

**WINERY WORKING GROUP
SUMMARY OF SONOMA COUNTY PAST PRACTICES**

Authority: Zoning Chapter 26: All agricultural processing and tasting rooms require a use permit in the three agricultural zoning districts and in the RRD. Ag processing is allowed in the AR zone, but not tasting rooms. “Sales and promotion” activities of agricultural products (includes events) is listed as a permitted use only when accessory to an agricultural processing facility or tasting room in the three agricultural zones.

General Plan: Agricultural sales and promotion activities must be directly related and promote local agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.

Size Thresholds: There are no size thresholds. Terms used in discussions during the General Plan update: small wineries <50k cases; medium wineries are 50-150k cases and large wineries are >150k cases.

Minimum Site Area: There are no minimum site area requirements for a winery or tasting room. Under Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) a site must be 10 acres and have 6 acres planted to be considered commercial agriculture.

Setbacks: Minimum setbacks per base zone. Front: 30 ft; Rear: 20 ft; Side: 10 ft.
Riparian Corridor setbacks 200-ft, 100-ft and 50-ft.
Scenic Corridor setbacks 30% of the depth of lot up to a maximum of 200-ft from centerline.
Other setbacks may be determined by use permit.
A noise study is required when site located within 300 feet of a residence property line. If outdoor events with amplified sound, generally noise study required within 1,000 ft.

Tasting Rooms: requires a use permit in all three ag zones and RRD. Not allowed in AR. Stand alone tasting rooms are permitted uses with a use permit - no on-site processing or production is required, but is a factor considered.

Visitors: determined by use permit;

Visitor hours: determined by use permit. The Board of Supervisors directed staff and the Commission to limit hours for all tasting rooms of 10 am – 5 pm avoiding the cocktail hour. Some permits limit 10 am – 4pm to avoid peak hour.

Food service: determined by use permit. Limited food service allowed since 1999 Board directive. Catering kitchens permitted with warming ovens but not stoves/cooktops until recently. Stoves have been permitted for food and wine pairing and events in recent permits.

Event definition: No specific definition, but General Plan allows agricultural promotional activities. Zoning allows “sales and promotion of agricultural products grown or processed in the local area”. “Special event” means agricultural promotional event in use permits. Recent permits list the types of events allowed including a limited number of weddings and charitable events. Private events, corporate events have been denied.

Cooking demonstration: Included in the food service condition in many use permits even though commercial kitchen not proposed.

Parking: determined by use permit. Trip generation forms used to determine parking requirements. Compare retail parking requirements for tasting rooms and warehouse parking requirements for wineries. Parking for events estimated at 2.5 persons per vehicle based on study done by TJKM in 1998.

Noise: determined by use permit. Noise standard is per General Plan Table NE-2: requires 5 dBA reduction for events (speech or music); additional 5 dBA reduction if quiet ambient; standard increased to ambient if higher than standard. An exception is allowed to measure noise at the outdoor activity area of the residence, only where the property is substantially developed and there is open land. An exception must be considered and changes to the standard condition adopted by the decision-making body.

Noise standard is applied at the property line of adjacent residential use.

Enforcement: Large events > 500 persons permitted by limited term use permit 5-7 years and requires renewal. 2-year reviews of event activities required of recent permits (last five years). Enforcement is by complaint only. If noise complaints filed, then PRMD can require a noise consultant measure and identify additional mitigation measures.

Misc: On-site septic capacity for the 5th largest event required. Otherwise temporary toilets allowed for up to 4 events annually. Refer to Policy 9-2-31 <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/policies/9-2-31.pdf>

Reporting annually of events scheduled required in permits since 2004.

Fruit requirement – not specified in code, but included in some use permits for large wineries per the project proposal statement (60-75% from “local area” and some 100% estate grown wineries).