



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 7, 2023
FILE NO.: ZCE22-0014
FROM: Levan King Cranston, Project Planner
SUBJECT: Z (Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion) Combining District zone change applications

During the Sonoma County Planning Commission public hearing held on August 3, 2023, Commissioners approved File No. ZCE22-0014 (Z Combining District removal) however, as part of their motion to approve the item, the Planning Commission suggested that the Board of Supervisors consider the possibility of holding off on processing any future Z Combining District removal applications until the Sonoma County General Plan Update is completed. Commissioners expressed concern regarding the potential cumulative impacts associated with removing the Z Combining District individually from parcels that did not meet the screening criteria for the 2019 Countywide Z Removal Zone Change approved under Ordinance No. 6285.

Permit Sonoma is processing two additional Z Combining District removal requests that were approved by the Planning Commission prior to August 2023. Permit Sonoma expects to bring these applications (File No. ZCE21-0002 and ZCE21-0012) to your Board in early 2024. Staff continues to process Z Combining District removal applications as they are submitted to Permit Sonoma; three applications are expected to be heard by the Planning Commission over the next six months.

Background:

Prior to 1989, the uses permitted in the County's Agricultural Exclusive zoning district were primarily related to agriculture. In the 1989 General Plan, the County recognized the need for residential uses in agricultural areas to support farming activities and employees. To that end, the 1989 General Plan created new agriculture-specific housing types while also strengthening policies that protect agricultural uses and lands. The 1993 Zoning Code updates implemented these policies by codifying prohibited uses that could negatively impact agricultural uses or promote conversion to non-agricultural activities. The Zoning Code update created the "Z" ADU Exclusion Combining District, which prohibited ADUs on all parcels formerly zoned Agricultural Exclusive (AE) and those parcels which were in Land Conservation Act contracts at the time of application.

In 2019, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 6285, which removed the "Z" Accessory Dwelling Unit Exclusion Combining District from approximately 1,924 specified parcels located in the LIA, LEA, and DA zoning districts countywide that met screening criteria related to fire hazard zones, biotic habitat, groundwater, traffic, and Land Conservation Contracts. This prior County-led rezoning effort completed a specific General Plan Housing Element Program (Program #17 Review "Z" Combining District). The Z Combining District now applies to a total of 4,178 parcels countywide in the Agricultural and Resource Zones, the Agriculture and Residential Zone, and the Rural Residential zone.

