

Periodic Special Events Ordinance Update



Board of Supervisors

December 9, 2025

File No. ORD25-0003

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Purpose

Clarify permitting and public noticing procedures

Align standards with current interpretations and practices

Establish a cap on the number of attendees allowed at periodic special events

Create consistency in the language used throughout the zoning code





Proposed Amendments

Consistent code references to “periodic special events”

Codify department interpretation that periodic events may occur no more than four times within a two-year period

Require separate zoning permits for all periodic special events held 30 or more days apart





Proposed Amendments Cont'd

Establish a cap of 2,500 attendees for all periodic special events

Require a use permit for all periodic special events with more than 2,500 attendees

Remove redundant appeal procedures

Clarify that courtesy public notices are provided after permit issuance





Planning Commission Review

Reviewed the proposed code amendments on September 4, 2025.

Looking forward to a more extensive update and detailed site-specific analysis through the General Plan Update.

Voted 3-2-0 to recommend approval of the proposed code amendments, including the cap on the number of attendees with an option to exceed the cap with a Use Permit, and an effective date of at least 6 months after adoption of the proposed ordinance.





Policy Option Encroachment Events

Exempt any periodic special event from the cap that also requires a special event encroachment permit (SPE File) to operate within the public right-of-way.

Events conducted entirely on private property would be subject to the cap of 2,500 attendees without a use permit.





General Plan Consistency

The proposed zoning code amendments are overall compatible with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Sonoma County General Plan.

The proposed amendments do not conflict with any General Plan policy because the General Plan does not limit the frequency or size of periodic special events.





Environmental Determination

The proposed amendments to the Zoning Code are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the proposed Zoning Code amendments will result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.





Recommendation

Adopt an ordinance finding the action exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) and amending Sonoma County Code Chapter 26 (Zoning Regulations), Articles 06, 22, and 88 to establish a cap on the number of attendees allowed at periodic special events and to clarify periodic special event permitting processes, public noticing procedures, and term definitions.





Questions

