities are low impact and go along with existing capacities, noise level limitations and parking allowances. Activities include winemaker lunches and dinners, release parties, trade tastings, food and wine educational pairings and are generally by invitation. Under these definitions, an **“Event”** has a higher impact and includes Passport, Barrel Tasting, and other large gatherings for a special purpose.
- The Wine Community believes these definitions will support **existing County policy** to encourage the promotion, marketing and sale of agricultural products, and protect Sonoma County’s agricultural character and long term health and viability.



DEFINITIONS : ACTIVITIES

“Direct Sales Activity” are:

- Normal wine business activities such as wine lunches, after-hours winemaker dinners, release parties, and wine pick-up days. These activities occur by invitation only and are for the purpose of marketing, promoting and selling wine and building and strengthening relationships with customers. They may include political and charitable events for the purpose of strengthening relationships within the community.

“Public Sales Operations” are:

- Wine tasting, tours, food and wine educational pairings and other hospitality related activities supporting the promotion of wine sales that are open to the general public. Such activities are subject to the Use Permit which sets the hours of operation, occupancy limits and operational requirements.

“Trade Marketing Activity” includes:

- Invitation only activities with staff, trade or distribution partners.

DEFINITIONS: EVENTS

“Association Sponsored Event” is:

- An event sponsored by a recognized organization to promote wine sales and tourism to the region
- Conducted across multiple sites within a specified geographic area
- Requiring all participating wineries to meet the organization's criteria for participation.

“Sonoma County Showcase Event “is:

- An event promoted to the general public showcasing Sonoma County’s commitment to agriculture & local food, arts, culture and the community with a focus on community building and cultural benefit.
- Less than a single day in duration, are not included in the Use Permit, may exceed the applicable occupancy requirements and may require temporary measures, if determined necessary (e.g. portable toilets, notification of neighbors, traffic & parking plans, sound monitoring).
- Approved with a Zoning Permit and do not run with the land.

“Use-Permitted Event” is:

- An event not included in Definitions and may include corporate events and weddings.
- Less than a single day and the number of which and size of which shall be identified in the Use Permit and subject to applicable occupancy and operational requirements.

Best Practices & New Solutions

Existing Best Practices

- Cap the number of tickets to large events
- Stagger start times/locations/date
- Responsible Hospitality
- Industry Wide Education
 - Develop and distribute to Sonoma County wineries a list of responsible event management Best Practices.

New Best Practices

- Dedicated winery contact during events
- Contact number available on winery's website
- Create Oversight & Compliance Manager



Best Practices & New Solutions

“Making Change Happen!”

Oversight & Compliance Manager

- Create new paid position
 - Sonoma County Events Oversight & Compliance Manager
- Roles and responsibilities
 - On-call nights and weekends
 - Investigates / resolves disputes
 - Does not replace PRMD Code Enforcement
 - Oversees all events including bike races, runs, etc.



Cumulative Impacts / Concentration

Cumulative Impacts:

- Cumulative impacts are considered as part of the winery permitting process and include measurable impacts such as traffic and noise.

Concentration:

- Wineries shall work with PRMD to define areas of “concentration” based on actual statistics and documented impacts.
- Consideration given to use of formal County-sanctioned groups to review applications submitted in defined areas of high impact, *i.e.*, Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council and Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission.
- Recognize facility capacities of parking, access and sound standards in high impact areas.



Summary

1. County voters already know about the economic benefits that grape growers and wineries bring to the County and its rural character.
 - *“Impressions of the Wine Industry in Sonoma County”*, Fairbank et al. Study July 24, 2015
2. Accept and adopt activities and events definitions for PRMD.
3. Industry adopts and promotes Best Practices for winery Activities and Events.
4. Create position of Oversight and Compliance Manager to address community impact concerns and resolve disputes.



From: [Deb Preston](#)
To: [Andrea Krout](#); [district4](#); [district5](#); [district3](#); [Susan Gorin](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance Workshop
Date: Friday, February 26, 2021 4:16:12 PM

Dear Honorable Supervisors;

I attended the Zoom workshop last week and would like to offer further comments.

I'm a longtime Sebastopol resident and strongly resist further expansion of entitlements/further concentration in Ag zones. Like the members of the public in my breakout group, I do support continuance of the County's current events definition: Meal service; After Tasting-Room hours; Amplified sound; Admission fees, or outside advertisement. These protections are crucial in preserving quality of life and safety for residents.

We residents are being asked to 'be a good sport' as to the wine industry so that they may continue development on Ag land that is quickly becoming outdated due to the fact that younger citizens aren't as interested in wine as older ones and the fact that the majority of brick-and-mortar businesses have gone to an online marketing model. Yet winery owners insist they must have more and more events, buildings and parking lots.

To address my specific concerns:

1) I do not wish to see wineries offering full meals at tastings and if they do, it should be defined as an event. Small appetizers and snacks are okay. It is crucial that we support our local restaurants, whose survival is difficult enough. In my breakout group two smaller wineries were represented; one owner opined that meals are needed for the safety of guests who have imbibed too much. In this example how is a winery unlike a bar? Why should it receive breaks that bars don't and not have to take responsibility for how much people drink? A restaurant kitchen with all its comings and goings will further contribute to the deterioration of our rural neighborhoods.

2) As to amplified sound, I do not support classifying it as a visitor-serving activity, whether indoor or outdoor. Noise is not required to sell wine and is disruptive to neighbors.

3) As to after-tasting room hours, ditto the above. Nighttime events are not necessary to sell wine. Our rural roads weren't designed and aren't lit sufficiently to accommodate visitors under the influence who are unfamiliar with the territory. It's a public safety issue.

4) I do not support more lodging of any type on Ag land.

5) "By-invitation only release and pickup parties", "wine trade meetings" and "harvest parties" should absolutely be defined as Events and not visitor-serving. I have no problem with staff **only** meetings.

I appreciate the work Permit Sonoma has put into this ordinance, after so many years; yet I would wonder how it is possible to consider redefining events as visitor-serving activities,

when there is no enforcement? How will you know what is happening? And what about when the Cannabis Industry gets going full bore?

So many of the concerns of residents were not addressed in the meeting, and one in particular: Water. There is just not enough to go around.

Sincerely,
Deborah Preston
Sebastopol

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County of Sonoma Agenda Item Summary Report

Clerk of the Board
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Agenda Item Number:
(This Section for use by Clerk of the Board Only.)

Board of Supervisors

July 12, 2016

No Vote Required

Permit and Resource Management

Jennifer Barrett 565-2336

All

Winery Events Study Session

Receive a presentation on the County's winery promotional and event activities and adopt a Resolution of Intention directing staff to prepare a draft ordinance addressing the key winery event issues.

The purpose of this study session is to provide the Board with an overview of the County's wine industry trends from a regulatory perspective and adopted General Plan policies that guide visitor serving uses. This report summarizes key issues that have emerged and the policy options that could reduce the potential for neighborhood conflicts and provide more certainty to the permitting process for operators. Staff requests that your Board consider the report and presentation and adopt a Resolution of Intention directing staff to prepare a draft ordinance to amend the Zoning Code to include development criteria and standards for winery events.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

The wine industry is the largest agricultural sector in Sonoma County with 62,135 acres of vineyards producing a crop value of \$442 million. The total estimated retail value of wine produced in Sonoma County is estimated at \$7.6 billion. Wine-related tourism is the largest sector of the Sonoma County economy generating more than \$1.25 billion in 2012. The wine industry contributes an estimated \$13.4 billion annually in local economic value and provides over 54,000 jobs. Agriculture is also a critical driver in preserving open space and rural character. Important Farmlands mapped by the State Dept. of Conservation which include all irrigated cropland, comprise 15 percent of the total land area in Sonoma County.

Business Need

Due to the decline of distributors across the country, the wine industry has increasingly shifted the mode of wine marketing to focus on direct-to-consumer sales. This shift has driven an increase in promotional activities and events that bring customers to agricultural areas for wine release parties, winemaker dinners, open house and industry-wide events and other gatherings that have, in some situations, resulted in neighborhood impacts and potential land use conflicts. As part of the review of the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan in 2015, the Board directed staff to work with industry and stakeholder groups to develop county-wide standards for promotional activities and events on agricultural lands balancing wine industry needs and protecting neighborhood character; and address land use compatibility issues due to local concentrations of events in some areas, particularly Sonoma Valley, Dry Creek Valley, and Westside Road.

Stakeholder Input

The PRMD Director formed a Working Group of stakeholders that met for six months to review existing policies and zoning provisions and inform staff of key issues and policy options. Following the Working Group meetings, staff conducted a large public workshop attended by an estimated 500 people and received written comments from various groups. Staff reviewed regulations from other counties, completed an audit of use permits issued to date, updated the winery database and contracted with a qualified traffic and noise consultants to assist with the analysis. The traffic and noise reports are currently in progress.

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

An Agricultural Resources Element was added to the General Plan in 1989 to strengthen the county's policies to protect agricultural lands and support farming. The General Plan Agricultural Resources Element contains several goals, objectives, policies and programs intended to balance competing interests while maintaining the rural character of the area. Relevant General Plan policies are provided in Attachment 1 and include:

Policy AR-6a: Permit visitor serving uses in agricultural categories that promote agricultural production in the County, such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production. Limit recreational uses to the "Land Extensive Agriculture" and "Diverse Agriculture" categories, specifically to bed and breakfast inns and campgrounds of 30 or fewer sites.

Policy AR-6f: Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses, and agricultural support uses as defined in Goal AR-5, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:

- (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.

(2) *Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.*

(3) *Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.*

Policy AR-6g:

Define in the Development Code compatible visitor serving uses such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events which support and are incidental to local agricultural production, and define their permissible sizes and intensities.

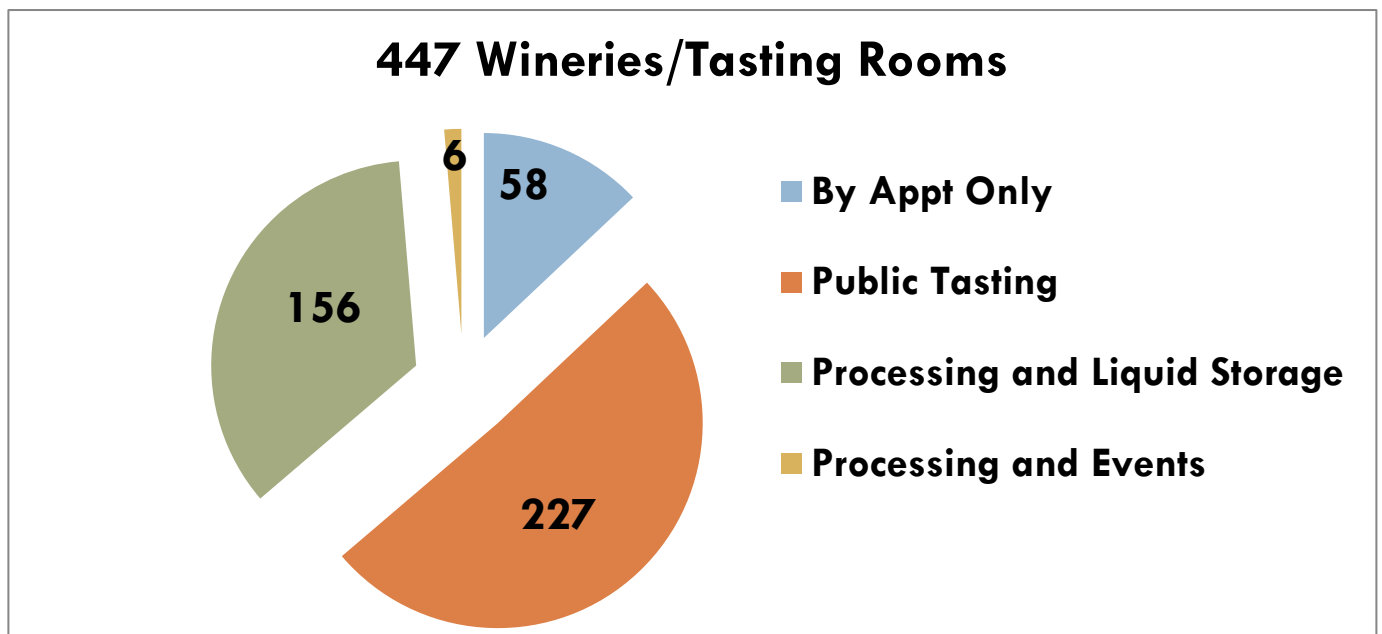
In accordance with General Plan policies, all event activities in agricultural and resource areas must promote local agricultural products and be secondary and incidental to local production. The key policy question that has been raised is:

What should be the permissible sizes and intensities for these types of promotional activities in agricultural areas?

Permit Requirements

Prior to 1989, the zoning code allowed agricultural cultivation by right and retail sales and tasting rooms with a use permit, but did not allow events or promotional activities. In 1989, the Agricultural Resources Element was added to the General Plan, which included a change in policy allowing agricultural promotional activities on agricultural lands where compatible with long-term agricultural use of the land. These policies were implemented in the 1993 zoning code update, which allows sales and promotion of agricultural products with a use permit, as well as occasional cultural events with an administrative zoning permit.

Figure 1: Permitted Wineries and Tasting Rooms June 2016

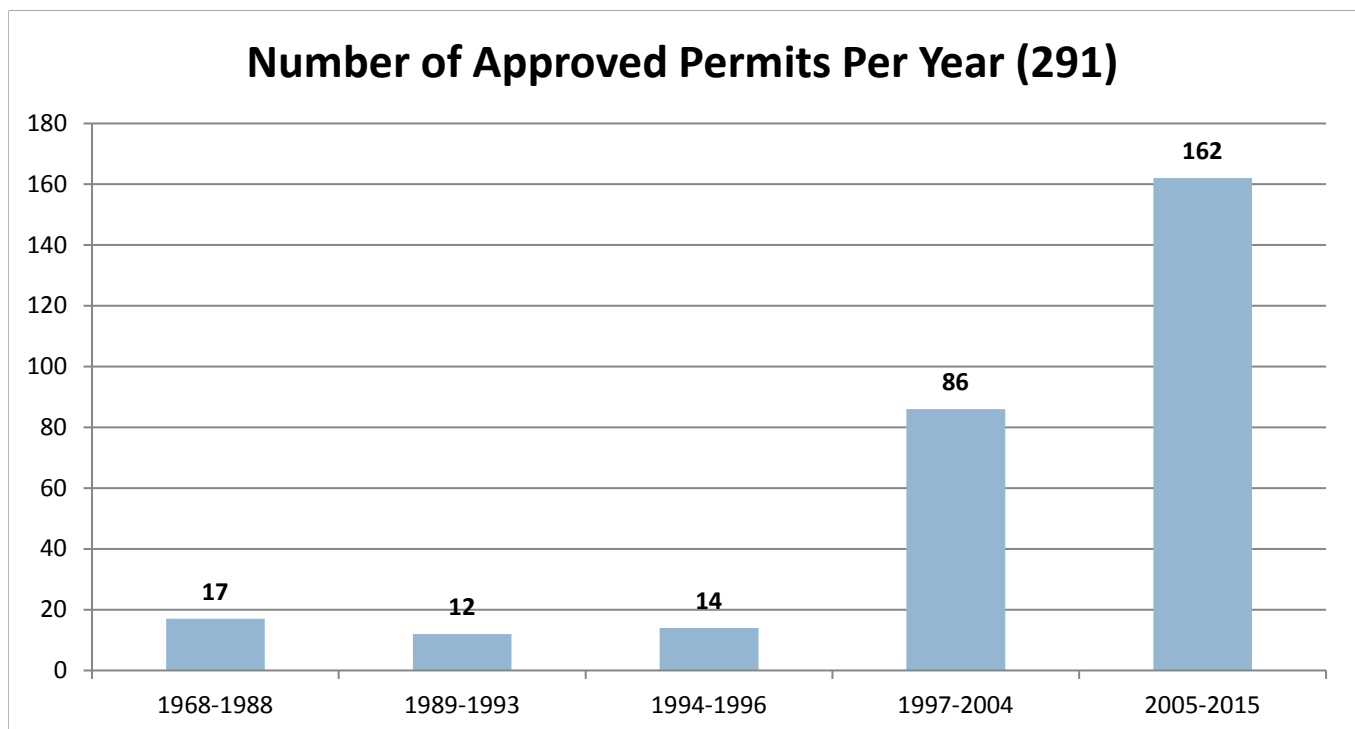


As of June 2016, there were 447 permitted wine-related facilities including 227 public tasting rooms, 58 by-appointment-only tasting rooms, 156 liquid storage or processing only wineries and 6 processing only with events, as shown in Figure 1. Most of the permitted tasting rooms are allowed to participate in industry-wide events (unless prohibited in the use permit). Use permits also specify other promotional activities and events depending upon site constraints and marketing plans of the operator.

Active Permits by Year

Excluding the liquid storage and processing only permits, there are 291 active permits for winery or tasting rooms with potential for event activities. As can be seen in Figure 2 below, the number of use permits related to events has risen sharply since the 1993 code amendments with 262 use permits issued. As many wineries have applied for modifications to their use permits, there are only 29 wineries currently operating in Sonoma County with use permits issued prior to 1993. Since 2005, 166 permits have been issued with 101 permits for new wineries or tasting rooms and 65 modifications to prior use permits. Of the 65 modifications to prior permits, 38 were for addition of events or tasting rooms to existing wineries.

Figure 2: Winery and Tasting Room Permits Approved by Year



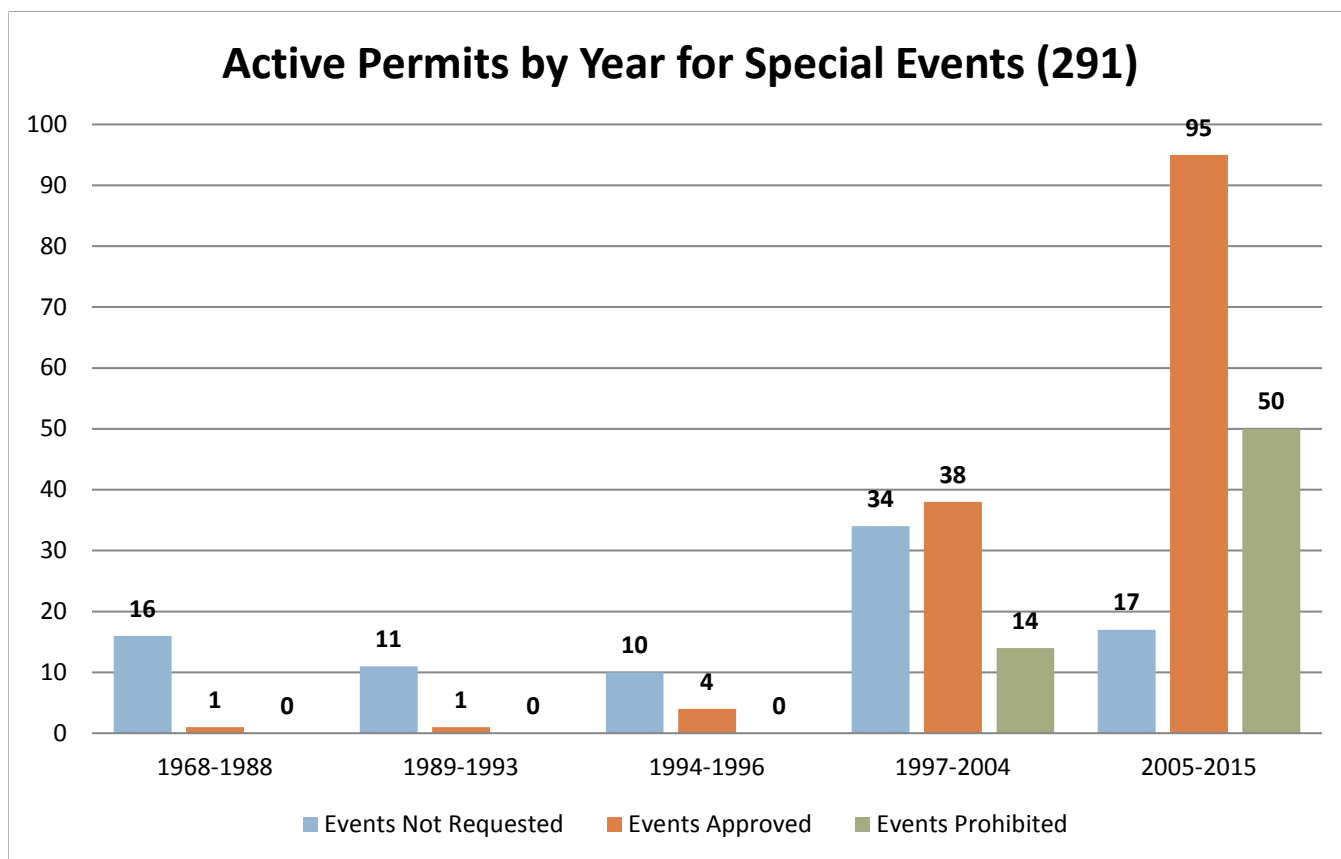
Permitted Event Activity

As illustrated in Figure 3 below, most event activity has been approved since 1993, the year zoning code amendments were adopted to allow promotional activities and events with a use permit. Of the 291 winery/tasting room permits issued since 1968, a total of 139 winery/tasting room permits are approved to hold special events (48 percent). Another 88 winery/tasting room permits did not request special events and were not approved for events (30 percent). In addition, 64 winery/tasting room permits are specifically prohibited from hosting special events due to site constraints (22 percent). With one

exception, all event activity noted in use permits has been approved since the 1989 General Plan update to allow promotional activities. The one exception is an historic winery that was conditioned to obtain administrative approval (i.e. cultural event permits) for special events.

Winery and tasting room use permit approvals have analyzed the impacts of promotional activities and events in terms of traffic, noise, lighting and neighborhood compatibility and established conditions to ensure land use compatibility. Industry-wide events have been allowed at most public tasting rooms, unless events are specifically prohibited in the use permit. Some permits limit events to industry-wide only either because the site is constrained or because the owner did not want to conduct other events.

Figure 3: Active Permits with Special Events



Winery Database Audit

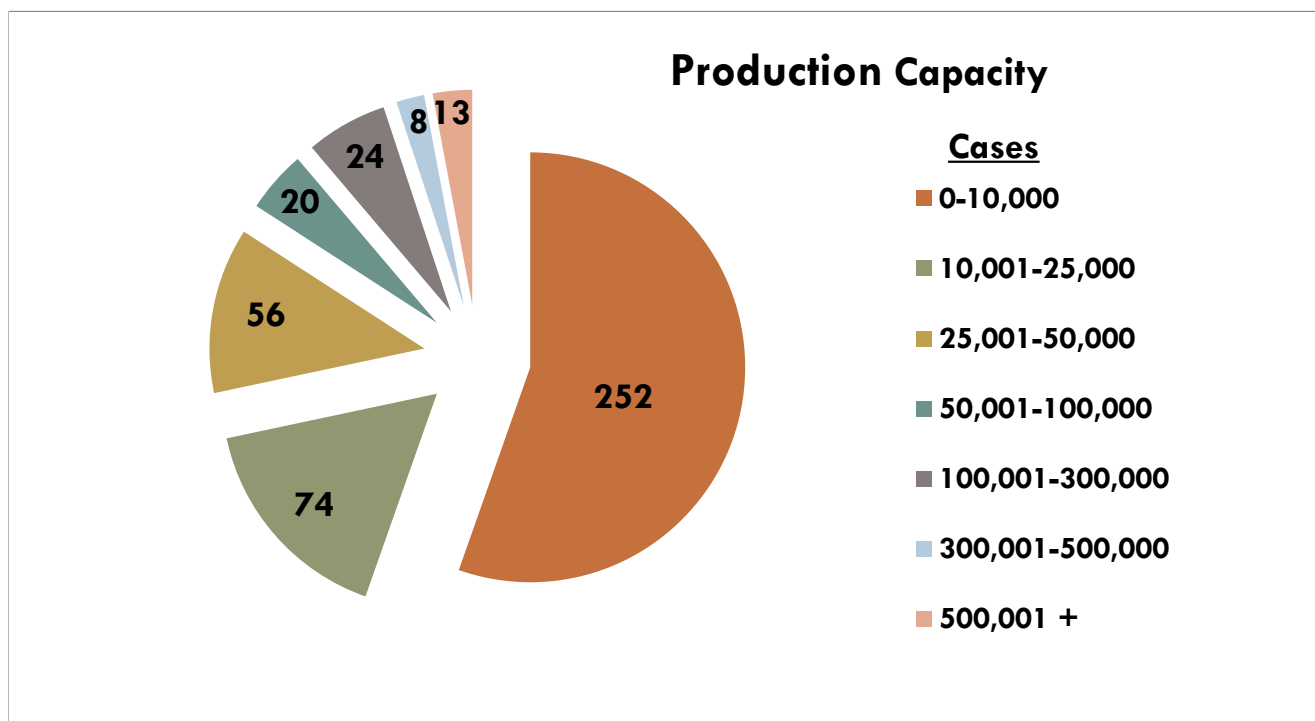
Following the Working Group discussion, staff conducted an audit of the winery database to verify the number of events allowed of the remaining 291 winery or tasting room use permits. During this audit, staff separated industry-wide events from permitted special or agricultural promotional events and focused on review of use permits that were silent or that prohibited events. Staff reviewed the original proposal statements, environmental documents, traffic studies, technical reports, staff reports, resolutions and the conditions of approval for each winery and if any indication was identified that events were proposed, evaluated or planned, staff corrected the database. Staff also reviewed websites and social media to determine if there were unpermitted events advertised or otherwise promoted at

wineries whose use permits were silent or did not allow events. Staff found that the majority (92 percent) of the wineries without permitted events appeared to be in compliance with their use permits.

Production Capacity

Most of the wineries in Sonoma County are small, producing less than 50,000 cases of wine annually as shown in Figure 4. An estimated 56 percent of all wineries produce less than 10,000 cases of wine. Another 17 percent produce 10,000 to 25,000 cases; and, 13 percent produce 25,000 to 50,000 cases. Only 15 percent of all wineries in Sonoma County have production capacity greater than 50,000 cases.

Figure 4: Production Capacity



LOCAL CONCENTRATIONS

Figure 5 illustrates the type of wineries by viticultural area. The Russian River appellation is the largest comprising over 126,000 acres of land, including 15,000 acres of planted vineyard and 105 approved wineries. In contrast, the Dry Creek Valley appellation comprises approximately 20,000 acres of land, including 9,000 acres planted with 79 approved wineries. Sonoma Valley AVA comprises 60,200 acres of land, including 10,250 acres of vineyard with 82 approved wineries. Alexander Valley comprises approximately 32,500 acres of land, with 15,000 acres of vineyard and has 63 approved wineries.

Figure 5: Type of Winery by Viticultural Area

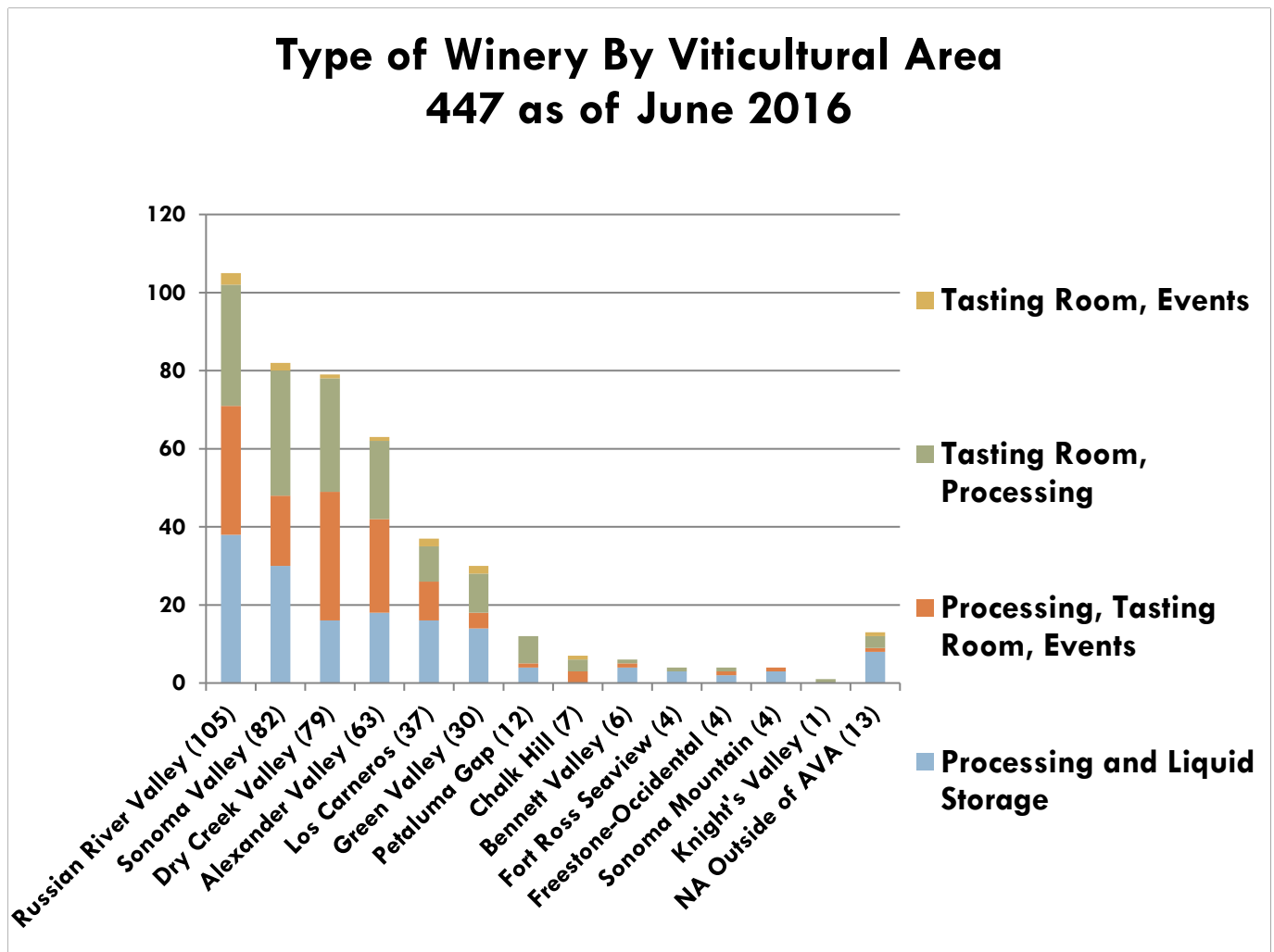
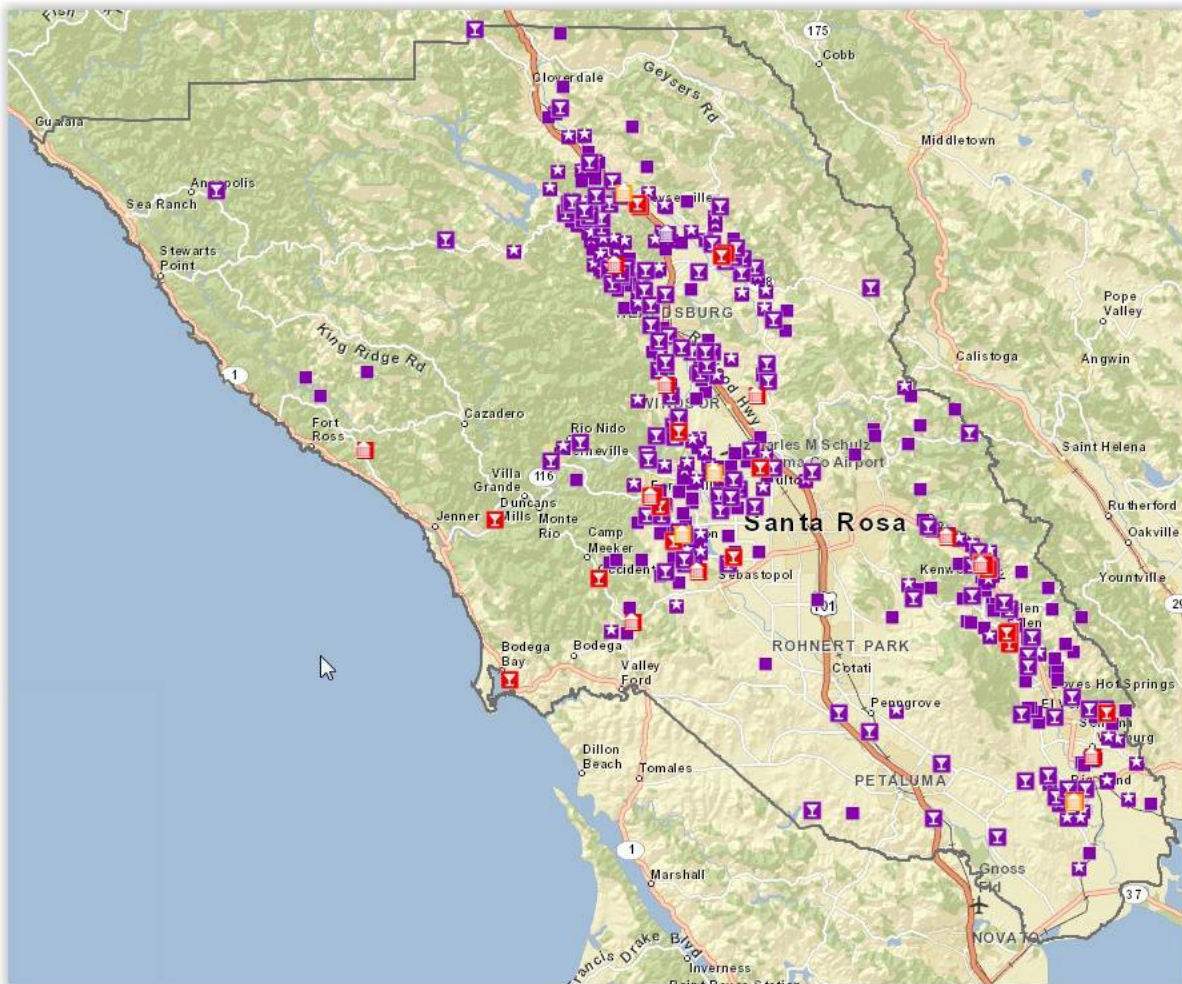


Figure 6: Sonoma County Viticultural Appellations



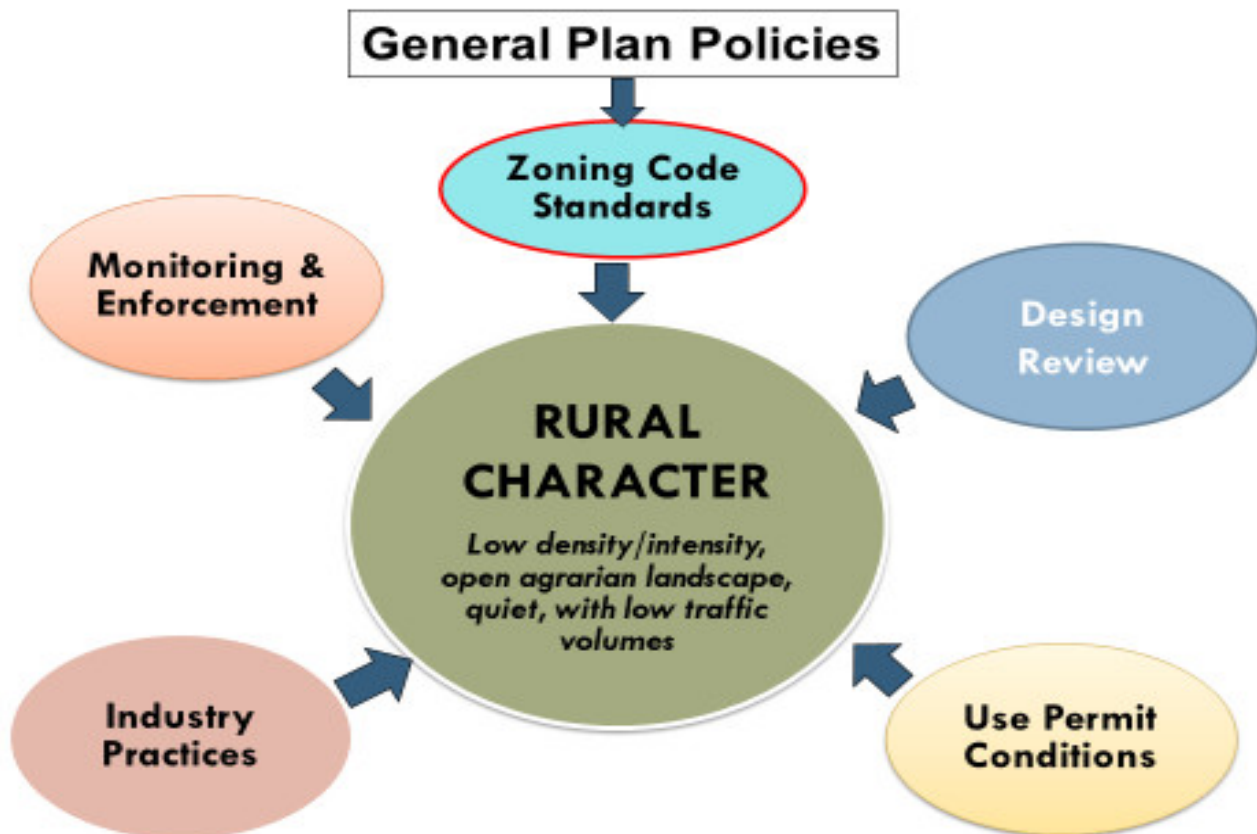
Local concentration of wine facilities occur primarily in the prime wine growing regions of the Russian River/Westside Road Area, Dry Creek, Sonoma and Alexander Valleys as illustrated in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7: Approved Winery and Tasting Room Sites



The General Plan includes existing policies that address local concentration of visitor serving uses. General Plan Policy AR-6f states that local concentrations of visitor serving uses, even if related to agriculture, are detrimental to agricultural use of the land and should be avoided. The General Plan also includes factors to consider when evaluating detrimental concentration of uses:

- Road conflicts – traffic conflicting with pedestrians, bicyclists and local neighborhood motorists;
- Traffic levels that exceed General Plan objectives on a specific or cumulative basis;
- Groundwater impacts to the aquifer and surrounding neighbor's wells; and
- Rural character – whether the uses would be detrimental to rural character.



Many people describe rural character as low density/intensity development, open agrarian landscape, quiet, with low traffic volumes. There are many factors and tools that can be used to maintain rural character, including:

- Zoning Code standards that address operating standards and cumulative impacts;
- Design Review process assures that project architecture, building materials, site layout, lighting and landscaping compliment rural character environment;
- Use Permit conditions of approval address site specific and operation impacts such as hours of operation, limits on number of events, limits on number of visitors at events;
- Industry Practices – such as effective traffic and parking controls that limit impacts to the surrounding neighborhood; and,
- Monitoring and Enforcement is a County responsibility to address Use Permit condition of approval compliance.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts can result from several facilities conducting events in the same area or along the same route. Cumulative impacts are small incremental effects that are not significant by themselves, but may be significant when added together with the impacts of past, present, and probable future projects. For example, one small winery might request 10 events with 50 people in 20 cars, which may not be considered significant at a project level. But if 80 other permits in the local area have similar events, those 10 events become 800 events per year; 50 people becomes 4,000 people at a time; or 1,600 cars generating 3,200 trips. Cumulative impacts related to traffic, rural character, or other resources can be addressed at a policy or zoning level to apply equitably and fairly to new uses going forward.

EVENT DEFINITION

One of the issues that emerged during the public outreach is the differing opinions among industry and neighborhood groups over what is considered “an event” and thus subject to the limitations in the use permits. Promotional activities and events are generally the most intensive activities for many wineries involving increases in traffic, noise, and concentrations of people in an otherwise quiet rural setting. While the number and type of events allowed at each site are generally described in the approved proposal statements, technical reports and use permit conditions, some older use permits are not as specific. Industry representatives have stated that many marketing staff and tasting room managers are unaware of the conditions in their respective use permits, or may interpret the language differently than staff or the Board.

In response, staff conducted an audit and review of each winery use permit in order to update the database and determine how events have been defined in proposal statements and each use permit. The review indicates a fairly consistent approach using several criteria for defining an allowed agricultural promotional or special event. Past permits indicate that an event is generally any activity conducted at a winery or tasting room for the education, marketing, sale and promotion of wine involving groups other than drop-in or by-appointment tasting, including activities involving any of the following:

- Service of full meals (other than food and wine pairing as discussed below);
- Outside the tasting room hours of operation;
- Fee for event;
- Entertainment, music, outdoor amplified sound, or similar activities; or
- Advertised to consumers (via web, press, radio, flyers, or email, including wine club members or other similar mailing lists or targeted groups).

EVENT TYPES

Many use permits distinguish between different types of winery promotional activities and events. One approach is to categorize the different types of promotional activities as follows:

Industry-wide events: Promotional activities sponsored by a recognized industry organization that involve multiple tasting rooms. Special event permits are required to be obtained by the industry

sponsor and participation is limited to public tasting rooms, unless otherwise restricted by use permit. Industry-wide events can be limited to a specified number of days per year in any given appellation or area. Within Agricultural Preserve areas, events are limited to no more than 2 consecutive days to conform to the County's Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserve and Farmland Security Zones.

Agricultural promotional event: Events that are directly related to the education and marketing of wine to consumers including but not limited to: winemaker dinners, release parties, and wine club parties. These are the primary types of events permitted in agricultural areas.

Business trade activities: Business trade meetings with distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners, and employees of the winery are not counted as events.

Private and other events: Weddings/receptions, corporate retreat/dinners, private parties, concerts, film or theatrical presentations, and charitable or political fundraising events allow for the sale of wine, but the wine related content is subordinate to the primary purpose of the event. These types of event activities have been prohibited or limited in number in many use permits.

KEY ISSUES

A number of issues and concerns have emerged that focus on several key areas including:

- Wine-Industry Business Needs
- Neighborhood Compatibility
- Impacts of Noise, Traffic, Water
- Commercialization of Agricultural Lands
- Preserving Rural Character/Local Concentrations
- Monitoring and Enforcement
- Existing Wineries

Winery Event Working Group

The Winery Event Working Group was comprised of individuals representing both industry and neighborhood groups who met over a five month period to provide input to staff on the key issues and possible options. While the group did not agree on many of the policy options identified, there were areas of general agreement that emerged through the discussions as noted by staff including:

- Event Coordination is needed.
- Industry-wide events must follow best management practices.
- Event areas need to meet General Plan Noise standards.
- Parking management and queuing must be on site.

- No stand-alone tasting rooms – must have agricultural processing or production on-site.
- No third-party rentals.
- Allow food and wine pairing during tasting room hours.
- Public access roads must meet safety standards.

POLICY OPTIONS

Development criteria and standards can be used to balance the needs of the wineries with the general welfare of neighboring property owners while maintaining the rural character and integrity of agricultural lands. Staff compiled ordinances from other jurisdictions to review the development criteria and performance standards commonly used in zoning as noted in the Summary of Other Jurisdictions provided in Attachment 2. The following discussion closely follows the Summary of Other Jurisdictions table for ease of reference. Different standards could be developed for areas of local concentration. The criteria and standards would be applied only to new applications received after the effective date of the ordinance. New regulations establishing criteria and standards would not affect any vested rights in previously approved use permits.

SITING AND DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA

Development or siting criteria are often used to ensure that a site is suitable for the type of use proposed. Siting and development criteria are effective means of addressing impacts because they focus on the site design and physical features, rather than operational behaviors. Site development criteria address the impacts by-design and are easy to enforce at the outset, whereas operational conditions apply on an ongoing basis. The following discussion highlights siting and development criteria used in other jurisdictions and outlines policy options.

Minimum Site Area: A minimum site area or lot size is often used to disperse development intensities and ensure that cumulative impacts are minimized. Minimum site area requirements could be applied only to event areas, or could be applied as development criteria for new tasting rooms and wineries. Minimum site area or lot sizes could ensure sufficient space between more intensive land uses and disperse traffic and noise. However, a larger minimum site area could also limit the ability of owners of smaller parcels to conduct events. The minimum lot size for commercial agriculture is 10 acres of land with a minimum of 6 acres planted under the County’s Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves. Minimum parcel sizes in the Zoning Code range from 10 acres (Diverse Agriculture) to 20 acres (Land Intensive Agriculture). However, many parcels in agricultural zones are smaller than the minimum lot size required for creation of new parcels due to historic subdivisions. The Land Extensive Agriculture zone allows clustering with a 1.5 acre minimum parcel size. The range of minimum lot sizes indicated in the Summary of Other Jurisdictions ranges from 2 acres for a small winery to 40 acres for large wineries. Some jurisdictions also require a minimum area of planted acreage.

Policy Options

- Establish a minimum lot size for development of new tasting rooms.

- Establish a minimum site area for sites with events.
- Establish a graduated site area based on numbers of visitors attending events.
- Establish a larger minimum lot size for areas of local concentration.

Setbacks: Setbacks are used to establish open space between land uses or along roads to ensure neighborhood compatibility and maintain rural character. Because noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source, setbacks are often used to minimize impacts related to noise. (Noise levels decrease an estimated 6 dBA for every doubling of distance.) Setbacks are effective ways to mitigate noise because they focus on site design elements rather than regulating ongoing behaviors.

The County General Plan Noise standards must be met for winery activities and are included as a condition of approval in use permits. In accordance with General Plan policies, the maximum noise levels are adjusted for event activities where the noise consists of music or speech (45 dBA up to 60 dBA max) and an additional adjustment is made when the noise source exceeds ambient conditions by 10 dBA or more (40 dBA up to 55 dBA max). Events that occur for 30 minutes or more must meet the lower standard, which has been consistently used in Noise Studies to evaluate the impact of event activities.

Based on analysis from two qualified noise consultants, and peer reviewed by a third consultant, the following setback distances for events was determined to meet the noise standards of the General Plan adjusted for music or speech without mitigation measures. These distances are generally used to determine when a noise study is required, but also could be used as general siting criteria to avoid potential noise impacts. The following table summarizes the noise levels for event activities and the distances required to attenuate noise with no mitigation or other attenuation from typography, buildings or other factors.

Typical Noise Levels and Attenuation Distance for Event Activities

Event Activity	Noise Level @ 50-feet (dBA)	Distance to Attenuate
Amplified Music	72 dBA	1,125
Amplified Speech	71 dBA	1,000
Non-amplified Music	67 dBA	625
Raised Conversation	64 dBA	450

Source: Illingworth and Rodkin, Noise Consultants

Mitigation measures

In some cases the event areas can be sited behind the winery or tasting room building or there may be intervening terrain or other structures that block the line of sight that can attenuate noise to some degree. A minimum of 5 dBA of attenuation could be accomplished by blocking the line-of-sight between the noise source and receptor.

Adjustment factors for interior noise levels are generally 12-15 dBA assuming the windows or doors are open and 20 to 25 dBA if the windows and doors are closed.

Sound walls can also be used to attenuate noise, but are considered undesirable in rural areas and detract from the scenic beauty, sense of open space and rural character of agricultural areas.

Policy Options

- Consider minimum setback standards for outdoor event areas, for both amplified and non-amplified sound.
- Allow reduction of setback with a sound study where existing terrain or structures attenuate the noise without the use of sound walls.
- No minimum setback requirements; establish on a case-by-case basis in the use permit process.

Number of Tasting Rooms: A key issue that has been raised for tasting rooms is the allowance for stand-alone tasting rooms currently allowed in the agricultural zones. The Board of Zoning Adjustments has denied tasting room permits when there has been no agricultural production or processing on a site. The Working Group appeared to reach agree on revising the code to allow tasting rooms only where accessory to a winery or where there is a commercial vineyard located on-site. Most jurisdictions only allow tasting rooms in agricultural areas when they are accessory to a winery processing facility.

Additional concerns have been raised about allowing more than one tasting room on a site. Similar concerns have been raised with multiple wineries represented at a single site. Custom crush facilities and multiple wineries promoting from a single tasting room could provide needed agricultural support services to smaller vineyard owners and reduce potential impacts of each site needing their own facilities.

Policy Options

- Allow tasting rooms only when there is processing or a commercial vineyard on-site.
- Limit the number of tasting rooms per site and allow tasting rooms only when accessory to a winery (no stand-alone tasting rooms in agricultural zones).
- Limit the number of custom crush operations in agricultural zones.
- Establish a maximum site area devoted to tasting room and visitor serving uses to ensure the use is incidental to agriculture.

Access: Conflicts regarding access roads and public safety has also been raised, particularly in more remote locations or where rural roads do not have adequate sight distance or pavement widths to accommodate two-way traffic. Fire safe standards typically require a minimum road width of 18 feet for emergency access. Both Public Works staff and Emergency Services have recommended a minimum width of 18 feet for access roads to winery sites proposing event activities.

Policy Options

- Require access from public roads or within ½ mile of a publicly maintained road for event activities.
- Require minimum pavement width for access roads to sites with events and/or new tasting rooms.
- Review access on a case-by-case basis.

OPERATING STANDARDS

Operating standards generally address ongoing operational conditions needed to minimize impacts, ensure compatibility or comply with County standards or policies. Operating standards related to event activities include the hours of operation, limitations on the type, number and size of events, allowable food service, parking management, and noise limits. Operational conditions can be more difficult to enforce due to the ongoing nature of the activity and the difficulty in providing measurable standards.

Visitor Hours: Hours of operation are routinely used to limit the intensity of land uses and ensure neighborhood compatibility. Hours of operation can also be used to avoid peak hour traffic and avoid noise impacts during evening and night time hours when people are more sensitive to noise. The Board has directed staff to limit tasting room activities from 10 am to 5 pm, but have allowed events up to 10 pm, including clean up. More recent use permits limit the hours of events to end by 9 pm and allow clean up by 10 pm.

Policy Options

- Limit events to tasting room hours only
- Limit events to the daytime noise standard to end by 10 pm.
- Establish operating hours on a case-by case basis through use permit

Food Service: Prior to 1996, food service was generally not allowed at tasting rooms on agricultural lands. In 1996, the Board directed staff to develop standards for food service at wineries following certain parameters, which became the genesis of the standard food service condition found in use permits issued since the Board directive. Food service at tasting rooms has generally been limited to appetizers or tastes of local food products. Full meal service has been allowed on a limited basis only for events. Restaurants, cafes, cooked to order foods, menus and table service has been prohibited in use permit conditions for tasting rooms. For many years, commercial stoves were not allowed in tasting rooms, though a commercial “caterer’s” kitchen with warming ovens was allowed. All tasting rooms are required to obtain a commercial kitchen permit from the County Public Health Division. Limiting the type of equipment allowed in a commercial kitchen limits the type of food that can be served and prevents tasting rooms from becoming de facto restaurants. The intent of these policies was to limit commercialization of agricultural lands, while allowing for limited promotional activities.

Increasingly, food and wine pairing is seen as an important component of wine marketing that helps support other locally grown agricultural products, diversifies the agricultural sector, and reduces the potential for impaired behaviors among wine tasters. In recent use permits, the BZA has allowed food and wine pairing separate from event activities, with limited seating and full-scale commercial kitchens with stove tops and hoods. In several cases, outdoor barbecues and pizza ovens have been requested, but denied as beyond the business needs for direct marketing of wine and in conflict with the prohibition on cooked-to-order foods.

Issues related to food service include: the difficulty in limiting the use to distinguish from a restaurant; the intensification of land use and related impacts of traffic, noise, light, and odors; and, the commercialization of agricultural lands. Restaurant uses are typically characterized by the provision of commercial stoves; seating areas with dining tables; table service, kitchen and wait staff; menus providing cooked-to-order foods; and, being open during meal hours. These same types of facilities are required for food and wine pairing, winemaker dinners and event functions, but have been limited to a certain number of event days, such that the facilities would not support a restaurant-level of intensity.

Policy Options

- Allow food and wine pairing during tasting room hours only.
- Limit the number of seats or area where food service is provided.
- Limit full meals to permitted events only.
- Limit kitchen facilities to a caterer's kitchen only.

Promotional Activities: There are a number of promotional activities that occur at wineries and tasting rooms that are permitted through the use permit process. "Special events" or "Agricultural Promotional Events" are terms that have been used in use permits to define types of promotional activities other than drop-in tasting. Event activities allowed in use permits include winemaker dinners, food and wine pairings, wine release or pick-up parties, weddings, and outdoor concerts. These activities are distinguished from normal tasting room activities by larger groups of people, the availability of food service, music, advertising, and specific dates or start times.

General Plan policies limit promotional activities in agricultural areas to the promotion of agricultural products that are grown or processed in the local area. There have been some concerns raised about whether corporate retreats, weddings, parties and charitable events are related to promotion of agricultural products. Some have suggested that these types of events should not be permitted by use permit that runs with the land, but rather by separate Cultural Event permits. The BZA has limited the number of these types of events in use permits to avoid the use becoming an event center. While there are many different types of activities that can be classified as events, they typically involve larger groups of people that can have detrimental impacts on a neighborhood, regardless of the type. Likewise, the impacts related to events is not based on whether a fee is charged, or a wedding is conducted, but more so on the size of the event, the location of the event and event parking areas, the access to the event and the type of outdoor activities, (i.e. amplified music). Nonetheless, in order to preserve the integrity

of agricultural areas, General Plan policies limit events in agricultural areas to only those that directly promote local agricultural products and are secondary and incidental to the agricultural operation.

Even though all tasting room and promotional activities are permitted and defined by use permit, it is helpful to have a clear definition of common terms and thresholds for events allowing a minimum level of promotional activities that are considered part of normal tasting room activities.

Policy Options

- Limit the number of events by size thresholds.
- Limit the type of events allowed.
- Require separate event permits for non-agricultural events (i.e. weddings, fundraisers).
- Distinguish between indoors versus outdoors activities.
- Distinguish by whether the event involves outdoor amplified sound.

INDUSTRY-WIDE EVENTS

Industry-wide events involve several tasting rooms within a given area that are advertised and sponsored by a recognized industry organization. Industry-wide events occur during normal tasting room hours and have been considered part of normal tasting room activities. Operators with use permits for public tasting are generally allowed to participate in industry-wide events, unless the use permit specifically prohibits them. Some of the industry-wide events have occurred in Sonoma County since the early 1980s. These events contribute to the local economy, not only from wine sales, but also from the tourism dollars they generate.

In the past decade, the number of industry-wide events have grown in popularity to span several days or weekends and require separate event areas located outside the tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are often the days that have the largest amount of traffic and visitors and thus more conflicts or issues with traffic, parking, noise, trespass, and compatibility concerns.

Currently there are 10 annual industry-wide events in Sonoma County each spanning several days. The largest industry-wide event has been Barrel Tasting, which lasts for two weekends and three days each weekend, generating 7,500 visitors per day in the Dry Creek, Russian River and Alexander Valleys. The Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys are designated by the Board as Agricultural Preserves where events on contracted lands are limited to two consecutive days by the County's Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves. In the past several years, the BZA has limited events by the number of event-days to be consistent with the Uniform Rules and clarify in the use permit what constitutes an event. Staff has worked with industry representatives to help identify best management practices that will address the cumulative impacts of industry-wide events.

Policy Options

- Require an annual event permit for industry-wide events (each participating tasting room must have a valid use permit).
- Set a limit on the number of industry-wide event participants starting at each winery host site to spread out the impact.
- Limit industry-wide event days per year in any given appellation/area.
- Require a parking management plan and consider restricting large tour buses.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

Monitoring and enforcement are additional issues that have been raised by many concerned citizens and winery operators alike. Enforcement of event conditions can be problematic due to the fact that events generally occur in the evening and weekend hours when code enforcement staff is not available. Vague or unmeasurable conditions that regulate behaviors are also difficult to enforce. Monitoring of noise levels by a qualified consultant during events is generally required as a condition of approval that is triggered whenever there are valid complaints. Since 2004, use permits with event activities have included a standard condition that events are subject to an event coordination program including annual reporting of events, and payment of a monitoring fee, but the program has not been implemented yet.

Policy Options

- Establish an annual monitoring and educational program to periodically review use permits.
- Hire contract services to respond to complaints of unpermitted event activities on nights and weekends.
- Increase fines and penalties for unpermitted event activities.
- Require an on-site coordinator to address complaints.
- Require events to be calendared at the beginning of each year and annual reports.

Legal Nonconforming Uses: Legal nonconforming uses are those that were lawful when established, but no longer conform to County zoning laws, often referred to as “grandfathered uses”. Legal nonconforming uses may continue indefinitely, but may not be significantly enlarged or increased. In addition, if a legal nonconforming use ceases for a year, any subsequent use must be in conformance with current law. The County has an administrative process for determining the existence and extent of legal nonconforming uses.

Existing Wineries: With regard to events, the Winery Working Group discussed how to address existing wineries that have been conducting promotional activities that were not evaluated or expressly permitted in their use permits. Industry groups have asked whether these historic activities could be approved via an expedited or administrative process, perhaps similar to that used for verifying legal nonconforming uses. Alternatively, unpermitted event activities can be approved via a use permit modification. Use permit modifications can be administratively approved with a hearing waiver if certain criteria are met and, after notice, no party timely requests a hearing.

Policy Options

- Establish an expedited permit process for existing wineries that have been conducting events with older use permits.
- Require all wineries to obtain use permits for event activities.

NEXT STEPS

Once the Board adopts the recommended Resolution of Intention, staff will complete the policy analysis, including the Traffic and Noise Studies that are underway. Staff will prepare a recommended draft ordinance that will go to the Planning Commission for consideration and a public hearing. Government Code Section 65855 requires that the Board receive a written recommendation from the Planning Commission on zoning code amendments, prior to your consideration.

Prior Board Actions:

December 9, 2014 – Approve the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan
 September 10, 1996 – Adopt resolution of intention to allow limited food service
 March 9, 1993 – Adopt Ordinance updating Zoning Code to reflect new policies for agricultural promotion
 March 23, 1989 – Adopts General Plan including new Agricultural Element

Strategic Plan Alignment Goal 2: Economic and Environmental Stewardship

Agricultural promotional activities and events are considered essential to the economic viability of the wine industry. These activities can also impact neighborhoods as well as agricultural operations and create potential conflicts with incompatible uses. The goal of existing General Plan policies is to balance these competing interests and preserve agricultural lands while maintaining rural character of the area.

Fiscal Summary - FY 16-17			
Expenditures		Funding Source(s)	
Budgeted Amount	\$ 153,296	County General Fund	\$ 153,296
Add Appropriations Req'd.	\$ 68,272	State/Federal	\$
	\$	Fees/Other	\$
	\$	Use of Fund Balance	\$
	\$	Contingencies	\$ 68,272
	\$		\$
Total Expenditure	\$ 221,568	Total Sources	\$ 221,568
PRMD planning staff hours for this effort were estimated at \$96,510 in the approved Winery Events Work Plan and are included in the approved budget for FY16/17. Additional legal review by County Counsel is required and is estimated at \$68,272 for FY 16/17. This adjustment would be made at first quarter consolidated budget adjustments.			
Draft Board of Supervisors Resolution of Intention Attachment A: Relevant General Plan Policies Attachment B: Summary of Other Jurisdictions Attachment C: Public Correspondence for the Study Session			



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: July 12, 2016

Item Number: _____
Resolution Number: 16- _____

ORD16-0001 Jennifer Barrett

☐ 4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Directing Staff To Initiate Zoning Code Amendments To Address Key Issues Associated With Winery Event And Promotional Activities

Whereas, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element allows for the sale and promotion of agricultural products grown or processed in the County, including promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production; and

Whereas, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element contains a number of policies relating to the definition and limitations for agricultural promotional events; and

Whereas, General Plan Policies AR-6f and AR-6g state that local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses can be detrimental to the primary use of the land for production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. Detrimental concentration can be caused by the following factors: road access conflicts, negative impacts to neighboring wells, and rural character; and

Whereas, in 2015 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Work Plan for Comprehensive Planning that included development of regulations addressing agricultural promotional events and potential overconcentration. The Work Plan includes an ultimate goal of developing county-wide standards for promotional activities and events on agricultural lands that addresses land use compatibility issues due to overconcentration of events in some areas, including Sonoma Valley, Dry Creek Valley, and Westside Road; and

Whereas, the PRMD Director formed a Winery Working Group of County stakeholders to provide input and guidance on potential regulation of promotional event activities at wineries and tasting rooms and policies to address areas of concentration. The Working Group was comprised of community

volunteers, including representatives from the wine industry, grape growers and neighborhood groups. The Working Group met over a period of six months and a number of issues and concerns emerged from their meetings, including: 1) business need for direct marketing activities; 2) neighborhood compatibility; 3) potential impacts related to noise, traffic, dust and water supplies; 3) commercialization of agricultural lands and concentration; and 4) maintaining rural agricultural character; and

Whereas, following the Working Group meetings, staff conducted a public workshop attended by an estimated 500 people and received written comments from various groups. Staff reviewed regulations from other counties, completed an audit of use permits issued to date, updated the winery database and contracted with qualified traffic and noise consultants to assist with the analysis. The traffic and noise reports are currently in progress.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Supervisors hereby directs staff to prepare a draft ordinance, amending the County Zoning Code, to address key issues associated with winery promotional and event activities.

Be It Further Resolved that the Board of Supervisors designates the Clerk of the Board as the custodian of the documents and other material which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision herein is based. These documents may be found at the office of the Clerk of the Board, 575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A, Santa Rosa, California 95403.

Supervisors:

Gorin:	Rabbitt:	Zane:	Gore:	Carrillo:
Ayes:	Noes:	Absent:	Abstain:	

So Ordered.

GENERAL PLAN AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO PROMOTING AND MARKETING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

GOAL AR-1: *Promote a healthy and competitive agricultural industry whose products are recognized as being produced in Sonoma County.*

Objective AR-1.1: *Create and facilitate opportunities to promote and market all agricultural products grown or processed in Sonoma County.*

Objective AR-1.2: *Permit marketing of products grown and/or processed in Sonoma County in all areas designated for agricultural use.*

The following policies shall be used to achieve these objectives:

Policy AR-1a: *Permit a wide variety of promotional and marketing activities of County grown and processed products.**

Policy AR-4a: *The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.**

Policy AR-5g: *Local concentrations of any separate agricultural support uses, including processing, storage, bottling, canning and packaging, agricultural support services, and visitor-serving and recreational uses as provided in Policy AR-6f, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and shall be avoided. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:*

(1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.

(2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.

*(3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area. In cases where the proposed processing use would process only products grown on site, such use would not be subject to this concentration policy.**

GOAL AR-6: *Allow new visitor serving uses and facilities in some agricultural areas but limit them in scale and location. These uses must be beneficial to the agricultural industry and farm operators and compatible with long term agricultural use of the land.**

Objective AR-6.1: *Give the highest priority in all agricultural land use categories to agricultural production activities. Visitor serving uses shall promote agriculture and*

enhance marketing of Sonoma County agricultural products, but shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production.

Objective AR-6.2: Permit visitor serving uses in all agricultural land use categories if they support and do not adversely affect the agricultural production activities of the area. Bed and breakfast inns of five or fewer rooms, and campgrounds of up to 30 sites, are permissible recreational uses only in the "Land Extensive Agriculture" and "Diverse Agriculture" categories, if they do not adversely affect the agricultural production activities of the area.

Objective AR-6.3: Develop a pilot event coordination program for the Sonoma Valley Planning Area that provides for monitoring and scheduling of special events on agricultural lands and for agriculture related events on other lands so as to minimize the adverse cumulative impacts of such uses, particularly in areas where agriculture related support uses and/or visitor serving uses are concentrated.

The following policies, in addition to those of the Land Use Element, shall be used to achieve these objectives:

Policy AR-6a: Permit visitor serving uses in agricultural categories that promote agricultural production in the County, such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production. Limit recreational uses to the "Land Extensive Agriculture" and "Diverse Agriculture" categories, specifically to bed and breakfast inns and campgrounds of 30 or fewer sites.

Policy AR-6b: Except as allowed by Policy AR-6a, prohibit new restaurants and lodging. Recognize existing restaurants or lodging facilities and those which were approved prior to adoption of this plan, but limit their expansion or intensification.

Policy AR-6c: Nonagricultural land use categories shall not be applied to lands surrounded by agricultural land use categories for purposes of permitting visitor serving or recreational uses or facilities.

Policy AR-6d: Follow these guidelines for approval of visitor serving uses in agricultural areas:

- (1) The use promotes and markets only agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.
- (2) The use is compatible with and secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities in the area.
- (3) The use will not require the extension of sewer and water.
- (4) The use is compatible with existing uses in the area.
- (5) Hotels, motels, resorts, and similar lodging are not allowed.

(6) Activities that promote and market agricultural products such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products are allowed.

(7) Special events on agricultural lands or agriculture related events on other lands in the Sonoma Valley Planning Area will be subject to a pilot event coordination program which includes tracking and monitoring of visitor serving activities and schedule management, as necessary, to reduce cumulative impacts.

Policy AR-6f: *Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses, and agricultural support uses as defined in Goal AR-5, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:*

(1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.

(2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.

(3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.

Policy AR-6g: *Define in the Development Code compatible visitor serving uses such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events which support and are incidental to local agricultural production, and define their permissible sizes and intensities.*

Policy AR-8b: *Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.*

Policy AR-9d: *Approve administratively temporary use permits for special events if the requirements of all appropriate agencies have been met.*

County	Napa	Monterey	Santa Clara	Yolo	Placer	El Dorado	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	San Joaquin	San Diego
Authority	Ordinance (adopted 1990; amended in various years)	Agricultural and Winery Corridor Plan (adopted October 26, 2010)	Ordinance (adopted December 2, 2014)	County Code (updated July 2014)	Ordinance (adopted 2008; amended 2012 and 2014)	Ordinance (adopted January 16, 2009)	Ordinance (adopted in 1992; amended in 1995)	Draft Ordinance	Ordinance (adopted November 4, 2014)	Ordinance (adopted August 4, 2010; in process of being amended)
Size thresholds	No thresholds	No thresholds	Small < 10,000 cases/yr Medium > 10,000 cases/yr Large - any winery with events > 250 persons	Small < 21,000 cases/yr < 15,000 sq ft Large > 21,000 cases/yr > 15,000 sq ft	Small < 20,000 cases/yr Large > 20,000 cases/yr	Micro-winery < 250 gal/ac of vineyard Winery - no size thresholds	No thresholds	Small < 20,000 sq ft max Medium < 20,000 sq ft max Large - max size est. by use permit	Small - 201 - 36,000 gal/yr (15k cases) Medium > 36,000 - 99,000 gal/yr (42k cases) Large > 100,000 gal/yr (> 42k cases)	Wholesale or Boutique < 12,000 gal/yr (5k cases) Small < 120,000 gal/yr (50k cases) Large >120,000 gal/yr (>50k cases)
Minimum Site Area	10 ac min	None	None	None	Winery - 4.6 ac min; min 1 ac vineyard Small event center - 10 ac < 100 people Medium event center - 20 ac < 200 people Large event center - 40 ac < 400 people	By right: Micro - 5 ac min 10 ac min w/5 ac vineyard in ag zones 20 ac min w/5 ac vineyard in non-ag zones Use Permit >10 ac w/5 ac vineyard in non ag zone	None	Small > 2 acres vineyard Medium > 20 acres > 10 acres vineyard Large > 40 acres > 20 acres vineyard	Small - 5 ac min Medium/Large - 10 ac min	Boutique or Wholesale < 1 ac - 1,000 sf 1-2 ac - 1,500 sf 2-4 ac- 2,000 sf for every ac over 4 ac +200 sf up to 5,000 sf max Small/Large - no min
Setbacks	600' setback on arterial roads 300' setback on other roads including private roads	100' from property line and 200' from existing residences all winery structures and outdoor use areas 200' from property line and 400' from existing residences for wineries with public tours, tasting, retail sales, or special events	None specified	None specified		200' setback from streams; > 20 acre lot size; < 2.5 ac max used for structures	100' from property line 200' from residence not owned by applicant for winery 200' from property line 400' from residence not owned by applicant for winery with tasting and events Special event setback of 1,000 ft from residential zone	Special event setback of 1,000 ft from residential zone	300' from roads 300' to property line of existing residence (if residence is setback 200' can be reduced to 100')	None specified
Tasting Room	Set by Use Permit	Accessory to winery only	Accessory to winery only Off-site tasting room - use permit	Accessory to winery only: includes wholesale, retail sales, wine tasting and winery tours	Allowed with zoning clearance or conditional use permit	Micro - no public tasting, sales, tours accessory to a winery only Allowed by right on lots > 10 ac in ag zones Allowed by use permit > 10 ac in non-ag zones	Accessory to winery only Located within 200" of winery Limit to 1 per site Wineries may share a tasting room	Small - not allowed Medium - not larger than 600 sq ft or 10% of winery structure area Large - size est. by use permit	No more than 30% of wine production area (retail sales max 500 sq ft)	Wholesale - not allowed Boutique - 1 tasting/retail sales room allowed
Visitors	Set by Use Permit	Events < 150 visitors	Small - may include limited public gatherings and promotional events	< 150 allowed by right		50 - 250 persons at one time allowed by right > 20 ac or > 10 ac in ag zones >250 persons by use permit		Small - not allowed except for trade members Medium: < 40 acres < 50 visitors > 40 acres < 80 visitors Large < 80 visitors		
Visitor Hours	Events end by 10:00 pm		No standard - by use permit	Use Permit if ends after 10 pm	Wineries: by use permit Ag Event Centers: 10am-10pm (Fri-Sat), 10am-8pm (Sun-Thurs)	By use permit	By use permit	10:00 am - 6:00 pm winemaker meals until 10:00 pm	Events shall end by 10 pm	Wholesale - not allowed Boutique - 10am-legal sunset (7 days/week) Small - by minor use permit
Food Service	Commercial kitchen w/use permit. Food and wine pairing allowed. No menu options, no meal service such that the winery functions as a café or restaurant	With Permit (Ministerial or Administrative): Use must be incidental, related, and subordinate in nature to the winery Located in same structure Max 1500 sq ft of kitchen and dining area (including outdoor dining) Catering kitchen	Commercial kitchen allowed ancillary to winery operations	Restaurant allowed in Agricultural Commercial Zone	Allowed as Agricultural Event Center Conditional Use Permit. Restaurants are not allowed	Snack foods during wine tasting allowed Commercial kitchen > 20 acre parcels Dining facilities by use permit		Small - Not allowed except for members of the trade Medium/Large May be allowed	Commercial kitchen allowed for events and shall not be used as a restaurant	Boutique Winery: sales and consumption on-site of pre-packaged food or catering Small Winery: outdoor eating, max 5 tables, no more than 20 people

County	Napa	Monterey	Santa Clara	Yolo	Placer	El Dorado	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	San Joaquin	San Diego
Event Definitions	Marketing of wine: activity conducted at a winery for the education of customers and may include cultural and social events (may include food service such as food and wine pairing) Business events can be marketing of wine if part of approved marketing plan	Winery-related Events: Fundraising events; Winemaker Dinners; Weddings Private Winery Events: Company Holiday Party; Employee-Related Private Parties	Industry/Marketing events: any activity to market wine and winemaking, barrel tasting, wine club dinners, passport, harvest festivals and industrywide. Small events: < 50 persons Medium events: < 250 persons Large events: > 250 persons Private events: includes fund raising for non profit organizations	Small event 12 events/yr, < 150 attendees, < 100 vehicle trips Site Plan Review required Large event > 12 events/yr > 150 attendees > 100 vehicle trips Minor Use Permit required		Marketing events: intended for promotion and sale of facility's products Special events: charitable events, promotional events, facility rentals events (weddings, parties, company picnics, and reunions)	Special event: any event with 50 or more attendees including concerts, weddings, winemaker dinners, and advertised events (including fund raising, but not industry-wide events)	Winery special event: > 80 people including amplified sound, weddings, concerts, fund raising events; does not include industry-wide events	Accessory Winery event: promotes and marketing of wine and wine industry may (includes wine release parties, barrel tasting, and wine club activities) Marketing event: include weddings and concerts; may include food service	
Agricultural Promotional Events	Set by Use Permit	For Winery-related Events: Allowed up to 150 people With Permit (Administrative): Allowed from 151-500 people With Special Event Permit (notice and referral): Allowed over 500 people	Industry/Marketing events: 12/yr allowed; use permit required for additional events Small events: allowed if lot is 5 acres or larger Medium events: 12/yr Large events: use permit required Private events: no limit		Wineries: 2 events/yr temp use permit 6 events/yr w/use permit Agricultural Event Centers: 26 events/yr or as est. by Use Permit	Non ag events: 48/yr <50 people do not count; < 250 people allowed by right in ag zones > 10 ac allowed by use permit in non-ag zones > 20 ac Non ag "special" events: more than 48/yr > 250 people at one time allowed by use permit on > 10 ac in ag zones	< 6 events < 80 people minor use permit > 6 events or > 80 people use permit For all: 20 ac min limited to 40 days/yr Outdoor amplified sound only from 10 am-5 pm	Small - Not allowed Medium - Max 4 winemaker meals/yr Large - Max 6 winemaker meals/yr	Small: 12 events/yr, 150 people Medium: 15 events/yr, 300 people Large: 20 events/yr, 300 people Industry events and Accessory winery events are not included in the total number of events	Wholesale Limited Winery, Boutique Winery: Not allowed Small Winery: Allowed, with standards
Industry-wide Events	Set by Use Permit	Allowed	See above	See above	Not mentioned	See above	Not mentioned	All max allowed 4/yr small < 50 visitors max medium: < 40 acres <100 visitors; > 40 acres <150 visitors large < 200 visitors industry-wide or ag promo event		
Other Events (weddings, private parties, corporate, charitable)	No weddings. Events must related to wine education.	For Weddings and Charitable Dinners, see Special/Agricultural Promotional Events) For other events: Allowed			Allowed as Agricultural Event Center w/Use Permit	Facility rental 12/year < 20 acres 24/year > 20 acres	See Special Events	Small/Medium: Not allowed Large: Max 12/yr with use permit		
Cooking Demonstrations				None	allowed for Agricultural Event Center			small/medium - not allowed large by use permit		
Parking	No standards. Reviewed individually with use permits	Development Plan required Included requirements: 1 space per employee; visitor parking = 2.5 persons/vehicle with enough for max capacity; event (> 20 persons) requires adequate on-site or off-site parking	1 space/1,000 sf of warehouse area 1 space/200 sq ft of tasting room area Medium/Large wineries also need 1 space per 3 attendees for events	Must be on-site Special events, weddings, marketing promotional events may use temporary overflow parking	Small - min 5 spaces Large - 1 space/300 sf of tasting rm/office 1 space/1,500 sq ft of production area 1 space/2.5 people for events Agricultural Event Center: 1 space/2.5 people, 1 space/FTE	Permanent parking required for winery, tasting room, and accessory uses Temporary parking can be unsurfaced All parking must be on-site and meet fire code requirements	400 sf/car Larger projects conditioned on parking plan and events no parking on any adjoining ROW	Parking plan for special events to include a parking coordinator for events attended by 100 or more persons	Parking attendant	Boutique - min of 6 spaces, min of 3 employee spaces, no off-site parking allowed
Noise	45 & 50 dba at receiving residential use property line	Noise standards	Noise standards	Noise standards	Noise standards	None	65 dB at property line	Outdoor amplified sound ceases at 7 pm (inner-rural areas) or 10 pm (rural areas)	Outdoor amplified sound per use permit Permitted 10am-9pm	Noise standards Boutique - amplified sound is not allowed

County	Napa	Monterey	Santa Clara	Yolo	Placer	El Dorado	San Luis Obispo	Santa Barbara	San Joaquin	San Diego
Enforcement	Annual audit of % of use permit; annual fee						Enforcement Plan required prior to effective date			
Misc	Categorically exempt allowance for small wineries defined as 30,000 gallons production, 5,000 sq. ft. building, and limit on visitors and marketing		Must have adequate septic capacity for maximum number of visitors	Agritourism: for the enjoyment and education of visitors, guests, or clients. Uses include, wine tasting, sale of local agricultural products, and event centers that accommodate weddings, music, and limited dining.	Agricultural Event Center: facility located on agriculturally zoned land that has an ongoing agricultural use that provides a facility for any type of social gathering and consisting of multipurpose meeting and/or recreational facilities, typically consisting of multipurpose rooms and a kitchen that are available for use by various private groups for activities such as weddings, parties, receptions, etc.	50% local fruit required	Principal access driveway shall be located on or within one mile of an arterial Outdoor tanks require 100% screening		Marketing Calendar shall be filed with the Community Development Department on a biannual basis and updated monthly as needed; must be kept on-site at all time	Fruit requirements: Wholesale Limited Winery: up to 75% of fruit may be imported Boutique Winery: 75% grown in the County, 25% grown on-site Small Winery: 50% grown in the County, 25% grown on-site

From: Angie Monette <angiemonette@gmail.com>
Date: June 21, 2016 at 05:55:25 PDT
To: Susan Gorin <susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org>, <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>, Shirlee Zane <shirlee.zane@sonoma-county.org>, <james.gore@sonoma-county.org>, "Efren Carrillo" <efren.carrillo@sonoma-county.org>
Cc: <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Please consider the rural character of Sonoma County and limit heavy wine activity to appropriate locations

Dear Supervisors,

I hear there is a briefing at the July 12 BOS meeting regarding winery related events and developments. I am unable to attend, but respectfully request that you consider my input here in your decision-making.

As a resident and business owner in west Sonoma County (4000 Harrison Grade Road, Sebastopol), I would like to urge you to please preserve the rural character of Sonoma County by limiting heavy wine event and vineyard production activities to those areas that are appropriate for such use.

"Appropriate" is where our roads can support the activity - not on our back roads that are in perpetual disrepair. Appropriate is where alternative transportation is easily accessible so that intoxicated visitors are not encouraged to drive drunk. Appropriate is where late night events don't disturb local residents.

We spend countless resources designing a general plan, knowing that not all uses are appropriate in all places. In keeping with this age-old human knowledge, please support plans that are located where heavy commercial use may be supported by - not conflict with - existing uses and soft and hard infrastructure.

We all know how special Sonoma County is -- to live, work, and play. Thank you for your efforts to help keep it that way.

Sincerely,
Angie Monette Harrison

Angie Monette Harrison
[707-479-0236](tel:707-479-0236)

For urgent items, please consider a call or text message for fastest response.

This email is private and confidential unless otherwise specified. This communication may contain information protected by attorney-client privilege and should be treated as such. Please do not share this message unless expressly directed.

From: Carol V <carolvsr@sonic.net>
Date: June 23, 2016 at 18:43:00 PDT
To: 'James Gore' <James.Gore@sonoma-county.org>, 'Shirlee Zane' <Shirlee.Zane@sonoma-county.org>, 'Susan Gorin' <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>, Efren Carrillo <Efren.Carrillo@sonoma-county.org>, <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>
Cc: <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Winery Events

June 23, 2016
Dear Supervisors,

Saturday June 18th the traffic on highway 12 by Kenwood was backed up for a mile in each direction because of the yearly Lavender festival at the Sonoma Lavender Barn. Over 3,000 people showed up over the course of two days. The owners were caught off guard because this has never happened before. What was different? They had advertised on social media. This festival has always been a favorite local event. I personally support Sonoma Lavender products.

What did this influx of people mean to the residents who live in the

Sonoma/Kenwood area? It meant they were stuck, frustrated, in traffic trying to get to work or back to their homes. This scenario happens each weekend during peak tourist season for winery events.

It is clear that events along Highway 12, Westside Road, Dry Creek Road, and many other county roads, can negatively affect the near-by rural community. Many residents have lived in their homes for decades and now find their quality of life suffers more each year because of the increased traffic, noise, litter, and other cumulative effects. Some have lost the water in their wells and had to have new deeper wells drilled because of increased water use by nearby vineyards, wineries, etc.

The county has been spending tax payer dollars for many years promoting tourism. Advertising has been extremely successful for businesses benefiting from tourism. However the quality of life for county homeowners affected by increased events on ag land is a negative impact.

Many organizations have been asking the county for years to address these issues, to uphold the intent of the General Plan, to address cumulative impacts, and to not turn ag land into entertainment venues and parking lots. The public has lost faith in the technical studies that the county provides as witnessed in the many meetings where the public has taken time out of their daily schedule to attend meetings pertaining to the permitting process.

Please act in the best interest of the whole community and uphold the concerns of the Preserve Rural Sonoma County citizens group.

Thank you so much for your time. Please show concern for your citizens by carefully reviewing existing policies and zoning provisions and provide clarity on all concerns.

Sincerely, **Carol Vellutini**

Carol Vellutini Mt. Jackson Watershed Protection Group
610 Willrush St.
Santa Rosa, Ca 95401
707-546-6308

From: Jennifer LaPorta <jenniferlaporta1@gmail.com>

Date: June 23, 2016 at 16:18:52 PDT

To: <susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org>, <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>, <shirlee.zane@sonoma-county.org>, <james.gore@sonoma-county.org>, Supervisor Efren Carrillo <efren.carrillo@sonoma-county.org>, <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: winery event center over-development

(Mr. Carrillo is my supervisor)

Dear Supervisors:

Don't you want Sonoma County to retain its status as a premier destination, a great place to live, for farming, ranching and viticulture? Let's ensure land speculation and the commercialization of Ag lands do not destroy our differentiating characteristic – Rural Character!

I'm concerned that many winery developments are being approved on viable agricultural land, which the General Plan specifically protects, and which are being turned into entertainment venues and parking lots. Please act in the best interest of the ENTIRE community to

uphold the protective policies in our General Plan (GP).

In that vein, we are asking you to enforce and where necessary, enact the following regulations that are in keeping with the provisions of the General Plan for Sonoma County.

1. Locate highly commercial activities in city-centers or along the Highway 101 corridor to protect the integrity of our Ag zoned lands. Preserve the rural character of Ag lands - defined as areas with low density, low intensity development, open agrarian landscapes and a sense of serenity – i.e. quiet atmosphere with low traffic volumes.

2. Address hospitality –related impacts both to neighbors and public resources: Land use conflicts are impact driven and the solutions need to address the impacts, both on-site and on a cumulative area-wide basis (road safety, water, etc.). As the Direct to Consumer model intensifies more visitor-serving and hospitality uses on each winery property, the impacts on adjacent properties and public costs escalate.

3. Fix the Use Permit Process: Set standards that are balanced, fair, more consistent and reliable. The public has lost faith in technical studies that the county provides. There is an inherent conflict of interest when an applicant pays a consultant to do noise and traffic studies with specific results required for permit approval. Measurable standards and improved integrity of technical studies will address impacts to water sources, ensure peaceful enjoyment of our homes and our neighborhoods, and reduce safety issues on our sub-standard roads.

4. Level the Playing Field: Everyone should follow the rules! Facilities operating outside the protections of their Use Permit should not be given competitive advantage. Require facilities with winery or tasting room permits that are silent or do not specify events to conduct necessary studies to determine the appropriate size, duration and number of permitted Ag Promotional events for the site - then require a Use Permit modification.

5. Food Service – Set criteria to prevent wineries morphing into restaurants: On-premise seated food and wine service, given the county's lack of enforcement, is essentially a quasi- restaurant; the GP specifically prohibits expansion of restaurants and lodging on Ag lands.

We support wine pairing with limited food options (offsite prepared foods from permitted food facilities) during tasting room hours only, by appointment with service in separate enclosed seating areas. Let's limit meal service to permitted Events only, using catering kitchens or

mobile caterer's facilities – do not permit on-site commercial kitchens.

6. Minimum Site Area and Setbacks to address noise impacts on-site: Address cumulative impacts and detrimental concentrations: Set minimal parcel size of 10 acres or 20 acres for any facility requesting outdoor events and define separation criteria for adjacent parcels to prevent detrimental concentrations. Uphold noise and scenic setbacks for all new development. In sensitive locations, set protective guidelines as the cumulative impacts resulting from small increases in number of events, extended hours of operation, and food service at tasting rooms have strong ripple effects that together undermine rural character.

7. Uphold the Sonoma County quality brand: 75% of wine content on permitted parcels should be from locally sourced Sonoma County AVA grapes.

8. Address road safety concerns: Require minimum 18-foot width for access roads to ensure emergency vehicle access and sufficient site-lines for driveway access and egress.

In order to achieve the above, we would suggest that Measurable standards will ease the permitting process and provide clarity for monitoring enforcement activities. Clear standards are required if use permit compliance is to remain “complaint based”.

We would also request the County hire enforcement staff and establish a process for random audits. And, per the GP, hire an event coordinator and utilize the calendaring system developed by the County to fairly allocate and disperse event impacts.

Sincerely,
Jennifer LaPorta

From: reuben weinzveg [mailto:preserveruralsonomacounty@gmail.com]

Sent: June 20, 2016 4:12 PM

To: David Rabbitt; Efren Carrillo; James Gore; Shirlee Zane; Jennifer Barrett; Susan Gorin; Tennis Wick; Traci Tesconi

Subject: AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE JULY 12 WWG STUDY SESSION



Dear Supervisors:

We are asking you as our Supervisors to act in the best interest of the whole community, and to uphold the protective policies in our General Plan (GP). If Sonoma County is to retain its status as a premier destination and a great place to live, and for farming, ranching and viticulture, we must ensure land speculation and the commercialization of Ag lands do not destroy our differentiating characteristic – Rural Character. Our concern is that many winery developments are being approved on viable agricultural land, which the General Plan specifically protects, and which are slowly being turned into entertainment venues and parking lots.

In that vein, we are asking you to enforce and where necessary, enact the following regulations that are in keeping with the provisions of the General Plan for Sonoma County.

1. Locate highly commercial activities in city-centers or along the Highway 101 corridor to protect the integrity of our Ag zoned lands. Preserve the rural character of Ag lands - defined as areas with low density, low intensity development, open agrarian landscapes and a sense of serenity – i.e. quiet atmosphere with low traffic volumes.

2. Address hospitality –related impacts both to neighbors and public resources: Land use conflicts are impact driven and the solutions need to address the impacts, both on-site and on a cumulative area-wide basis (road safety, water, etc.). As the Direct to Consumer model intensifies more visitor-serving and hospitality uses on each winery property, the impacts on adjacent properties and public costs escalate.

3. Fix the Use Permit Process: Set standards that are balanced, fair, more consistent and reliable. The public has lost faith in technical studies that the county provides. There is an inherent conflict of interest when an applicant pays a consultant to do noise and traffic studies with specific results required for permit approval. Measurable standards and improved integrity of technical studies will address impacts to water sources, ensure peaceful enjoyment of our homes and our neighborhoods, and reduce safety issues on our sub-standard roads.

4. Level the Playing Field: Everyone should follow the rules – facilities operating outside the protections of their Use Permit should not be given competitive advantage. Require facilities with winery or tasting room permits that are silent or do not specify events to conduct necessary studies to determine the appropriate size, duration and number of permitted Ag Promotional events for the site - then require a Use Permit modification.

5. Food Service – Set criteria to prevent wineries morphing into restaurants: On-premise seated food and wine service, given the county's lack of enforcement, is essentially a quasi- restaurant; the GP specifically prohibits expansion of restaurants and lodging on Ag lands.

We support wine pairing with limited food options (offsite prepared foods) during tasting room hours only, by appointment with service in separate enclosed seating area. Limit meal service to permitted Events only, using catering kitchens or mobile caterer's facilities – do not permit on-site commercial kitchens.

6. Minimum Site Area and Setbacks to address noise impacts on-site: Address cumulative impacts and detrimental concentrations: Set minimal parcel size of 10 acres or 20 acres for any

facility requesting outdoor events and define separation criteria for adjacent parcels to prevent detrimental concentrations. Uphold noise and scenic setbacks for all new development. In sensitive locations, set protective guidelines as the cumulative impacts resulting from small increases in number of events, extended hours of operation, and food service at tasting rooms have strong ripple effects that together undermine rural character.

7. Uphold the Sonoma County quality brand: 75% of wine content on permitted parcels should be from locally sourced Sonoma County AVA grapes.

8. Address road safety concerns: Require minimum 18-foot width for access roads to ensure emergency vehicle access and sufficient site-lines for driveway access and egress.

In order to achieve the above, we would suggest that Measurable standards will ease the permitting process and provide clarity for monitoring enforcement activities. Clear standards are required if use permit compliance is to remain “complaint based”.

We would also request the County hire enforcement staff and establish a process for random audits. And, per the GP, hire an event coordinator and utilize the calendaring system developed by the County to fairly allocate and disperse event impacts.

Respectfully submitted,
Preserve Rural Sonoma County
Padi Selwyn & Judith Olney, Co-Chairs

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Neighbors to Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC)

We are a 100% volunteer organization. Please consider making a donation to help us advance our mission. Donations can be made by sending your tax deductible checks made out to Sonoma County Tomorrow (our fiscal sponsor), c/o PRSC, P. O. Box 983, Sebastopol, Ca. 95473. Or donating online via Paypal <http://preserveruralsonomacounty.org/donate/>

Visit our website at - <http://www.preserveruralsonomacounty.org>
Like us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/preserveruralsonomacounty>

From: Tibby Elgato <chinacat1970@gmail.com>

Date: July 2, 2016 at 07:35:20 PDT

To: <susan.gorin@sonoma-county.org>, <david.rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>, <shirlee.zane@sonoma-county.org>, <james.gore@sonoma-county.org>, <efren.carrillo@sonoma-county.org>

Cc: <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Sonoma County overdevelopment of the winery/event center industry

There are already enough wineries and wine events in Sonoma County. Many of us enjoy a nice glass of local wine but it is the responsibility of the Supervisors to regulate and put a stop to the rampant development that turns agricultural land into wine industry tracts and brings heavy traffic to our back roads. We the residents of Sonoma County want no new event centers in the country, no more forests cut for wine grapes, no more production centers (like Dairyman) and no more foreign owned exploitation of our county land. Very few individuals profit from all this over development.

This is a beautiful, relative unspoiled place and we want to keep it like that. The wine industry will destroy our land and take all the water for a few more years of unsustainable profitability. Understand that the wine industry is experiencing a bubble. There is no growth in domestic consumption and in a few years competition for the foreign growers will push California growers out. It is obvious that wineries now need every gimmick in the books to maintain profitability. What's next, rollercoasters and ride for the kiddies? When the bubble bursts and

the wine industry goes the way of apples and hops, is the County prepared to pay the cleanup costs?

How about the impacts of wine tourism on housing? Converting houses to unregulated wine country weekend condos anonymously through airbnb and VRBO makes people homeless and drives up the cost of everyone's home. This may be a destination area but people have to live here too.

John W. Cruz
Sebastopol

From: Jim Dreisback [mailto:jmdreisback@yahoo.com]

Sent: July 05, 2016 3:48 PM

To: Efren Carrillo <Efren.Carrillo@sonoma-county.org>; James Gore <James.Gore@sonoma-county.org>; Susan Gorin <susan.gorin@somona-county.org>; david.rabbit@sonoma-county.org; Shirlee Zane <shirlee.zane@sonoma.county.org>

Cc: Tennis Wick <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>; Jennifer Barrett <Jennifer.Barrett@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: July 12th Study Session

Board of Supervisors

I am writing in reference to the up coming Study Session scheduled for July 12th. As a member of the County's Winery Working Group and a 63 year resident of Westside Road, Healdsburg, I have had the opportunity gain many insights into the grape farming and wine making activities in Sonoma County. Having watched first hand the evolution of various agricultural activities here, and their impacts on the economy of the region, I recognize the importance of this industry and the tourism dollars that it brings to our county. I have many friends who are grape growers and wine producers and also have family members that work at wineries. It is of utmost importance that the Board of Supervisors recognize the value of this agricultural product and make the right decisions that will insure it's prosperity for generations to come. This said, I have concerns about the permitting process that I have witnessed over the past few years and what appears to be a disregard for the General Plan guidelines when it comes to permitting events at wineries. I feel that the following should be considered when the Board of Supervisors adopts regulations for promotional activities and events at wineries.

There are areas within the County that are not appropriate for continued growth of wineries and winery events due to road conditions, (West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg), a concentration of wineries and events, (Westside Road, Healdsburg) or traffic issues, (Kenwood /Sonoma areas). Special consideration needs to be given to these areas when adopting new regulations. There is room for growth in the County, but these areas are reaching a critical point and need to be protected in order to preserve the rural character that brings tourists from all over the world.

Minimum parcel size plays a critical role in determining if a winery with visitor services and events are appropriate. It was suggested in the Winery Working Group that a minimum parcel size of 10 acres be required for any winery/tasting room site in order to mitigate noise. In areas of concentration a 20 acre parcel would be more appropriate to control growth. These parcel size regulations would go a long way in

allowing the proper application of the noise ordinance that is already part of the general plan. This noise ordinance needs to be adopted as part of the new regulations for winery events and the BZA needs to understand and properly apply these regulations when approving new applications. And please, no more sound walls on agricultural lands. They are a permanent scar on our beautiful landscape.

Food service and over-night lodging are becoming popular at wineries. There seems to be a move from chocolates and crackers to full out lunch menus and dinners. Recognizing that there are some winery locations that would be appropriate for these activities, most of our farm lands should be preserved for farming. There needs to be clear regulations written that will prevent our rural farm lands from becoming restaurants and hotels.

Industry wide promotional events, think Barrel Tasting, are becoming a very popular draw to our area. Up to this point there has been minimal regulation of these activities. Because of their popularity these events now require additional regulation. Limiting the number of allowed industry event days to 8 within a specific region would limit the impacts while only allowing those wineries to participate that have appropriate parking and facilities to accommodate the number of anticipated participants.

These are but a few of the many issues that need to be discussed when formulating new regulations for winery events. I look forward to the discussion on July 12th.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to preserve our agricultural heritage and rural character that makes Sonoma County a very special place for it's residents and visitors alike.

Jim Dreisback
9545 Westside Road
Healdsburg
292-7352

cc: Tennis Wick, Jennifer Barrett

Feb. 26, 2021

Sup. Lynda Hopkins, Chair, and
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Permit Sonoma Director Tennis Wick
Planner Georgia McDaniel

VIA EMAIL

RE: Winery Event Ordinance,

Dear Chair Hopkins, Board of Supervisors and Permit Sonoma,

Greenbelt Alliance urges the Board of Supervisors to draft and adopt a countywide winery events ordinance, as you directed in October 2016. Doing so will finally provide clarity and certainty to Sonoma County residents, visitors and the wine industry going forward, particularly during the current COVID crisis and future recovery.

Greenbelt Alliance supports the detailed comments provided by Preserve Rural Sonoma County.

Please take action on the long-overdue winery events ordinance as follows:

- Adopt and implement a winery event ordinance with enforceable regulations based on community input and consistency with the General Plan.
- The winery ordinance must have observable and enforceable definitions and protective siting criteria and standards.
- The winery events ordinance must specify the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting, irrespective of whether event is being held for visitors, wine clubs, fundraisers, industry or trade activities.
- Residents and visitors alike rely on these criteria and standards to maintain rural character, environment and public safety of our roads and communities.

- The ordinance and enforceable guidelines must be quantifiable, observable and serve to prevent and reduce over-concentration of visitor serving and hospitality uses on agricultural land per the Sonoma County General Plan.
- Wildfire safety must be considered in defining the size and scale of events, and events must be limited in the High and Very High Fire Severity Areas in the SRA and LRA. State firesafe road regulations must be met and exceeded for events in wildfire prone zones. Evacuation plans for every event from the site to safety must be provided for all events, and ideally for all visitors at all times to reduce wildfire risk, most importantly during the wildfire season, as defined by CalFire.
- Environmental review under CEQA must be required for any expansion of entitlements for hospitality and visitation at wineries and tasting room, including evaluation and mitigation of cumulative impacts, greenhouse gas emissions, and vehicle miles traveled.

The Board of Supervisors has a responsibility to uphold the Sonoma County General Plan and to protect agricultural lands from over-concentration and commercialization. The county has a long legacy of protection of working lands and open space. Please stay true to the vision spelled out in the General Plan and the will of the voters, who have consistently supported protection of natural and working lands and city-centered growth.

With climate disasters such as wildfires and flooding, it is more essential than ever that we protect natural lands and open space and not increase loss of life and homes by putting more people in harm's way, and that includes visitors.

The legacy of Sonoma County has made it what it is today: the jewel of the Bay Area and beyond, where people want to live, work, and visit. A strong and clear winery events ordinance will ensure that our people, lands, economy, and environment continue to thrive and recover strongly from COVID crisis and the wildfires. Please take the long view and take a stand for a climate-healthy future.

Sincerely yours,



Teri Shore
Advocacy Director
tshore@greenbelt.org

February 26, 2021

To: Tennis Wick and Georgia McDaniels

From: Preserve Rural Sonoma County

RE: February 18, 2021 – Concern – event policy next steps

Input entered into the Administrative Record relative to winery and agricultural events from Preserve Rural Sonoma County on behalf of our coalition members.

For seven long years, our community groups have tried to constructively work with County staff to define rational criteria and controls for events that protect public safety and a neighbor's peaceful enjoyment of their lands. This debate has been focused on about 300 winery event venues that have Use Permits with rights to hold agricultural- related events. Now the impact area has expanded significantly: On February 16, 2021, the County released documents stating that the prohibition on cannabis-related events is to be lifted, with little to no specification on how these are to be permitted and monitored on another 65,000 acres of land.

Need Clarification of Chapter 26 Zoning Code Changes: What are the implications of the February 9th adopted Chapter 26 omitting standards, application review by public safety departments, and other processes for periodic events?

- What standards or processes apply in the interim period – March through adoption of Winery Event Ordinance?
- What standards apply for Ag Promotional events at tasting rooms or vege stands, cannabis events, etc.?

Background: In doing advanced research for the February 18th workshop, we were confused by changes in the on-line Chapter 26: For example, the convoluted double-negative definition of "Cultural Events" or not cultural events as the case may be. The changes to the Zoning Code and next steps should have been addressed during the February 18th workshop.

Today, we received a set of documents relating to the Zoning Code Update project, including the September 2020 Planning Commission hearing and the February 9, 2021 Board of Supervisors approval of a revised Chapter 26. Reviewing these documents raises a number of concerns:

- Definitions: Only a definition for **"Periodic Events" (former Cultural Events) and Zoning Permit** - conspicuously missing are definitions for Agricultural Promotional Events, Special Events, Winery Events or Cannabis Events. And, the Table indicates that "Periodic Events" are "P" – permitted with no use permit requirements; however, we would expect at a minimum, the current protections of the Zoning Permit traffic, sanitation etc. review process would apply.
- Staff Report for the 2020 Planning Commission included the long-standing guidelines and processes, such as a size over 35 people, up to four events over a two-year period and certain criteria. The Staff Report included the grammatically incorrect double-negative construction and changes in the criteria for "not a cultural event" are confusing, and may not meet Noise Element standards. Most important, the Staff reiterated the need for pre-review and approval by various public safety departments - before issuance of a Special Event Zoning Permit.
- However, Minutes from September 2020 Planning Commission indicate a removal of long-standing protective guidelines and processes. **Commissioner Davis made a motion**

recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the project with modified resolution to omit proposed standards for periodic special events that are not currently codified, to clarify that such events shall be called “periodic special events” instead of “periodic events” and to provide clarifying language regarding the CEQA exemption.

- February 9, 2021 Board of Supervisors adopt new Chapter 26 Zoning Code, with these omissions. Omission of key standards and protections is a substantive change, not a clarification. The Staff Report referred to ‘Ministerial Permits’ for events and the winery event ordinance processes to be developed in the future. And, did not address events at new venues.

Concerns raised by Feb 18th Workshop Staff Presentations: The wine industry position of no oversight for events is not an option: The Staff report only discussed new winery/tasting room permits. More likely, Use Permit modifications to increase Ag Promotional event entitlements (not cultural events with no nexus with agriculture) will need to either:

- 1) Go through the Discretionary Use Permit process with hearings at the Planning Commission and available for appeal to the Board of Supervisors; or
- 2) Be permitted through a Zoning Permit for occasional events evaluated by type -size- intensity for a specific duration. Environmental and community groups have been advocating for periodic zoning permits vs. having event entitlements run with the land, as cumulative impacts can be assessed and standards updated.

Background: County staff recapped the requirements of the General Plan to define in the zoning code definitions and standards to address the scale and intensity of events on agricultural land. And, covered the extensive public processes to obtain industry and public input from 2014 through May 2020 Board of Supervisors Workshop, omitting the Planning Commission workshops in 2012-2013.

Statements made in certain report outs, when compared to page 9-10 Wine Industry presentation and the now the undisclosed changes in Chapter 26 are doubling concerning. The wine industry position that the County should have no oversight or regulation of promotional events held in their tasting rooms, event centers and vineyard lands is not supported by State Zone Code and environmental laws.

Bottom Line: The substantive issues raised in the 2018 letter from Shute Mihaly Weinberger LLP have not been addressed. If the Ordinance definitions and event criteria do not support the stated goals of reducing event impacts and preserving rural character or County issues permit exemptions result in an increase in impacts, as requested by wine industry, a full environment impact report is required.

PRSC also has some broader concerns:

1. Public has not been briefed on technical studies underpinning the proposed Ordinance; and
2. The accident rate and DUI data submitted to the County by PRSC in 2017 has not been factored into the consideration of public safety issues related to events.

Concern 1: Need public review of technical studies informing the Ordinance: Staff referred to technical studies that back up the standards and guidelines that will be in the Countywide Ordinance, yet the County has not had a workshop to communicate how these studies will be translated into Ordinance standards to reduce cumulative impacts. We note that these May 2020 Agenda items were not covered in the Board Workshop.

- a) Traffic: Capacity Threshold Studies only for Dry Creek and Sonoma Valley. Both VOTMA and WCA sent substantive comments to the County, including that the methodology is best suited for Sonoma Valley state highway and larger road infrastructure, not north or west county roads.
- b) Noise: Bollard Acoustical review of GP Noise Element – I’ve reviewed this memo relative to a proposed project. The red flag is whether noise studies may no longer be required if a project meets “screening criteria.”
- c) Water Availability: The General Plan has a clear standard for well impact studies. Depending on the location of adjacent wells and the size of pumps used by the new development, well impacts can occur in Zones 1 and 2. It’s important to require a hydrogeologic study in Groundwater Zones 3 and 4 to verify groundwater sustainability. Please provide information to PRSC on how Net Zero Water Use plans are expected to work for cultivation, winery operations and hospitality uses.

Concern 2: Public Safety – Sonoma County’s high accident rate, especially DUIs. Again, we request that Permit Sonoma and County decision-makers factor road safety into considerations for events on our rural-byways. PRSC submitted data into the record on Sonoma County’s higher than State average injury accident and DUI rates prior to the County-funded traffic studies. And, member groups have provided substantive evidence of higher-than-normal accident rates on our wine roads.

The California Highway Patrol statistics for the 15-year period from 2001 to 2016 are sobering.

- Over 325 people were killed on Sonoma County roads – with 75 % of these deaths DUI related; while, statewide, only 36 % of total fatalities are DUI related.
- The data shows that there is a far greater likelihood of dying in a DUI-related crash than a speeding related crash.

The draft Dry Creek Capacity Threshold Study, even with its limited collision, data substantiated our concerns:

- Data covering the years 2011 to 2015 showed that in Dry Creek and Westside roadways, 68% of injury accidents resulted in severe injuries;
- The injury collisions/ mile driven showed Westside at 56.4 % - much higher than the County or Statewide averages of 40 and 42.5% respectively.
- And, there are significantly higher accident rates in the Peak Season and weekends from 1-4 pm; these are indicators that tourist traffic (vehicle and bicycle) have a role in increased risks.

Please keep these sobering statistics in mind before approving event guidelines that allow long-duration drinking, especially through the cocktail and dinner hours, on our dangerous wine country roads.

February 28, 2021

Tennis Wick

Permit Sonoma Director

2550 Ventura Avenue

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Cc: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Georgia McDaniel

Re: February 18th Winery Events Public Workshop

Dear Director Wick:

These comments are in response to the recent virtual workshop on winery events, which I appreciate aimed to address a broad scope of topics and participant perspectives. A brief disclosure is that I'm on the board of the Valley of the Moon Alliance, though share my own comments here.

First, a process point. The confusing "re-registration" step presented to pre-registered attendees at meeting time evidently caused some heavy attrition. I trust PS will review meeting logistics to avoid similar, future confusion.

In policy terms, I encourage you and others at the County with power to shape winery events policy to view the issue through two simple and complementary lenses:

- First, while you may plan to live out your years in lovely Sonoma County, you may not always live under your current circumstances, exactly. As simplistic as it may sound, I strongly encourage you to think about what kinds of events you would want to see permitted within earshot, eyesight, or brief walk/bike/drive distance from **where and how you may live.**
- Second, I'll highlight the time-honored "duck test," as in, "if it quacks, and waddles, and molts like a duck – it's a duck!" The citizens (including businesspeople) with lives to live and work to do can't navigate wheels-within-wheels of nested logic, to understand what PS sees as "winery events." For results to have credibility (and to avoid needless downstream conflict and confusion), a normal and reasonably attentive citizen should be able to describe what "winery events" are to a neighbor over the back fence, while both enjoy a refreshing adult beverage. **For any policy, ordinance, or localized guidelines to function, it needs to be clear, relevant, relatable, and perceived as fair to stakeholders.**

So, using those two complementary lenses, how would I frame winery events in our enlightened County, aiming to balance community, ecology, and economy (so all can meaningfully continue)?

- "It quacks" (it's a winery event) **if it occurs outside normal, permitted business hours,** and beyond the scale of a small business meeting that neighbors wouldn't notice.

- It's a winery event **if it involves music or other sound that neighbors (maybe you, now or later?) can hear from a reasonable distance**, amplified or not (understanding that "amplified" may serve as a reasonable proxy in most cases).
- It's a winery event **if it involves "broadcast" advertising and promotion** (social or traditional media, beyond an email blast to local club members).
- It's a winery event **if a fee is charged** beyond typical tasing fees during normal business hours.
- It's a winery event **if it involves what a "reasonable person" would describe as a full meal**. If it involves an on-site or supplemental kitchen facility, table service, place settings that you'd use if hosting a home dinner party, seating planning, or if it takes too long to consume while standing comfortably – "quack," it's a meal. (I suggest we all take the "significant other" test on this: "Dear, I'm not asking us to plan a full meal for all our guests, it's just a 'light activity.'")

The preceding are what I'd call "foreground" factors – what neighbors and community members can fairly readily monitor (or be impacted by) real-time.

In addition, a few critical "background" factors should be considered. These are:

- Some aspects of more expansive events are not obvious real-time – of course, this includes "hidden" factors like **water use and septic capacity**. Ideally, winery events should either be confirmed to cause *de minimis* uses of this type over time, or otherwise quantify what added use will be, for event permitting consideration.
- To what extent does the County **post-validate its earlier projections** of winery buildout, events volume, or traffic? If this kind of post-validation doesn't occur in any systematic way, then the original projections are toothless. For example, I'm skeptical of the Sonoma Valley Capacity Threshold Study when it publicizes (based on underlying SCTA modeling) a cumulative growth estimate in north Sonoma Valley highway 12 traffic, from 2017 to 2040, of **only 3.1% cumulatively over 23 years**. Nobody believes that, including anyone reading these comments.
- Winery events should involve some **appropriate, business- and visitor-friendly form of event registration**, which the County can at least spot-check as needed. No reputable, good-neighbor business should object to a "trust-and-verify" protocol for assuring they're abiding by their permit terms.
- Related, the County should more **proactively monitor permit compliance, and enforce penalties** for bad behavior. How to fund this? The wineries. They're asking the surrounding community, including many who don't particularly benefit from their events, to "socialize" the addition burden that profits the wineries. It can't be that difficult to allocate costs for a focused headcount (or two) on this issue, across all the annual events that wineries so ardently desire. It simply involves the County balancing the valid interests of taxpaying citizens, and those who want to profit from, ultimately, **shared** public roads, water, soundscapes, viewscales, etc.

Thanks for the County's ongoing efforts to achieve what has seemed a distressingly elusive solution here. Among many others, including attendees of the February 18th session, I strongly encourage you to focus on winery events criteria and planning that you can easily describe to a friend or neighbor, who is likely to hear that description as clear, relevant, workable, and fair to all.

This is particularly critical in areas, like mine (Kenwood/Glen Ellen), already dealing with cumulative impacts of overconcentration, as we've accumulated more wineries than originally forecast some years ago.

Thanks.

Todd Board

Kenwood

From: [Anna Ransome](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance Comments
Date: Sunday, February 28, 2021 11:38:41 AM
Attachments: [WineryEvents Letter - FAW.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

Please see attached a letter sent on 5/15/20 by Friends of Atascadero Wetlands to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Winery Event Ordinance. Our position on winery events remains the same. I did attend the recent zoom meeting on events and was surprised that the industry is now asking for even more latitude and the County seems to be going along with events having a very narrow classification and all the rest of these large, impactful tourist gatherings are to be considered the same as wine tasting.

From an environmental standpoint, it is impossible to agree with this. Certainly most people in Sonoma County are willing to put up with a certain degree of inconvenience to support the wine industry and the impacts of increased tourism, but not to sacrifice the peaceful enjoyment of their properties and the protection of the environment.

Our County government needs to work with residents seeking to preserve the very reason most settled here: the peacefulness, quiet and rural quality of this particular place. Every effort to increase tax base does not have to come at the expense of that. Allowing unfettered winery development has resulted in too much competition in a shrinking market, so now we pay the price for over-development when wineries complain that they need to change their business model to entertainment and fine dining. The reliance on tourism is a risky gamble when we lose the very soul of place that attracted people here in the first place.

Friends of Atascadero Wetlands (FAW) fully supports Preserve Rural Sonoma County's positions on winery events. They have worked tirelessly on this issue and they have developed reasonable solutions to the impacts of unregulated event proliferation. Thank you for consideration of FAW's comments. Anna Ransome for Friends of Atascadero Wetlands (FAW)

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May 15, 2020

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

re: Winery Event Ordinance

Dear Supervisor Gorin and Board Members:

Our organization is concerned about the environmental, traffic, and noise impacts from the proliferation of winery events countywide, especially, but not limited to, the three areas of concentration. Land use conflicts have resulted from over-concentration of high-impact gatherings. A strongly written, enforceable ordinance is necessary to prevent new areas of concentration and to regulate those already identified as problematic.

The definition of events must include all types of events including trade events, business and special gatherings of ten or more visitors. The current lack of event definitions has allowed wineries to have many events, but not consider them events – even though in reality they are indeed events with major impacts on traffic safety and noise.

All visitor-serving activities need to be identified in the winery's Use Permit, whether through modification or issuance of a new permit. Many wineries have been having well-publicized events for years, where there is no allowance in their operating permits.

It is critical that the events ordinance is based on observable and measurable standards. This provides consistency and clarity for winery events – and should be enforced in all parts of the county. General recommendations are vague and inadequate. They cannot be monitored or enforced, providing regulation loopholes.

The ordinance needs a twenty-acre standard minimum for a winery operation to be able to have events. Smaller acreage allows for over-concentration of events and the resulting traffic safety and noise issues. It also causes over-commercialization of rural areas transforming their purpose from agricultural-zoned areas to overly commercial activities. The General Plan specifically aims to prevent this from happening.

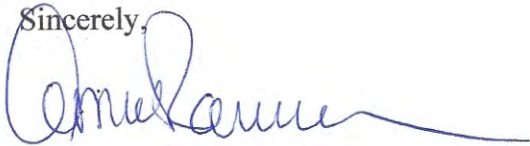
The twenty-acre minimum for events also provides more adequate setbacks from property lines so that noise impacts are lessened for neighbors and wildlife.

Allowing commercial kitchens in wineries erodes the profitability of our local restaurant industry, which is already struggling due to Covid-19 restrictions. Restaurants in wineries require expensive infrastructure that smaller, family-run businesses can ill afford.

Additional standards should include 18-foot access road width, and adequate public road sight-lines to insure safety for cars and cyclists. Dry Creek Road, an area of over-concentration, has experienced nine traffic fatalities since 1990, all DUI incidents. Over-concentration along with event-related drinking increases the risk of traffic deaths.

We urge you to implement specific, measurable guidelines that can be enforced to prevent the over-concentration of winery events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anna Ransome", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anna Ransome for Friends of Atascadero Wetlands (FAW)
P.O. Box 364
Graton CA 95444



March 8, 2021

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors:

Lynda Hopkins, Chair; Susan Gorin, David Rabbitt, Chris Coursey, James Gore,

cc: Tennis Wick, Director Permit Sonoma

Georgia McDaniel, Planner

Re: Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Supervisors and Planners:

In 1989, Sonoma County wisely adopted parcel-specific zoning. Three primary agricultural zones were established, and landowners in these zones were granted right-to-farm protections. These visionary measures were implemented to protect our county's agricultural heritage, economy, rural landscapes, and the surrounding ecosystems. However, the continued approval of new wineries and tasting rooms (now far in excess of those anticipated and mitigated for in General Plan 2020), as well as their shift to hosting many visitors and large events, has changed the nature of our wine industry and the character of our rural areas. Notably, this expansion of the wine industry continues despite reports of a market glut of wine grapes since 2018, per reporting from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Since Permit Sonoma staff and the public recognized the need for an ordinance to regulate winery events in 2016, our Sonoma County CAFF Chapter has submitted several letters urging you to enact a moratorium on permits that include events at wineries until the ordinance is implemented and suggesting appropriate standards. After attending the February 18, 2021 workshop, we have updated our recommendations, which are included below.

The current draft "framework" appears to be changing the name of some activities that have been considered "events" to "visitor serving" uses. We feel that **all activities except for drop-in and by-appointment sales and tastings, tours during tasting room hours for individuals or small groups, and invitation-only business meetings specifically focused on the wine industry with less than 25 attendees should be classified as "events."**

In addition, we believe the ordinance should contain the following provisions:

General Principles

- The Ordinance and Guidelines must contain standards that are *quantifiable, clearly observable and enforceable*, to successfully protect rural areas from over-concentration of visitor serving and hospitality uses on agriculturally-zoned land. Clear standards will also benefit the applicant by explicitly stating requirements for a winery with a tasting room.
- Cumulative impacts and over-concentration have been noted in earlier Staff Reports. Policies must be included to address this problem and institute limits.



- Use Permits and zoning run with the land, and therefore cannot be specific to one crop. Protection of land and soil for agricultural production for future generations must guide all regulations for uses in these zones. However, consumption of alcohol requires additional restrictions.
- To conform with County goal of “maximizing carbon sequestration on working lands and other open space”, buildings, patios and roads must be minimized in ag zones.

Site

- **Access** – Public roadways at least 20’ in width required (as per new fire-safe road regulations). Adequate stopping sight distances based on higher AASHTO standards for roadway intersections per DOT guidelines (do not use a lower stopping sight-distance standard). No traffic backup on public roadways. All parking must be on-site and commensurate with maximum visitor allowance. Traffic studies required; project must address traffic congestion and traffic levels, including all regional events and bicycle traffic, on a site-specific as well as cumulative basis.
- **Setbacks** – Setbacks should conform to General Plan standards and create new minimum setbacks to achieve the goals of noise standards. Noise “abating” features must be documented and maintained. Standards should be applied to ALL noise sources (not just the event center itself), including parking areas and access roads.
- **Size** – A minimum parcel area of 20 acres should be required in most cases. Staff should follow clear guidelines for granting exceptions; for example, a smaller vineyard applying for a winery and tasting room to sell 100% estate product in a low-impact location. Size of tasting room and other visitor serving areas must be *proportionate* to winery production capacity, which must be based on wine grape production acreage on site or sites owned within a designated proximity. Establish a maximum site area devoted to tasting room and visitor serving uses to ensure the use is incidental to agriculture. Only one tasting room per site in agricultural zoned lands, permitted only where grape growing and processing takes place. Implement limits on the size of the processing area, proportionate to vineyard production, and the number of custom crush operations in agricultural zones.
- **Density** – Maximum two facilities per half mile in all areas, with additional consideration for localized factors such as access road width and distance sighting, proximity to major roads, parcel size, etc.
- **Production Requirements for Sale** – Majority of grapes processed and offered for tasting or sale must be grown on-site, and at least 75% must be from Sonoma or an adjacent county.



Activities and Events (General)

- Tasting room hours - Drop-in or by appointment tasting between 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Use Permit applications for winery events and activities must include comprehensive and cumulative studies addressing:
 - a. An analysis of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with visitor uses, including tasting rooms and other buildings/hardscapes, means and distance of visitor travel, shipping, employee transportation, etc. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) is now required to be considered by state law.
 - b. Analysis of water usage associated with visitor attendance (including tasting rooms, food service, landscapes, etc.), as well as all available information on local seasonal water supply levels/ shortages, seasonal impacts and sourcing (i.e. on-site well, municipal).
 - c. Require wineries to include quarterly event and tasting room attendance numbers in their annual reporting and perform a random audit on a percentage of those each year to determine permit compliance.
 - d. Require an environmental review that assesses the cumulative impacts of existing and potential future wineries in excess of *General Plan 2020* analysis before any new permits are approved.
 - e. Traffic studies, with specifics as noted above.

Promotional and Special Events

- Event hours limited to 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
- Limit number of attendees and events per year, established on a size threshold and location basis. Maximum of 12 event days per year, including industry events. No more than two days allowed for one event.
- Limit the type of events allowed.
- Require individual event permits for non-agricultural events (i.e. weddings, fundraisers).
- Distinguish between indoors versus outdoors activities.
- Amplified outdoor sound prohibited.
- Count business trade activities as events when attendance exceeds 25 people.
- Third party rentals prohibited.

Industry-wide Events

- Event hours limited to 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM.
- Require an annual event permit for industry-wide events (each participating tasting room must have a valid use permit).
- Set a limit on the number of industry-wide event participants starting at each winery host site to spread out the impact.



- Limit industry-wide event days per year in any given appellation/area with maximum of 12 days, with no more than 2 successive days per event in an area.
- Include in analysis other events in region that would increase impacts (i.e. bike rallies, car races, lavender festival, etc.)
- Require a parking management plan and restrict large tour buses.
- Number of industry event days to be included in event use permit totals

Business Trade Activities

- Allowed for up to 25 people, invitation only, from 8:00 AM to 9:00 PM
- Meals provided by off-site caterer may be served if not sold and no menu options.

Food Service

Food service must support, and be secondary to, the wine experience.

- Allow food and wine pairing during tasting room hours only.
- Limit the number of seats or area where food service is provided.
- Limit full meals to permitted events only, except for those provided to business trade groups of less than 25 people. Must be supplied by off-site caterer.
- Limit kitchen facilities to a caterer's kitchen only.
- No menu choices or meal purchases allowed.

Monitoring, Enforcement, and Neighbor Notification & Engagement

Monitoring and enforcement is a crucial part of this policy.

- Establish an annual monitoring and educational program to periodically review use permits.
- Hire staff or contract for services to respond to complaints of event activities or other infractions (i.e. parking/noise) including on nights and weekends.
- Increase fines and penalties for unpermitted event activities.
- Require a designated on-site coordinator to address complaints.
- Require events to be calendared at the beginning of each year and annual reports including quarterly information.
- Fees for permits must cover administration and monitoring of programs including traffic/road impact fees.
- Develop and execute an improved system for notifying local area residents of permit applications.
- Existing wineries which have been hosting events without a use permit should have a time limit for applications for use permits and significant fines for any that do not meet that deadline. Include cumulative impacts of existing and "historic" wineries and/or



events as part of mitigations and cumulative impact analysis.

In closing, preservation of our agricultural lands and soil for actual agricultural production will ensure the future of our ever-evolving agricultural sector. Much of our agricultural sector has become a hospitality industry, threatening the same agriculture that it intended to support. As this pandemic has shown, local and regional food security is important to community health and resilience, and is increasingly threatened by the effects of disasters, corresponding market uncertainties, and high land prices. Our local food-producing farms have demonstrated in the last year and in all of our recent disasters how critical they are as they stepped up to provide food and services to feed our community. As our global food system is expected to suffer more setbacks from climate change, pandemics, and economic and political upheaval, local food production will be increasingly necessary. In addition, if we want our county to continue to be home to a diversity of farms and farm products, we need policies that continue to protect and support farmland for agricultural production.

As we have also noted previously, building tastings rooms and hosting events is not the only way for wineries to distinguish themselves and sell wine. On-line sales are strong, and there is great consumer interest and demand for wines with organic and biodynamic labels, as well as for vineyards that have chosen to diversify their operations with other crops and livestock.

Crop diversification will be a key factor in the climate change and economic resilience of our agricultural sector.

We renew our request to meet with Planning staff prior to the Planning Commission hearing to discuss our recommendations and hope to hear from you soon to set this date.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Krupnick, Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County



March 8, 2021

PRMD-WineryEvents@Sonoma-County.org

Re: Comments of Winery Events after workshop of Feb 18

Dear Permit Sonoma Winery Events Team,

We at Valley of The Moon Alliance appreciated the effort made to receive public comment on the winery event workshop that you held on Feb. 18, 2021. The break out groups really didn't have enough time to discuss the questions you posed to any extent. It is an issue with a lot of history and background information needed to make an educated opinion.

VOTMA also appreciates the attempt to develop a "balanced" approach between the environmental impacts on neighborhoods and county resources vs the wine industry. VOTMA recognizes that a healthy wine industry is an essential part of the agricultural fabric of the County. We must also recognize that the essential foundation of any policy development on this subject is the natural beauty of the environmental resources and the rural character of this county, which need to be protected and preserved. It is this beauty and the quality of life that must be maintained. In particular, increased traffic on our roads means winery event permits must be more sensitive to the events' contributions to traffic congestion issues.

In the overview starting the workshop, VOTMA was concerned with the explanation for the direction of the county wide ordinance /standard. It was explained that the guidelines being developed for the noted areas of concentration were to apply to those areas of concentration, while the county standards would apply to the rest of the county. There continues to be some confusion about what is to be governed by guidelines in these areas and what is to be governed by an ordinance. This seems a bit backwards. It seems there should be consistent standards throughout the county and the areas with guidelines should include those standards plus some extra protection because of concentration impacts.

Relationship of Guidelines and Ordinance: We request that the County clarify what it intends to address in the ordinance and what will be covered by the guidelines for the current three Local Areas of Concentration, and how the two relate to each other. In addition, it would be helpful to know if these are to be developed on concurrent timelines. Clearly, the guidelines being crafted for the three current areas of concentration need to be more protective than the current County practices and can be more

specific to the areas; however, there needs to be a “baseline” from which to determine how a project fits into a neighborhood.

It seems essential that there be consistent definitions that govern both these guidelines and the ordinance. In particular, there needs to be a common definition of an “event”. It would make little sense for an event to be defined differently in different parts of the county.

Definition of an “event”: No informed discussion about guidelines or standards or ordinances can take place unless and until we agree what an “event” is. A clear and enforceable definition is needed. Referring to the characteristics listed to require a zoning permit for a cultural event, a suggested list more specific to winery events is noted below. An “event” would have any one or more of the following characteristics:

- When amplified sound is used.
- When “happening” is scheduled outside of tasting room hours.
- When “happening” is advertised to the public or wine club members.
- When there is a fee charged.
- When a sit down meal is provided.
- When there are more than 15-25 persons attending.

Standards based on current county wide practices are needed to be written down and could eventually be codified within the zoning codes for agriculturally zoned lands. It would serve as a “baseline” from which applications could be considered on a case by case basis using current practices. If an application is in the current areas of concentration, there would be further guidelines for consideration; if outside there could be some flexibility with a discretionary application and the BZA/Planning Commissioners.

Management Tools Needed: The County needs to be able to find that the cumulative impact of winery events have been adequately addressed, and it needs to make required findings of consistency between its General Plan and any winery use permit application. How can it do this without better data that aggregates the number, location and attendance of these events? As the purpose of these efforts is to manage winery events so as to allow the industry to promote its products in a responsible and effective manner while minimizing the adverse impacts of events on County traffic and community quality of life, we believe the following need to be included in these efforts:

- An event coordination program is needed county wide to avoid overlapping event days and multiple events in one area. An event coordinator program was included in the latest General Plan but never fully or successfully executed. There should be a system under which wineries’ planned events are noticed to the County well in advance and coordinated to avoid overlaps that will impact the area.
- Every winery approval with events should be conditioned for the winery to report its events and the attendance at each of the events by the end of the month in which the event occurs. This is not difficult. Any well managed winery will keep tabs on the number of attendees that visit its facility and at its events, and this data should be reported, aggregated, by sub regions in the County, and made public. How can CACs or the County make informed decisions about the

impact of a proposed winery use permit and its proposed events if they do not have accurate data on the already expected number of permitted events and their expected attendance?

- Enforcement is essential. Ideally, the County should undertake random audits of a few wineries a year to review their use permits. It would serve as a reminder of what the use permit says, especially if the permit was approved awhile ago or if there are new owners. If County resource constraints make this difficult, why not require an annual, sworn, certified, signed statement from each winery's principal operating official that it is in compliance with its use permit and its restrictions on the number and reporting of events? It may be noted that any new standards or relaxing of definitions are not applicable to existing winery use permits and may need reminding of that too.
- A County wide process for identifying areas of concentration due to cumulative impacts is needed. The three current areas of concentration were developed by numbers of events and visitors and the impacts that have happened because of the concentration. More attention needs to be made of the environmental impacts on the groundwater, traffic and road safety BEFORE the area develops adverse impacts.

These are some of the reasons VOTMA feels a county wide ordinance/standard needs to be developed. The guidelines being crafted for the three current areas of concentration need to be more protective than the current county practices and can be more specific to the areas. There needs to be a "baseline" from which to determine how a project fits into a neighborhood.

Thank you for considering VOTMA's comments.

Kathy Pons, President

Valley of The Moon Alliance Board of Directors

From: [Roger Peters](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Scott Orr](#); [Tennis Wick](#); [Susan Gorin](#); [g_carr@sbcglobal.net](#); [Caitlin Cornwall](#); [exec@votma.org](#); [mobilizesonoma@vom.com](#)
Subject: Comments on Winery Events Policy
Date: Monday, March 08, 2021 5:30:32 PM

Project Website,

I have a belated comment on the draft Winery Events Policy. I did attend the initial portion of the workshop on 2/18/21, but had to drop off to fulfill another obligation just as the subgroup split out was initiated. I did not hear the feedback from those subgroups, so don't know if my comment has otherwise been raised.

The comment is more from a conceptual perspective and focuses on the concept of inserting into the winery events guidelines a more dynamic approach to evaluating the acceptable level of event use authorizations. It starts from what I believe is a non-controversial observation: that to be effective from a community/geographical congestion impact (traffic/noise/etc) perspective, the County would be wise to look beyond the individual permit by permit approach in setting "maximum persons at one time" and/or "maximum number of persons per day/weekend" limit points. Instead, the County should look to regulate/control/monitor the cumulative impact (per time zone or day) within defined zone or concentration areas. Of course between and among the zones there is another layer of impact that must also, depending on the nature or time/season of the event, be considered. That latter would be the case where there was a Valley wide event scheduled, or where given the nature and time of the event (beautiful weekend late summer, with clear skies and warm weather) the Valley will fill regardless of whether there is an "industry" Valley-wide event scheduled. To make that sort of flexible view of managing events in the aggregate a realistic possibility PS would need to be able to ramp up/down the active use of permitted events on a granular (permit) level.

To accomplish the sort of dynamic event-management, as applied on the ground on a permit by permit basis, that those situations require, the County would need to shift from a static (fixed) permit model to a flexible permit. The latter would allow restrictions on events and event characteristics to float up to down (less restrictive or more restrictive) in allowable event activities by area and by permit, if need be. To be fully effective, that authority should apply not just to events, but also to on-going tasting/pairing activities. The aggregate number of persons engaged at the wineries, and the associated vehicles and traffic that result, are the same whether the participant is going to an event or is just engaged in normal wine tasting.

Implementing a flexible event management permitting tool would not be difficult to insert into use permits in terms of permit language; they would be much more difficult to apply and enforce. But at this point without the flexibility built into permit COAs (other than the ability to declare a general nuisance) the design and enforcement issues are never even reached. Instead, so long as the permit holder is under the number of events and per person restrictions (if any have been imposed) set out in the COAs, the permit holder would claim by right the ability to fully utilize the permit scope. From the permit holder perspective that principle appears to apply regardless of whether the geographical area where the permit holder resides

has long since moved from a manageable state of cumulative event impacts to an over-concentrated state.

That situation means that the County can only gradually implement a flexible permit event scope by imposing such conditions on "new" permits granted. Even there, and absent clear COAs to the contrary, we heard at the SVCAC hearing on events that if a new permit is granted the grantee cannot be forced to ratchet back the vested authorization down stream if the area becomes unacceptably over-concentrated. I urge PS to reject/cut off that unacceptable possible outcome by explicitly inserting scale down authority reserved to PS to avoid adverse impacts, either on a situational basis or on a long term over-concentration basis. New permits should perhaps instead set a lower absolute limit on events and activities (at least x events), but reserve the ability to titrate permitted use above that zone as conditions and circumstances warrant. The permit holder would be left with the certainty of a not less than x number of events/activities/persons at one time/or day from which to make a go/no-go investment decision, with expansive earnings/marketing potential above that zone, but no guarantee, within the flex zone as to actual usage. In this reverse boundary approach (i.e., focusing first on bounding the lower side) and then adding upper sides; i.e., it would make sense just from an efficiency/monitoring standpoint to also impose a max bounding the upper side (i.e., not more than the lesser of: the max sanitary or parking space capacity at any one point in time for the facility and/or a specified total max number of customers per day, as a limit on event impacts.

By implementing this approach PS would gain the flexibility that it needs (and presumably desires) to dynamically manage the aggregate impacts of winery (or other) events across both geographic specific zones and regionally across the Valley for major impact situations.

One final thought re existing permits: there does seem to be a carrot and stick opportunity here to back-fill the dynamic model into existing permits. As I read the Dry Creek Valley guidelines, the new expanded event menu is only available to "new" use permits. The SV guidelines that PS has circulated is silent on whether existing permit holders could step up/into any broader event menu the guidelines might provide by filing an application. Since existing permit holders seem adamant that they cannot be permit-constrained by new guidelines (i.e., they are not bound by any conditions imposed on new project permits), there is no good reason to allow such holders to be allowed to take advantage of any upside the new guidelines might provide. You just can't expect to have it both ways. However, if an existing permit holder were willing to agree to be bound by a flexible boundary concept that provided upside for the permit holder and the ability for PS to flexible manage within agreed boundary points (low and high), perhaps that might produce a win-win outcome. That carrot should necessarily include some give on the lower boundary (i.e., relative to the current permit) to avoid a situation in which the permit holder would essentially be allowed to eat some cake and still have it too, regardless of the impact. We all know how well that works from an equity perspective.

Thanks for considering this comment.

Roger Peters

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From: [Ted Lemon](#)
To: [district5](#); [Leo Chyi](#); [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Tennis Wick](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: winery events
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:09:15 PM

Dear Supervisor Hopkins and Sonoma County Officials:

Littorai Wines is a small 6000 cs winery in unincorporated Sonoma County west of Sebastopol. We have existed since 1993 and received a Use Permit for our facility from Sonoma County in 2007. We are visitors by-appointment only. Some of this letter takes up the language suggested by the Sonoma County Vintners but not all. We ask that you read it carefully.

We do not need to communicate to you the extraordinary challenges all of us have experienced in the last several years: wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shut offs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. We will produce only a single Pinot Noir wine from Sonoma County in 2020 due to the impacts of smoke. You are also well aware that the wine community is a major contributor to our county's economy. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has not only survived these challenges, but many of us have maintained full payrolls during the downturn, volunteered our teams to organizations like the Redwood Empire Food Bank and increased our charitable donations in the county including the Sonoma County Vintner's Foundation. We cannot survive more regulation that is neither warranted nor necessary. Over the past 5 years, wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, and the ability of wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country has greatly diminished. With this and the wine marketplace experiencing significant changes, wineries are required to market directly to consumers in order to simply survive and sell their wines

We hereby request that the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by Sonoma County Vintners be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Planning Commission in May 2021 and the Board of Supervisors in August 2021. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the General Plan and the Zoning Code and already clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation and noise. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery operations and those few have been resolved with communication.

We are a winery deeply committed to the idea that all wineries should sell their products by the quality therein and not by gimmicks or lightly veiled events designed to be primarily forms

of entertainment at which wineries can just move product.

The challenge for you lies in finding the appropriate balance between the need to avoid over regulating an already burdened business and the legitimate concerns of neighbors who have complaints about events which are really nothing more than entertainment at which the winery can deplete inventory. This is no easy task. We ask that you lean to the side of giving the wineries more flexibility rather than less.

Thank you,

Ted Lemon
Proprietor
Littorai Wines
788 Gold Ridge Rd
Sebastopol, CA 95472
P: 707-823-9586
F: 707-823-9589
www.littorai.com

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From: [Margie Healy](#)
To: [Lynda Hopkins](#)
Cc: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Tennis Wick](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Leo Chyi](#)
Subject: Permit Sonoma - Draft Ordinance for Winery Event Guidelines - FROM: Gary Heck, Owner and President, F. Korbel and Bros.
Date: Monday, March 15, 2021 11:40:06 AM

Dear Supervisor Hopkins,

Located in the Russian River Valley for close to 140 years, Korbel Champagne Cellars, like many Sonoma County businesses, has faced the challenges of wildfires, floods, power shut-offs, diminished tourism, and pandemic challenges.

It is our understanding that Permit Sonoma is drafting an ordinance for winery event guidelines. It is important that this organization as well as other Sonoma County officials realize what is crucial to the wine community's business structure and what basic marketing and operational needs are required to survive and be successful in today's environment.

As strong supporters of Sonoma County Vintners, we therefore strongly urge that their **Winery Guidance and Definitions** be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Planning Commission in May 2021 and the Board of Supervisors in August 2021. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the General Plan and the Zoning Code and already clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise.

As an employer of over 300 employees in Sonoma County, we cannot survive more regulation that is neither warranted nor necessary.

Thank you,



Gary B. Heck
Owner and President
F. Korbel and Bros.

cc:
Leo Chyi, District Director for Supervisor Hopkins
Tennis Wisk, Director of Permit Sonoma
Georgia McDaniel, Planner III of Permit Sonoma
General Inquiry Email for Permit Sonoma

Margie Healy
Vice President, Communications
Korbel Champagne Cellars
13250 River Road
Guerneville, CA 95446
(707) 824-7715

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From: [Carmen Castaldi](#)
To: [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Very concerned about recent Permit Sonoma meetings
Date: Friday, March 19, 2021 4:33:17 PM
Attachments:

March 19, 2021

Georgia McDaniel
georgia.mcdaniel@sonoma-county.org

Dear Ms. McDaniel,

As members of the Sonoma County business community since 1959, Rodney Strong Vineyards and all of our employees take great pride in our local roots. We look forward to continuing to contribute to a sustainable, high quality of life that Sonoma County offers for all of our local businesses, employees, customers, and guests.

The challenges during the past several years have been many, affecting virtually every segment of the community. Like our neighbors, we have been significantly impacted by wildfires, smoke exposure, flooding, power shut-offs, pandemic—and the severely diminished tourist trade and visitation that these events have wrought.

In the face of these many challenges, we continue to be inspired by the resilience of our employees and their families—along with our friends and neighbors throughout Sonoma County. We remain committed to our community and look forward to continuing our work within the local wine and wider business community to ensure that our region remains a world-class destination for food & wine tourism.

Having participated in the recent Permit Sonoma workshop, we would request that the positions of the Sonoma County Vintners related to Winery Guidance and Definitions be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Planning Commission in May and the Board of Supervisors in August of this year.

As you know, wineries are subject to the General Plan and Zoning Code, which already clearly identify facility capacity, as well as addressing hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. Sonoma County Code Enforcement has reported very few complaints related to winery operations and those few have been easily resolved via direct communication and dialogue.

In my capacity as President of Rodney Strong Vineyards and member of the Executive Committee at Sonoma County Vintners, I feel a strong responsibility to the employees and members whom I represent. I urge you and your colleagues to continue to engage with the many constituents represented by the broader wine community in working together to develop and improve a regulatory framework that will ensure a bright future for all businesses and residents that call Sonoma County home.

Sincerely,



Carmen Castaldi
President

11455 Old Redwood Hwy, Healdsburg, CA 95448



Committed to Community Since 1959



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From: Andy Peay <andy@peayvineyards.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 18, 2021 5:18 PM
To: district4 <district4@sonoma-county.org>; Jenny Chamberlain <jchamber@sonoma-county.org>
Cc: Nick Peay <nick@peayvineyards.com>
Subject: Permit Sonoma

Dear Supervisor Gore,

I am alarmed to learn about some of the restrictions being considered in the Permit Sonoma regulation the Planning Commission and Supervisors are reviewing. We live in Healdsburg and have operated a winery in Cloverdale for 25 years and while I recognize the county is changing in some ways (more tourists and traffic, for example), I think it is very important to recognize not only how much the wine industry contributes to the County's economy but also how difficult it has been - and looks like it will be - to operate a business here. The challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shut offs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts has been brutal. As is, our business is very tenuous. Throwing more roadblocks and loopholes for us to operate, and potentially not allowing us to hold wine events at our winery, would be very detrimental to us. I am all for limiting huge gatherings and frequent weddings in rural areas that are unrelated to the business of making and selling wine but open houses, pick up parties, distributor lunches, and standard events wineries host as part of their day to day business should not be capriciously restricted. I ask that the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by the Sonoma County Vintners be presented and considered by the Planning Commission in May 2021 and the Board of Supervisors in August 2021.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andy & Nick Peay
Peay Vineyards
227 Treadway Drive
Cloverdale, CA 95425

Andy Peay
Peay Vineyards
m. 415.531.2756
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IG: peayandy, peay_vineyards

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From: [Kim Stare Wallace](#)
To: [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Winery Guidance and Definitions
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 3:08:11 PM
Attachments:

Dear Ms. McDaniel,

I am the President and second-generation owner of our family winery, Dry Creek Vineyard, located in Healdsburg. I grew up in Dry Creek Valley, having moved here in 1972 when my parents founded Dry Creek Vineyard, the first new winery in the region following Prohibition. I have seen the vast changes in Sonoma County over the past nearly five decades, from a sleepy farming community to a thriving tourist destination. I can remember when the storefronts in downtown Healdsburg were empty, and the resulting revenues that benefit the county were virtually nonexistent.

Unfortunately, due to wildfires, floods, diminished tourism and a global pandemic, many of the doors to our local businesses, including wineries, are closing again this time permanently. The impact of these closures will reach far and wide in our community, affecting families, nonprofit contributions, tax revenue and much more. Now is not the time to increase regulations and throw more roadblocks into the path of new wineries that are looking to contribute to our local economy.

Distributor consolidation and an influx of wine from around the globe have changed the landscape of the wine industry. Building consumer relationships, as well as marketing and selling wine through the Direct-to-Consumer channels (tasting room, wine club and e-commerce) is ABSOLUTELY essential for survival in the business today. The ability to engage directly with our consumers through wine club functions, educational events and tasting room visits, has become a key facet of a successful winery business. This is particularly true for the hundreds of family-owned wineries upon which the Sonoma County wine industry was built, and it is what led to the revitalization of our county's economic base.

It is important to recognize that the vast majority of wineries in Sonoma County are extremely conscientious small business owners, running their wineries with a high degree of integrity and ethics. They are considerate neighbors and play by the rules. In fact, many of our wineries have partnered with regional organizations to create thoughtful and realistic approaches to the definitions behind the distinction between "activities" and "events" for the benefit of both the wineries and the surrounding neighbors. The Winery Guidance and Definitions, developed by Sonoma County Vintners, is an example of this collaboration, and should be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

I urge you please do not make the dire situation that is the revitalization of our local businesses into an impossible one. Sonoma County is dependent on the health, economic impact and vibrancy of our wine and grape industries. We can do better than a one-size-fits-all approach in this "new normal" of unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

Kim Stare Wallace

President

707.433.1000 ext. 130
Kim@drycreekvineyard.com
3770 Lambert Bridge Rd.
Healdsburg, CA 95448



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