



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/9/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Scott Orr, Crystal Acker, Marina Herrera (707) 565-1900

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide (excluding Coastal zone)

Title:

Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update and Final Environmental Impact Report, Permit Sonoma File No. ORD21-0004

Recommended Action:

Take the following actions:

- A. Adopt a Resolution certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update ("Project"), adopting findings of fact, a statement of overriding considerations and the mitigation monitoring and reporting program pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act;
- B. Adopt a Resolution (1) amending General Plan policies of the Agricultural Resources Element governing cannabis operations and amending definitions in the glossary to redefine cannabis as controlled agriculture, and (2) amending the Sonoma County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones to reclassify cannabis as a qualifying agricultural use and prime crop;
- C. Adopt an Ordinance amending Sonoma County Code Chapter 26 (Zoning Code) pertaining to the regulation of cannabis cultivation and accessory uses, cannabis visitor-serving uses, centralized processing, laboratories, and manufacturing and incorporating the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
- D. Adopt an Ordinance adding Chapter 4 Article X to the Sonoma County Code to establish a cannabis business license program; and
- E. Adopt a Resolution introducing, reading the title of, and waiving further reading of an Ordinance amending Chapter 30, Article II of the Sonoma County Code to explicitly include cannabis uses in the County's Right to Farm Ordinance.

Executive Summary:

On October 28, 2025, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing and took straw votes on the Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update. The updated program builds on several years of public outreach, environmental review, and interdepartmental coordination. The Cannabis Program Update revises the County's cannabis use standards and streamlines permitting and environmental review for cannabis cultivation uses and accessory uses, cannabis visitor-serving uses, centralized processing, laboratories, and manufacturing.

On October 28, 2025, by Resolution No. 25-0512 the Board of Supervisors introduced an ordinance adding Chapter 4 Article X of the Sonoma County Code to establish a Cannabis Business License Program, which is now presented for final adoption.

In addition, this item seeks certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report; adoption of amendments to the Agricultural Resources Element of the General Plan and Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves; adoption of an ordinance amending Chapter 26 pertaining to cannabis uses; and adoption of an ordinance amending the Right to Farm Ordinance.

Discussion:

The proposed Ordinance would guide cannabis land use permitting, licensing and compliance under a single, streamlined structure. A key change includes allowing most supply chain uses in commercial and industrial zones by right.

On October 28, the Board took a series of straw votes to provide direction to staff to return with Cannabis Program Update documents for final consideration. In agricultural zones, the Board provided direction to redefine cannabis as a “controlled” agricultural crop under the County’s General Plan, apply local Right to Farm protections to cannabis, and reclassify cannabis as a qualifying agricultural use and prime crop under the County’s Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones. Defining cannabis as a “controlled” agricultural crop allows the cannabis industry to integrate into the agricultural landscape of the County and provides additional business opportunities and flexibility for the industry and farmers. Consistent with other agricultural uses, the Board straw voted to allow limited visitor serving uses, events, and farm retail sales.

In agricultural and resource zones, the Board provided direction to increase allowable cultivation to up to 10% of the parcel and to permit uses accessory to cultivation allowing greater vertical integration and flexibility for cannabis farms. The Board straw voted to approve crop swap provisions which would allow for a ministerial pathway for permitting cannabis cultivation in these zones by which farmers could replace another actively cultivated crop with cannabis. Crop swaps would be subject to permit standards to ensure there would be no change in impacts as well as compatibility setbacks. In these zones, the Board recommended a 5-acre minimum parcel size due to the recommended increased setbacks.

The Board provided direction to improve neighborhood compatibility by continuing the prohibition on commercial cannabis uses in residential zones and adding a new 1,000-foot setback to all residential zoning and incorporated city boundaries (Attachment 6, Residential Setback Map). The Board also straw voted to strengthen current setbacks by applying the 100-foot property line setback and 300-foot setback from neighboring residences to the entire cannabis operation (not just outdoor and mixed-light cultivation). The Board provided direction to allow the property line setback and setback from neighboring residences to be waived when the parcels are under common ownership. The Board did not ask to carry forward adoption of Cannabis Exclusion Zones due to these increased setbacks.

County residents can view the proposed regulations as they relate to their property at: [add map viewer](#).

Existing uses and complete applications would be subject to the setbacks in place at the time the application was deemed complete or approved, except that new or expanded uses on those parcels would be subject to the 100-foot property line setback and 300-foot setback from residential uses.

More information on the Cannabis Program Update can be found in the October 28, 2025, Board of

Supervisors packet (linked below under Prior Board Actions and Attachment 7).

Approval of the Cannabis Program Update includes certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which studied the potential environmental impacts of all proposed cannabis uses, and adoption of the findings of fact and statement of overriding consideration in accordance with CEQA. All mitigation measures identified in the EIR have been incorporated into and made enforceable through the proposed ordinances.

The Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update is intended to support economic growth of the industry while improving neighborhood compatibility. The Ordinance would go into effect July 1, 2026, to allow for fee adoption and program implementation.

Strategic Plan:

N/A Choose an item.

Racial Equity:

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

Yes

Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials, October 28, 2025, for additional details.

Prior Board Actions:

October 28, 2025 - Board of Supervisors straw votes on the Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update and adoption of Resolution No. 25-0512 introducing, reading the title of, and waiving further reading of the Cannabis Business License Ordinance. ([_Sonoma County File # 2025-117 <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7711643&GUID=F8619CF8-92EA-4FCD-88E3-4D9745BC19B5&Options=&Search=\)>](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7711643&GUID=F8619CF8-92EA-4FCD-88E3-4D9745BC19B5&Options=&Search=)>))

Additional prior Board of Supervisors actions are included as Attachment 8 of the October 28, 2025 Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Fiscal Impacts of this item are unknown. Possible new fees or amended fees will be evaluated and included with the FY 26-27 fee hearings.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Staffing Impacts of the item are unknown. Any staffing impacts will be reviewed and included as part of Program implementation.

Attachments:

1. Resolution - Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Comprehensive Cannabis Program Update and adopt findings and a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.
 - Exhibit 1-A. Final Environmental Impact Report
 - Exhibit 1-B. Errata to the Final Environmental Impact Report
 - Exhibit 1-C-D. Findings and Statement of Overriding Consideration

- Exhibit 1-E. Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program
- 2. Resolution - Adopt the General Plan Amendment and approve an amendment to Uniform Rules 2.0, 4.0, 7.0 and 8.0 of the Sonoma County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones.
 - Exhibit 2-A. General Plan Amendment
 - Exhibit 2-B. Amendment to the Sonoma County Uniform Rules for Agricultural Preserves and Farmland Security Zones
- 3. Ordinance - Amendments to the Zoning Code, Chapter 26 of the Sonoma County code as it pertains to cannabis uses
 - Exhibit 3-A. Article 04. Sec. 26-04-020, Definitions.
 - Exhibit 3-B. Article 18. Sec. 26-18-020, Ag Crop Production and Cultivation
 - Exhibit 3-C. Article 18. Sec. 26-18-115, Cannabis Cultivation
 - Exhibit 3-D. Article 18. Sec. 26-18-270, Cannabis Events
 - Exhibit 3-E. Article 20. Industrial, Manufacturing and Processing Use Standards
 - Exhibit 3-F. Article 22. Sec. 26-22-120, Periodic Special Events
 - Exhibit 3-G. Article 86. Parking Regulations
 - Exhibit 3-H. Mitigation and Monitoring and Reporting Program
- 4. Ordinance - Adding Chapter 4, Article X to the Sonoma County Code to establish a cannabis business license program.
 - Exhibit 4-A. Chapter 4, Article X
- 5. Resolution - Introducing, reading title, and waiving further reading of amendments to the local Right to Farm Ordinance, Chapter 30 of the Sonoma County Code.
 - Exhibit 5. Right to Farm Ordinance (Chapter 30)
- 6. Residential Setback Map (as recommended by the Board of Supervisors, October 28, 2025)
- 7. October 28, 2025, Board of Supervisors Meeting Materials (Link: <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7711643&GUID=F8619CF8-92EA-4FCD->)
- 8. Final Environmental Impact Report (Link: <https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/h-Tis2yIRNA/>)
- 9. Public Comment (Link: <https://share.sonoma-county.org/link/ZzYl1qANuaQ/>)

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