



# County of Sonoma

## State of California

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Date: May 18, 2021

Item Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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4/5 Vote Required

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**Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California,  
Disapproving a Proposed General Plan Amendment to Consider Cannabis as Agriculture under  
the Sonoma County General Plan 2020**

**Whereas**, the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance, Sonoma County Code Section 26-88-250 et seq. (established by Ordinance No. 6189 (2016) and amended by Ordinance No. 6245) governs the special use regulations for commercial cannabis businesses allowed in various zoning districts;

**Whereas**, since the adoption of the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance the Board of Supervisors has considered cannabis as a non-agricultural use and not included within the definition of "agriculture" under the Sonoma County General Plan 2020;

**Whereas**, based on direction from the Board of Supervisors, the Cannabis Ad Hoc Committee, and public input, staff drafted a proposed general plan amendment to include cannabis within the meaning of agriculture for consideration in conjunction with amendments to the Cannabis Land Use Ordinance ("Ordinance"), all of which were studied in an Initial Study and Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration ("SMND") in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), 14 California Code of Regulations, §§15000 et seq. ("CEQA Guidelines") and County CEQA guidelines;

**Whereas**, On March 15, 2021, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the general plan amendment, SMND, and the Ordinance, continued deliberations to March 25, 2021, and further continued the meeting to April 15, 2021, at which it adopted Planning Commission Resolution No. 21-01 recommending the Board of Supervisors disapprove the general plan amendment, adopt the SMND, and adopt the Ordinance with amendments;

**Whereas**, On May 18, 2021, the Board of Supervisors conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the general plan amendment, SMND, and the Ordinance and considered all information, staff reports, and public comments.

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the Board of the County of Sonoma declares and

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orders as follows:

1. The general plan amendment attached as Exhibit A be disapproved.
2. Cannabis cultivation and other cannabis-related uses remain non-agricultural uses for purposes of interpreting and implementing the Sonoma County General Plan 2020.

**Be It Further Resolved** that the Board of Supervisors designates the Clerk of the Board as the custodian of the documents and other material which constitute the record of proceedings upon which the decision herein is based. These documents may be found at the office of the Clerk of the Board, 575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A, Santa Rosa, California 95403.

**Supervisors:**

Gorin:

Rabbitt:

Coursey:

Gore:

Hopkins:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Abstain:

**So Ordered.**

DRAFT  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS  
TO AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT  
OF THE  
SONOMA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Proposed Amendments to Agricultural Resource Element to clarify that the meaning of “agriculture,” as used in the Sonoma County General Plan, includes cannabis.

See current definition of “agriculture” in the General Plan in the Glossary published online: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Glossary/>

See full Agricultural Resource Element published online: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Long-Range-Plans/General-Plan/Agricultural-Resources/>

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## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PURPOSE

To acknowledge the importance of agricultural production in and to Sonoma County, an Agricultural Resources Element was added to the General Plan in 1989. The policies in this element have the same legal status as those in any State mandated element.

The Agricultural Resources Element defines agriculture as an industry which produces and processes food, fiber, plant materials, including cannabis, –and which includes the raising and maintaining of farm animals including horses, donkeys, mules, and similar livestock. The purpose of the element is to establish policies to insure the stability and productivity of the County's agricultural lands and industries. The element is intended to provide clear guidelines for decisions in agricultural areas. It is also intended to express policies, programs and measures that promote and protect the current and future needs of the agricultural industry. If future technology, and/or enterprises, of the agriculture industry require alternative and yet unforeseen policies and implementation mechanisms, those should be consistent with the County's commitment to encourage the maintenance of a healthy agriculture sector of the County's economy.

\* \* \* \*

**GOAL AR-4:**

**Allow farmers to manage their operations in an efficient, economic manner with minimal conflict with nonagricultural uses.\***

**Objective AR-4.1:**

Apply agricultural land use categories only to areas or parcels capable of the commercial production of food, fiber and plant material, including cannabis, or the raising and maintaining of farm animals including horses, donkeys, mules, and similar livestock. Establish agricultural production as the highest priority use in these areas or parcels. The following policies are intended to apply primarily to lands designated within agricultural land use categories.

\* \* \* \*

**Policy AR-5g:** Local concentrations of any separate agricultural support uses, including processing, storage, bottling, canning and packaging, agricultural support services, and visitor-serving and recreational uses as provided in Policy AR-6f, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials, including cannabis, and shall be avoided. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:

- (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.
- (2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.
- (3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.

In cases where the proposed processing use would process only products grown on site, such use would not be subject to this concentration policy.\*

\* \* \* \*

**Policy AR-6f:** Local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses, and agricultural support uses as defined in Goal AR-5, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials, including cannabis, and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:

- (1) Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis.
- (2) Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.
- (3) Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.\*