



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/16/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Scott Orr, Director (707) 565-1900

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

Recommended Action:

Receive recommendations of the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee.

Executive Summary:

The Board of Supervisors established the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee on January 7, 2025, to review current best practices in effective, fair, and transparent code enforcement within Sonoma County with proposed outcomes: improve case resolution times and prioritization of high-risk violations; enhance public compliance and engagement with the enforcement process; strengthen coordination across departments and better resource management; increase transparency and public trust in the Code Enforcement Division; and a more efficient, fair, and equitable enforcement system.

The Ad Hoc Committee met nine times between February 2025 and October 2025 to review current procedures, best practices, existing regulations, and workload. Through this process the Ad Hoc Committee developed recommendations for the Board of Supervisors to consider including in Permit Sonoma's future work plan. This item presents and concludes the work of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Discussion:

The Code Enforcement Division of Permit Sonoma enforces all violations of codes under the Department's jurisdiction, abates public nuisances, and undertakes special projects such as enforcement of Public Health Orders. The Division responds to citizen complaints received through various ways, including Sonoma County's "GoGov" email complaint system, a dedicated complaint phone line, code enforcement email, or by letter. Code Enforcement also responds to referrals by other Sonoma County departments or City agencies.

Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee Charter & Areas of Focus

On January 7, 2025, the Board of Supervisors established the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee, which is guided by the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Charter (Attachment 1) approved on May 6, 2025. The Code Enforcement Ad Hoc reviewed current best practices in effective, fair, and transparent code enforcement

within Sonoma County within the following areas of focus:

- Improve case resolution times and prioritization of high-risk violations.
- Enhance public compliance and engagement with the enforcement process.
- Stronger coordination across departments and better resource management.
- Increase transparency and public trust in the Code Enforcement Division.
- A more efficient, fair, and equitable permitting and enforcement system.

Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

In addition to reviewing best practices, the Ad Hoc Committee analyzed permit and violation data, reviewed code requirements that generated higher numbers of violations, and discussed current department practices. Based on this review, the Ad Hoc Committee developed a series of recommendations.

- 1) Develop an amnesty program that balances tenant protections, code compliance, and affordability for non-life safety related violations.
- 2) Make all staff-initiated code enforcement complaints public to increase transparency.
- 3) Focus on life safety violations and update ordinances that generate high volumes of non-life safety violations to reduce the need for aggressive code enforcement.
- 4) Codify incentives for self-reporting of violations.
- 5) Explore restructuring the Code Enforcement budget from a self-sustaining revenue structure to a General Fund unit where fines/fees/penalties go into the county General Fund.
- 6) Consolidate Code Enforcement Policies & Procedures into a single Code Enforcement Manual and make available online so that the public know how staff conducts code enforcement.
- 7) Create educational material in language that a non-developer can understand to potentially make coming into compliance easier should there be a violation.
- 8) Continue to assess the efficacy of code enforcement as recommendations are implemented.

Permit Sonoma staff support the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and will incorporate items that require code amendments or budget development into the department workplan for 2026-2027 . For recommendations that can be accomplished through changes in practice, such as prioritizing case load, staff will begin implementing after the recommendations are accepted by the Board.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

Agenda Date: 12/16/2025

May 6, 2025: Approval of the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee Charter

January 7, 2025: Established the Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee

FISCAL SUMMARY

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Code Enforcement Ad Hoc Committee Charter

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A