



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 4/28/2026

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Scott Orr, Director (707) 565-1754, Haleigh Frye, Planner III (707) 565-2477

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Second

Title:

1:45 P.M. Appeal of a Use Permit Approval to allow a commercial cannabis cultivation and centralized processing operation at 4707 Bloomfield Road in Petaluma. Permit Sonoma File No. UPC19-0012; APN 027-050-022.

Recommended Action:

Hold a public hearing and adopt a Resolution denying the appeal, find the project consistent with Cannabis Program Update and Final Environmental Impact Report, and upholding the Board of Zoning Adjustment's decision to approve the commercial cannabis operation for 5,000 square feet of indoor cannabis cultivation, 10,000 square feet of mixed-light cultivation, accessory propagation, and centralized processing. (Second District)

Executive Summary:

This report presents an appeal of a Board of Zoning Adjustment's (BZA) decision to approve a Use Permit to allow a commercial cannabis cultivation operation at 4707 Bloomfield Road in Petaluma, APN 027-050-022. The Use Permit was approved on August 22, 2024. An appeal of the approval was filed by Ayris Hatton and Allan Kipperman (appellants) of 4760 Bloomfield Road (APN 027-050-044), neighbors of the project, on August 27, 2024. A hearing before the Board of Supervisors was scheduled for January 28, 2025, but was continued in order for the applicant to further address comments made by the appellant and for staff to perform additional environmental review as necessary.

The proposed project includes a commercial cannabis operation including mixed-light cultivation and indoor cultivation totaling 15,000 square feet of cultivation area, and centralized processing on a 113-acre parcel zoned Land Extensive Agriculture in the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan boundary.

The appeal cites concerns related to the hours of operation, traffic, noise, and lighting. During the August 22, 2024 hearing, the BZA heard concerns from the public including those cited in the appeal, and discussed hours of operation, long term operational noise, lighting, access to the site, and trips associated with project operations. The BZA approved Conditions of Approval and the mitigation measures included in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) to address these concerns.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the project and circulated through the State Clearinghouse for public review from April 22, 2024 through May 22, 2024. After the close of the public hearing on August 22, 2024, the Board of Zoning Adjustments determined that all potential impacts could be mitigated to a less

than significant level and adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on December 9, 2025. Although the Use Permit was approved by the BZA prior to adoption of the Program Update, the project has been evaluated for consistency with the policies and impact conclusions of the certified EIR (Attachment 4 Project Specific Consistency Analysis). Where applicable, the project remains subject to the regulatory standards in effect at the time the application was deemed complete, consistent with the transition provisions adopted as part of the Program Update. Although consistent with the program update, which will go into effect on July 1, 2026, this application is being processed under the current ordinance.

Discussion:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Bloomfield Flowers, LLC., proposes:

- 5,000 square feet of indoor cultivation area within a new 6,480 square foot building;
- 10,000 square feet of mixed-light cultivation area within a new 12,960 square foot greenhouse; and
- Centralized processing and accessory indoor propagation within a new 10,000 square foot building (see Attachment 2 Board of Zoning Adjustments Staff Report and Exhibits, Site Plan, page 57). (Centralized processing is the processing of cannabis grown on and offsite.)

The project site is located in a previously graded, flat, graveled area on a portion of the parcel formerly used as a quarry decommissioned prior to 1980 (see Attachment 2 Board of Zoning Adjustments Staff Report and Exhibits, Site Photos, page 59). The total area premises footprint, including all proposed uses, is approximately 2.5-acres of the 113-acre parcel.

The mixed-light and indoor cultivation operations would operate year-round, seven days a week, generally from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, with extended hours during harvest, typically 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. While these are the typical and expected operating hours, operations would be allowed to be conducted seven days a week, 24-hours a day as needed. Management personnel would be on-call 24 hours a day, seven days per week, to address any operational or emergency issues. The state Department of Cannabis Control classifies delivery and shipping of cannabis as “distribution”. All delivery and shipping activities, including those carried out by third-party distributors transporting cannabis to other licensed premises, would be limited to Monday through Friday between 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The cannabis operation would employ up to 19 staff including a combination of full time, part time, and administrative staff. The operation would not be open to the public.

The agricultural parcel supports a variety of existing uses including a horse training facility, commercial organic vegetable farm, bee keeping, and livestock grazing, which would continue to operate independently of the cannabis operation. The majority of the 113-acre parcel (over 100-acres or ~88% of the parcel) will be reserved for these uses.

PROJECT SITE AND CONTEXT

Background

The project parcel is located in a western unincorporated agricultural area of Sonoma County, southwest of the City of Sebastopol and northwest of the City of Rohnert Park and the City of Cotati, and within the Census Designated Place of Bloomfield. Existing development on the parcel includes a horse arena, four barns, one

greenhouse, and several outbuildings for the existing agricultural uses (see Attachment 2 Board of Zoning Adjustments Staff Report and Exhibits, Overall Site Plan, page 56).

General Plan Land Use and Zoning

The General Plan Land Use designation on the parcel is Land Extensive Agriculture with a 160-acre density. The site is also designated Land Extensive Agriculture by the Petaluma Dairy Belt Area Plan.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning

The area is largely rural consisting of relatively large parcels and a combination of scattered residential development and undeveloped properties with rolling hills and nonnative grassland interspersed with sparse oak woodland and small stands of Eucalyptus. Surrounding parcels are zoned Land Extensive Agriculture, with low residential densities of 160 acres or 60 acres per dwelling unit (LEA 160 or LEA 60, respectively). Surrounding land uses are predominantly pastureland and dairies with scattered residential development. The nearest offsite residence is approximately 330 feet from the project site boundary and 400 feet from the proposed mixed-light greenhouse. All other offsite residences are over 1,000 feet from the project site.

ISSUES RAISED IN THE APPEAL LETTER

The appeal letter is provided as Attachment 1. The issues are addressed below.

1. Hours of Operation

The appellants raise concerns with the hours of operation, stating they are excessive given the rural nature of the area.

Staff Analysis

The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the project are considered compatible with the agricultural zoning and surrounding land uses in the vicinity. This is evident by the large parcel size of the site (113 acres) and surrounding parcels that range in size from about 30-290 acres and average 96 acres in size.

The area surrounding the project parcel is characterized as rural. Parcels in the general vicinity are relatively large, with a significant portion under a land conservation contract (Williamson Act) or conservation easements. Surrounding land uses include grazing and dairy operations. Within a 1,000-foot radius of the project parcel there is Tremari Ranch and Dougan Dairy.

Dairies as well as other agricultural operations are allowed to operate 24 hours a day. A typical 24-hour dairy operation involves continuous care and management of dairy cows, with milking occurring two to three times daily at set intervals, typically including late evening and early morning hours, after sunset and before sunrise. There is regular truck traffic for the transportation of milk offsite, typically by milk tanker (10-15,000 pounds empty and 80,000+ pounds full), after each scheduled milking, along with deliveries of feed, supplies, and other dairy products regularly.

Dairies, grazing or ranching operations, and other outdoor agriculture such as hay and grape production include continuous care and maintenance of facilities and animals and extended workdays beyond daylight hours. This work often includes large scale equipment and facilities like tractors, pickup trucks or Utility Terrain

Vehicles (UTVs), forage harvesters, feed mixer trucks, balers, continuous non contained night lighting, and large barns and productions facilities.

The Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update and Environmental Impact Report (EIR), evaluated the operational characteristics of indoor and mixed-light cannabis cultivation in agricultural districts, including potential impacts related to noise, lighting, traffic, and compatibility with surrounding uses. The EIR identified mitigation measures requiring, among other things, construction noise controls; compliance with operational noise standards; shielding and direction of outdoor lighting; odor control measures; and adherence to performance standards designed to protect nearby sensitive receptors and agricultural operations. With implementation of these measures, operational impacts were determined to be less than significant. However, the EIR concluded that temporary construction noise impacts could be significant and unavoidable, and a Statement of Overriding Considerations was adopted by the Board of Supervisors for these short-term impacts. The proposed project would comply with all applicable mitigation measures and would not involve construction activities beyond those evaluated in the EIR. Therefore, construction noise associated with the project would not represent a new or more severe impact than previously analyzed, and the project remains within the scope of the certified EIR.

The cannabis operation would operate year-round, seven days a week within the proposed project structures. No outdoor cultivation would occur. Primary operational hours for the cultivation and centralized processing operation are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and 7:00 am to 7:00 pm during harvests for the majority of activities. Conditions of Approval allow 24-hour operations as necessary to address discrete operational needs. Management personnel will be on-call 24 hours a day, seven days per week, to address any operational or emergency issues. Vendor deliveries and shipping activities would be limited to 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. The cannabis operation would hire up to 19 employees including full and part time staff. The operation would not be open to the public.

Limited operational activities that may occur outside typical daytime hours would take place within enclosed structures, would be subject to adopted conditions of approval and applicable County performance standards, and are comparable in scale and intensity to other agricultural activities permitted in the area. As analyzed in the EIR, such operations would not significantly change the rural agricultural character of the vicinity.

For these reasons, the Project's hours of operation, as conditioned, do not result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of impacts beyond those analyzed in the EIR.

2. Traffic and Transportation

The appellants raise concerns with traffic generated by the proposed cannabis operation including potential physical impacts to Bloomfield Road from project generated trips.

Staff Analysis

The EIR identified screening criteria for Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)-efficient areas. This project is within a VMT efficient area as identified in Figure 3.14-1 of the EIR indicating that it would not exceed the County's VMT significance threshold of 15 percent above existing countywide VMT per employee. The project falls within EIR screening criteria and does not create a new or more severe VMT or traffic impact. The project also does not include events. Therefore, a project specific traffic study is not required.

The Sonoma County Public Infrastructure Roads Division is responsible for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the County-Maintained public road system, including Bloomfield Road. According to their Pavement Preservation Program an approximately one-mile portion of Bloomfield Road that runs from its intersection at Valley Ford Road to Tremari Road (postmile 10 to 11.06) was repaved in 2024. In 2021, an approximately one-mile portion of Bloomfield Road (postmile 14.12 to 15.04) was repaved from its intersection at Canfield Road to Pleasant Hill Road. While the applicant for this project cannot be required to improve the public roadway which is maintained by the County, they are required by Project Conditions of Approval 102-107 to improve each project driveway entrance such that it conforms to Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations §1270 et seq. and County standards and to allow for concurrent emergency ingress and egress as well as the smooth and safe movement of passenger vehicles entering and exiting the public road (Bloomfield Road) that provides access to the property. Additionally, the BZA required that a Condition of Approval (Condition No. 30) be included specifying that the two ingress/egress access points shown on project plans are the only driveways authorized for non-emergency use by the project.

For these reasons, traffic impacts are within the scope of the EIR analysis and do not result in new or substantially more severe impacts.

3. Long Term Operational Noise Inclusive of Ventilation Fans

The appellants raise concerns with long term operational noise from the proposed cannabis operation inclusive of ventilation fans.

Staff Analysis

The EIR evaluated potential operational noise from cannabis facilities, including mechanical equipment such as HVAC systems and ventilation fans. It determined that in agricultural and resource districts, operational noise would not exceed County standards where adequate setbacks were maintained from property lines, residential zoning districts, and sensitive uses.

A project-specific noise study (July 29, 2025) and subsequent memorandum (April 7, 2026), Attachment 6, were prepared by Bollard Acoustical Consultants, Inc. evaluated existing ambient noise conditions and modeled operational noise associated with the project, including mechanical equipment, on-site vehicle activity, and the proposed emergency backup generator. The project specific noise study confirms that noise generated by project operations, inclusive of external HVAC and onsite traffic circulation, are within General Plan Noise Standards in Table NE-2 and not increase existing baseline ambient noise levels by 10 or more dBA at the nearest sensitive receptor, which also demonstrates compliance at the further sensitive receptors. The table below represents combined noise level exposures at the four residential receptors from the noise study and is then followed by Table NE-2 from the General Plan Noise Element.

Table 1. Combined Noise Level Exposure at Residential Receptors

APN ¹	Calculated Combined L ₅₀ (dBA)	
	Daytime ²	Nighttime ³
027-040-019 (R-1)	31	30
027-040-004 (R-2)	39	39
027-050-044 (R-3)	31	30
027-050-043 (R-4)	31	30

027-050-043 (R-4)	31	30
1. Long-term noise survey locations are identified in Figure 1 in the Noise Study		
2. Daytime hours: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.		
3. Nighttime hours: 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.		

Table NE- 2 Maximum Allowable Exterior Noise Exposures for No transportation Noise Sources

Hourly Metric ¹ , dBA	Daytime (7a.m. to 10 p.m.)	Nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.)
L50 (30 minutes in any hour)	50	45
L50 (15 minutes in any hour)	55	50
L50 (4 minutes 48 seconds in any hour)	60	55
L50 (72 seconds in any hour)	65	60
1. The sound level exceeded n% of the time in any hour. For example, the L50 is the value exceeded 50% of the time or the median noise level		

Based on the acoustical study and applicable performance standards, long-term operational noise impacts are within the scope of the EIR analysis and do not result in new significant impacts or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

4. Night Lighting and Glare

The appellants raise concerns with ambient lighting at night and daytime glare from the proposed cannabis operations structures.

Staff Analysis

The project includes one mixed-light greenhouse, two fully enclosed buildings for indoor cultivation and processing, and limited exterior security lighting. These types of structures and lighting are consistent with the indoor and mixed-light cultivation facilities evaluated in the EIR.

Interior lighting associated with cultivation activities would occur within enclosed structures. Exterior lighting would be limited to security and operational needs. As described in the Project Specific Consistency Analysis (Attachment 4), the project is subject to Mitigation Measure 3.1-4b, which requires that exterior lighting be shielded and directed downward to prevent spillover onto adjacent properties and that building materials be reviewed to avoid substantial glare. The submitted lighting plan and technical sheets for proposed exterior lighting, greenhouse frost film, and greenhouse screening device (Attachment 7) demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements. Exterior lighting would be fully shielded, downward-directed, and motion-sensing. The proposed greenhouse would utilize a frosted film with low reflectance, and as conditioned, would be limited to a maximum of 10 percent visible light reflectance.

Because the project incorporates these design features and applicable mitigation measures, nighttime lighting and potential glare impacts would remain within the scope of the impacts evaluated in the EIR and would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated. Accordingly, the concerns raised in the appeal regarding

lighting and glare are addressed by the project design and applicable mitigation measures.

5. Project Odors

The appellants raise concerns with odor impacts resulting from the proposed cannabis operation.

Staff Analysis

The EIR evaluated odor impacts associated with cannabis cultivation and concluded that compliance with setback requirements and required odor control systems (carbon filtration and ventilation) would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

The project conforms to the setbacks currently effective in Sec. 26-88-254 as well as those studied under the EIR for approved permits and applications in process. Specifically, all mixed-light cultivation is over 100 feet from property lines and 300 feet from offsite residences, and indoor cultivation and support uses exceed the setbacks of the base zone for structural development. Specifically, the nearest off-site residence is 330 feet away from the nearest proposed project structure and 400 feet from the proposed mixed-light greenhouse. The next closest 5 residences are between 1,000 and 2,000 feet away. The nearest cluster of residentially zoned parcels is about 3,000 feet away.

The project does not include outdoor cultivation or events. The project does not exceed the scale or operational characteristics evaluated under the EIR. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.3-4a requires that the air filtration system shall be sufficient to prevent internal odors from being emitted externally and must rely on odor control mechanisms so that odors are not detectable outside the structure.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Although the BZA adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration in 2024, the Board's consideration of the appeal occurs after certification of the EIR. The EIR provides a comprehensive programmatic analysis of cannabis cultivation in agricultural zoning districts, including impacts related to noise, traffic, lighting, biological resources, and compatibility with surrounding agricultural operations.

Staff has evaluated the proposed project against the environmental analysis and mitigation framework contained in the EIR and determined that the project falls within the scope of impacts analyzed in the EIR. The project's operational characteristics, scale, and location are consistent with the assumptions evaluated in the EIR, and implementation of applicable mitigation measures and Conditions of Approval ensures consistency with the EIR's impact conclusions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors deny the appeal, find the project consistent with the adopted Cannabis Program EIR, and uphold the Board of Zoning Adjustment's decision to approve the request for a cannabis use permit at 4707 Bloomfield Road, Petaluma, subject to the Conditions of Approval.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

January 28, 2025: [10:30 A.M. - Appeal of a Use Permit Approval to allow a commercial cannabis cultivation and centralized processing operation at 4707 Bloomfield Road in Petaluma. Permit Sonoma File No. UPC19-0012; APN 027-050-022. <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7101803&GUID=986EA90D-9412-4345-AF03-A8E1ECF65872&Options=&Search=>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7101803&GUID=986EA90D-9412-4345-AF03-A8E1ECF65872&Options=&Search=)

The Board of Supervisors did not open the public hearing and approved the continuance of this item to a date uncertain.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None. This is an at-cost project application with costs paid by the applicant. Appeal fees were paid by the appellant.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Board of Supervisors Resolution
- Attachment 2: August 22, 2024 BZA Staff Report and Attachments
- Attachment 3: August 22, 2024 Board of Zoning Adjustments Minutes
- Attachment 4: Project Specific Consistency Analysis
- Attachment 5: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Attachment 6: Project Specific Noise Study and Memorandum
- Attachment 7: Greenhouse Glare and Lighting Technical Sheets
- Attachment 8: Appeal Submission
- Attachment 9: Appellant Letter
- Attachment 10: Staff Presentation
- Attachment 11: Appellant Presentation

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

N/A