

Public Comments
Received for the
Planning Commission Hearing
6-3-21 through 5-19-22

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**Public
Comments
for PC Hearing
6-3-21**

From: [Linda Kay Hale](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Comments
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2021 2:38:37 PM

EXTERNAL

To the Sonoma County Planning Commission and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors:

This long-awaited Winery Events Ordinance is a huge disappointment. It continues the tradition of allowing wineries and event planners to self-regulate and will only be monitored when renewing a permit which only happens if a winery or tasting room wants to expand. Current conditions, including traffic, cannot be ameliorated by studies done by the very wineries who are applying for the expansions and more events.

The Sonoma Valley Capacity Study, for example, only looks at current industry wide events and not all of the many winery individual events! Future traffic patterns are listed as “unpredictable” at peak times already and everybody should take a bus or trolley to events? What about the folks who choose to do their own tours? What about egress and ingress at large events onto two lane highways? What about new wineries?

“Unpredictable” does not solve the current problems. New developments and cannabis grows along with their businesses will impact water and traffic all year round.

This study, along with the previous \$90,000 voluntary events “calendar” that no winery ever used, does not fairly or realistically address the issues or cumulative impacts.

Sincerely,
Linda Hale
1500 Warm Springs Road
Glen Ellen, CA 95442

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [David Eichar](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Question on proposed Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Thursday, May 27, 2021 10:34:35 AM

EXTERNAL

Hi,

I have a question on the proposed Winery Events Ordinance. Part of the language of the ordinance states, "5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events." Does this mean that weddings and wedding receptions are basically prohibited?

Thanks,
David Eichar
Boyes Hot Springs

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From: [Christina Meyer](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [greg99pole@gmail.com](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#); [p.davis479@gmail.com](#); [todd.tamura@gmail.com](#); [Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Thursday, May 27, 2021 2:13:11 PM

May 27, 2021

Dear Planning Commissioners:

While I am not opposed to the winery ordinance coming before you June 3 there are some changes needed to clarify the permitting process and reduce land use conflicts. What is missing in this ordinance are clearly set forth guidelines and criteria that will ease the workload of those in the Permit Department and speed the review of new permit applications and modifications to existing permits. The ordinance as written is not sufficient for that purpose.

Here are some suggestions:

- 1- Revise definitions to close loopholes, remove inconsistencies and enhance enforcement. For instance, the ordinance as proposed allows for 2 types of gathering when in actuality all of the food serving gatherings are events and should not be separated into types. That is an enforcement nightmare for the County.
- 2- Clarify the ordinance to ensure that an existing permit use is not automatically included in the new ordinance. Commonly called "Grandfathering" the ordinance needs to make clear that an existing use permit must be modified by the applicant and reviewed again by the Permit Department under the new guidelines if the applicant wants events and gatherings that are part of the new ordinance but were not covered under their current use permit.
- 3- Adding siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety issues as well as preventing new areas of over-concentration. There are currently 3 major areas involved and the criteria can be area specific and easily followed when the Permit Department reviews applications and assesses enforcement. New site areas can be added as needed.

These are not difficult corrections to make to the ordinance and it will actually enhance staff's ability in processing permit applications and enforcement.

A letter from Preserve Rural Sonoma County sent to you provides additional information and background.

Thank you for your attention to these corrections.

Christina Meyer
1008 Hawthorne Circle
Rohnert Park CA 94928

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From: [Karen Giovannini](#)
To: [Hannah Spencer](#); [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Comments about Draft Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Thursday, May 27, 2021 8:36:48 AM
Attachments: [202105 KG comments for winery events ordinance.docx](#)

Hello Hannah and Winery Events Planner,

Attached are my comments and suggestions.

Note: I purposely did not include my title and office on the document.

Great work! I know this is going to cause some angst, but as they say, you know the ordinance is balanced when everyone is grumbling a bit. Best wishes in finding that balance.

Thank you,

Karen Giovannini

(Ag Ombudsman, UCCE Sonoma County)

Draft Winery Events Ordinance – Comments due May 28, 2021

To: PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org

From: Karen Giovannini

RE: Comments for the Winery Events Ordinance

The focus of these comments is on *non-winery farming and ranching*, including non-winery agritourism. These comments/suggestions are to clarify that there is a difference between 'Winery Events' and non-winery 'On Farm Events' in the hopes of keeping non-winery agritourism separate from winery tourism – admittedly they do overlap, especially for wineries that also grow and sell produce and/or livestock products.

Exhibit “B” 26-18-260 Winery Standards

Terms and Phrases

Suggestion: in Terms and phrases, make 7 & 8 subs to #6 and add 'Wine' to all types of winery events to avoid confusion with agritourism that is *not* at a winery (e.g., Agricultural Experiences, seasonal events such as blueberry harvest, pumpkin patches, Christmas tree farms, Farm Trails weekends, and so on):

D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:

6. Winery Events means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite and/or in the area and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR- 6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural-Wine Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Wine Events.

7.a. Agricultural-Wine Promotional Events are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release parties, and wine club parties and similar events.

a.b. Industry-Wide Wine Events are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.

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Food Service

Clarification: in Foods Service, **e(2)** not sure why “Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for *on-site consumption only*.” Some wineries sell pre-packaged food they make from their own *farm grown products* (e.g., breads, cheeses, jams, olive oil, and so on) it seems like those items should be allowed to be purchased to eat off-site and/or as gifts.

AND **e(3)** *indoor seating not allowed in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food*. If the winery offers snacks to eat while wine tasting and eating those snacks is allowed in an outside seating area, why not also allowed in an inside seating area?

Draft Winery Events Ordinance – Comments due May 28, 2021

These next comments are not directly related to the Winery Ordinance but included because of Exhibit A.

Exhibit “A” 26-6-030 Table 6-1 Amendments

Table 6-1: Allowed Land Uses in Agricultural and Resource Zones

P* = Permitted Use, subject to *discretionary* approval criteria

Clarification: Is P* the same as a zoning permit? Because a Zoning permit is *not discretionary*. But since I know a Zoning Permit is required for Ag Processing, Small Scale, and the designation of “P*” was used, I assume that is what it means.

Suggestion: change the definition of P* to subject to ~~discretionary~~ ministerial approval criteria

OR if that is *not* what P* stands for, **ADD** Z Zoning Permit required subject to ministerial approval criteria

Suggested edits based on those recommendations:

Land Use	LIA Zone	LEA Zone	DA Zone	RRD Zone	TP Zone	Use Regulations
Agricultural Processing, Small Scale	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	-	26-18-040; <u>26-88-210</u>
Lodging: Agricultural Farmstay	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	-	26-28-110; 26-88-085
Lodging: Agricultural Marketing Accommodations	C	C	C	-	-	26-28-120; <u>26-88-086</u>
Lodging: Bed and Breakfast (B&B)	-	<u>Z</u> /C	<u>Z</u> /C	<u>Z</u> /C	-	26-28-130; 26-88-118
Lodging: Hosted Rental	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	-	26-28-140
Lodging: Vacation Rental	-	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	P* <u>or</u> <u>Z</u>	-	26-28-160; 26-88-120

From: [Wendy Krupnick](#)
To: [greg99pole@gmail.com](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#); [p.davis479@gmail.com](#); [todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Hannah Spencer](#); [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#); [district3](#); [district5](#); [district4](#); [Susan Gorin](#)
Subject: Draft Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Friday, May 28, 2021 4:01:47 PM
Attachments: [Winery Events- CAFF 5-28-21.pdf](#)

Dear Planning Commissioners and Planners,

Please find the attached comments from the Sonoma County chapter of Community Alliance with Family Farmers, (CAFF), regarding the draft Winery Events Ordinance on your agenda for June 3, 2021

Thank you for considering our comments and suggestions.

Wendy Krupnick

Vice-president, CAFF Sonoma County

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May 28, 2021

To: Sonoma County Planning Commission
Georgia McDaniel, Planner

cc: Tennis Wick, Director Permit Sonoma

Supervisors Lynda Hopkins, Chair; Susan Gorin, David Rabbitt, Chris Coursey, James Gore,

Re: Draft Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Sonoma County Planning Commissioners and Ms. McDaniel,

The Sonoma County chapter of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) appreciates the work Permit Sonoma staff has done to draft the long-awaited and much-needed Winery Events Ordinance. While we were pleased with several of the provisions included in the Draft Ordinance, we feel that the current draft proposal has many inconsistencies and loopholes so some modifications will be required to achieve the intended goals of protecting the primacy of agricultural production on agricultural lands, providing clarity on standards for visitor services to the wine industry, and limiting impacts to rural roads and neighborhoods.

We agree with the detailed comments and suggested changes submitted by Preserve Rural Sonoma County this week. In addition, we would like to bring attention to the following issues and proposed solutions with sections of the Draft Ordinance referenced where applicable:

1. In defining terms and phrases for Winery Standards, it is important to clarify that the definitions are specific to wine and wineries so they are not confused with other types of agricultural events or services. Specifically, the term "Agricultural Promotional Events" should be changed to "Wine Promotional Events" (*Section D-7*), "Industry-Wide Events" should be changed to "Industry-Wide Wine Promotion Events" (*Section D-8*), and "Sales Activities" should be changed to "Wine Sales Activities" (*Section D-11*).
2. The Draft Ordinance defines "Winery Visitor Serving Activities" as being "part of normal winery and tasting room business operations." Parties where full meals are served and where gatherings after normal tasting room hours are not part of normal tasting room business, so must be considered as events. This includes pick-up parties, harvest parties, and Wine Trade parties. (*Section E*)
3. The County should encourage agricultural diversification and allow a variety of farm-produced products to be sold on-site. Off-site consumption of local food and food products, eg., olive oil, table olives, canned salsa, jam, and applesauce, sold at a tasting room should be allowed. (*Section E-7*)
4. The ordinance should have clear definitions and be enforceable. Specifically, how will "local food and food products" be defined and enforced? (*Section E-7*)



5. In order to provide clarity for all, and to be enforceable, there should be mention in the Ordinance of the presence and role of the Area Guidelines that are proposed for the areas of the County that are considered to be "over-concentrated". Definitions and criteria should be provided regarding what an "over-concentrated" area is, as well as information on accessing proposed Area Guidelines. There should be indication regarding how an area experiencing accelerated development in the future can be designated as "over-concentrated" and the procedure for doing that. Current proposed Area Guidelines seem to be an overly complex yet ineffective and unfair layer of bureaucracy. **We recommend that the most restrictive provisions of the Area Guidelines should be incorporated into the Ordinance, and should apply county-wide.**
6. The Ordinance should include explicit provisions to identify, and if possible prevent, new areas of concentration.
7. Any new winery proposal should include an analysis of its effect on the cumulative impacts of wineries in the region, and must be evaluated for water availability and Vehicle Miles Traveled by both staff and visitors.
8. Climate considerations must be included in all ordinances if the County is to be seen as serious about meeting stated State and local climate goals.
9. The size of tasting room and other visitor serving areas must be proportionate to winery production capacity, which itself must be based on wine grape production acreage on site or sites owned within a designated proximity. The ordinance should establish a maximum site area devoted to tasting room and visitor serving uses to ensure the use is incidental to agriculture. We recommend that only one tasting room be allowed per site in agricultural zoned lands, and that tasting rooms be permitted only where grape growing and processing takes place,
10. The size of the processing areas the number of custom crush operations in agricultural zones should be required to be proportionate to vineyard production,
11. The need for monitoring and enforcement has been repeatedly called for in public comment and are critical to the effectiveness of the Ordinance, yet they appear to be missing from the draft. Our earlier recommendations on this are included below:
 - Establish an annual monitoring and educational program to periodically review use permits.
 - Require events to be calendared at the beginning of each year, and require annual reports including quarterly information.
 - Require that the applicant hire staff or contract for services to respond to complaints of event activities or other infractions (i.e. parking/noise) including on nights and weekends.
 - Increase fines and penalties for unpermitted event activities.
 - Place a time limit for existing wineries which have been hosting events without a use permit to obtain use permits and impose significant fines on any that do not meet that



deadline. Include the cumulative impacts of existing and “historic” wineries and/or their events in mitigations and in the analysis of cumulative impacts over time

- Require fees for permits that cover administration and monitoring of programs, including traffic/road impact fees.
- Develop and execute an improved system for notifying local area residents of permit applications.

As we have previously noted, although many farmers and ranchers welcome the opportunity to host the public and educate them about their products and practices, the business of hospitality is not the same as the business of agriculture. We believe the multiple benefits of preserving agricultural lands for agricultural production are essential for the long-term health of our society, our economy and our planet, and we strongly urge that the demands of the hospitality industry not be allowed to interfere with the protection of those benefits in Sonoma County.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Krupnick, Vice President, CAFF Sonoma County

From: [Nick Frey](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Events Ordinance 5 28 21
Date: Friday, May 28, 2021 10:39:14 AM
Attachments: [Winery Events Ordinance 5 28 21.pdf](#)

Attached are my comments. Thank you for the opportunity for input.

Nick Frey
Balletto Vineyards
707-291-2857
www.Ballettovineyards.com



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May 28, 2021

To PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org:

I appreciate the staff's report on the proposed Winery Events ordinance. It has outlined key concepts that will help reduce the ambiguity of the Winery Use Permit process. I feel however some additional clarifications of definitions for Events and Activities are needed. In addition, the term Rural Character is not defined, and the use of "parties" does not represent most winery Activities or Events. My comments follow.

- Activity/Activities -Activity needs to be defined as a normal business activity to promote product sales. Limit its use unless it is the defined Activities term, e.g. events activities is confusing two terms that each should be capitalized and in the definitions list.
- Rural Character is undefined and likely 10 people when asked will give 10 definitions. Given it is used in the AR section of the General Plan, it would seem it should have an agricultural definition, i.e. farmers, not rural residents.
- Parties is undefined and again implies many things to many people. The ordinance should not use the word. Wine Club pick up Activities normally occur during tasting room operating hours and do not have a party atmosphere. These are not like a Cinco de Mayo or St Patrick's day party residents my have at their homes or back yards. Wineries too need to be sensitive to using "party" to describe Activities during tasting room hours.

The wording needs to be tightened for an ordinance and key terms need to be defined in a definitions section and used consistently. Vague terms like party or rural character should not be used unless defined. The General Plan's Ag Resources section sets the guiding principles in AR 4a: Residential uses in rural areas need to recognize the primary use (agriculture, its processing and visitor serving uses) may create traffic and agricultural nuisances. AR 8b Encourages promotion and marketing of agricultural products. There are other codes or guidelines, e.g. parking, septic, water and noise, required in use permits that protect the interests of rural residents and those should be sufficient to serve the entire rural community.

General Comments:

- General Plan and County Seal
 - Protect and enhance agricultural lands and the unique character of Sonoma County
 - Allow visitor serving uses to support agriculture
 - County Seal has Agriculture, Industry and Recreation
 - It does not say "preserve and protect rural residences" as a core value

Our vineyards and wineries are an economic driver in this county supporting governments through taxes, providing recreational activities for many visitors who also enjoy or forests, beaches, hiking and biking, and jobs for many of our residents. Rural residents take ag lands to build houses on multiacre lots and then landscape, add poos, and perhaps some hobby agriculture. But when the property comes up for sale, it will not revert to commercial agriculture.

Staff Report

- County Ordinance Page 8 Paragraph 2: “The intent of the Winery Events Ordinance is to provide consistency and clarity to the use permit application evaluation process, reduce impacts to surrounding uses, protect agricultural lands and preserve rural character.” It seems preserve agricultural lands (and preserve agriculture by supporting agricultural production and sales to make farming in Sonoma County economically viable) is the top priority. And unless defined, rural character should not be listed.
- Unless Rural Character can be defined, I think references to Rural Character should be deleted throughout. As I read the General Plan, I think reference to Rural Character was concerned about processing or manufacturing facilities whose scale was not consistent with a rural landscape. Today’s wineries are smaller and smaller in scale and do not create traffic issues, excessive noise and generally blend well with the landscape. Page 6 last paragraph – “the draft Winery Ordinance implements the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element policies and programs to protect agricultural lands and the unique character of unincorporated communities”. I do not see that wording in Attachment 3. It seems to subjectively alter the General Plan.
- I am concerned that single consultant recommendations are inserted in ordinance language. Have those recommendations had any public input or review? The setback requirements seem arbitrary. How much noise is generated by a parking lot during Tasting Room Operating Hours? If it is an event at night with light standards with generators, then noise level at the property line of the nearest residence or facility should determine the setback or a noiseless light source alternative would be needed.
- Table 2: Remove parties from the tables. This implies many things to different people. Any Activity during normal Tasting Room Operating Hours to support sales is a legitimate and essential business activity today. Wine Club member recognition during Tasting Room Hours is an Activity. A Wine Club Recognition Dinner after 5:00 pm may be an event, but I could argue that customer retention today is a vital activity.
- Any Trade hosting should be an Activity. It is invitation only. Typically has a limited number or trade. A bus load of people would be the exception, not the rule. I say they should be hosted during normal business hours for the winery, i.e. 8:00 to 10:00. A Winemaker Dinner after 5:00 is typically 20 to 60 people by invitation or through ticket sales.

Ordinance – Exhibit B:

- Expand list of Definitions as commented above RE: Events, Activities, Rural Character if definable, etc
- Replace “parties” with a more appropriate word for a sales Activity.
- #5 – Shall not rent to a third party. OK if the third party takes over the facility, but if it is an executive retreat who come for a staff meeting with food and wine during the day, this is a revenue source and an opportunity for new customers and wine sales. The winery staff hosts the Activity and no other alcohol is served.
- 6cs – Off-site parking. If needed for a large wine pickup Activity during normal Tasting Room Hours, this is counterproductive. It encourages on-road parking or other problems. Again, you

have parking standards and if exceeded, then the winery needs to mitigate to safely accommodate the visitors and neighbors. That may require off-site parking and visitor transportation.

- Setbacks seem arbitrary. There are noise guidelines at the lot line of the nearest neighbor and those limits need to be respected regardless of the setback.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment. It is essential that ambiguity of terms is removed so that applicants, the county and interested parties understand the rights and obligations under the ordinance so that use permit limitations are consistent for every applicant.

Thank you for your work in bringing this ordinance forward.

Sincerely,

Nick Frey

Balletto Vineyards

5700 Occidental Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

From: [Marc Bommersbach](#)
To: [Tennis Wick](#); [Scott Orr](#); [Brian Oh](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance - Preserve Rural Sonoma County"s (PRSC) comments
Date: Friday, May 28, 2021 10:41:27 AM
Attachments: [PRSC5 winery ordinance5-28PS.pdf](#)
[Exhibit B PRSC redline markup 5-26.pdf](#)

Tennis, Scott, Brian, Georgia,

Attached is a redline mark-up of the proposed ordinance and an accompanying letter explaining PRSC's comments. PRSC believes these comments are reasonable and balanced. They support Permit Sonoma's role in meeting the General Plan's objectives and policies regarding regulation of visitor uses in ag zones through its review of use permit applications using clear and specific standards.

The ordinance, with the modifications specified in these documents, in general, do not limit the wine industry from expanding or adapting to change business conditions.

I would like an opportunity to discuss a few provisions in the proposed ordinance that are confusing, and may need clarification prior to the hearing.

I appreciate your work to keep this effort moving along given workload from all of the other planning issues facing the County.

Regard,

Marc

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May 28, 2021

County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa CA 95403

Attn: Tennis Wick, Scott Orr, Brian Oh, Georgia McDaniels

RE: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing, June 3, 2021,

Dear Director Wick,

Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Winery Event Ordinance (red line mark-up attached). To meet the County's objective to avoid CEQA review for this Ordinance, the changes proposed in this letter and the attached red-line mark-up address the concerns of many rural residents who have been impacted by tasting rooms as they have morphed from drop in, stand-up tasting, to venues that offer seated wine and food pairing, meals, and potentially thousands of events.

PRSC's proposed changes will reduce land use conflicts in rural communities and provide clarity and more specificity to the County's winery permitting process by:

1. Revising definitions to close loopholes, remove inconsistencies and enhance enforcement.
2. Clarifying the ordinance to ensure any additional entitlements are conferred only under a modification to an existing use permit, with appropriate project-specific environmental review.
3. Adding siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety issues, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

These changes will not limit the wine industry's ability to grow and to adapt to future business conditions.

Background

The need for the Winery Event Ordinance grew out of concerns that the proliferation of tasting rooms and events in rural areas had gotten out of hand – resulting in significant public safety and environmental impacts. The objective of the Ordinance, as codified in the General Plan, is to create clear standards to manage winery hospitality and events on agricultural land and to address unauthorized promotional uses.

The Ordinance was never intended to expand or intensify visitor serving uses, however, efforts to reclassify what have been historically deemed as “events” to “tasting room activities,” and allowing “daily events”, would create a significant expansion of entitlements for promotional uses that have been included in hundreds of Use Permits approved over the last several decades.

PRSC appreciates the efforts, both past and present, of Permit Sonoma, Planning Commissioners and the Supervisors, to regulate hospitality uses through Use Permit-based project approvals that clearly specify the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting. Citizens rely on these criteria and standards to maintain the peace, well-being, and safety of our roads and neighborhoods.

Loopholes in the “Definitions:” section should be closed. For example:

“Parties” are events – The County has long considered parties held for visitors (not employees) to be “events”. These include release/pick-up parties, wine club parties, harvest parties or other holiday or cultural parties. According to the dictionary, the definition of a party is: ***a social gathering of invited guests, typically involving eating, drinking, and entertainment***. The proposed ordinance correctly defines release parties and wine club parties as Agricultural Promotional Events, however, pick-up parties and harvest parties, are listed as activities. This is clearly contradictory, confusing, and inconsistent with past practices. The definition of Ag-promotional events should include all four of the listed “parties” (or any other type of party held for visitors) as “events”. The rather vague and overly broad term “and other hospitality related activities” should be removed or clarified as to what hospitality uses are envisioned in the term “other”.

All visitor gatherings, including Wine Trade Activities, held after tasting room hours or where a meal is served should be considered to be an event - The draft ordinance recognizes the County’s long-standing policy that any gathering of visitors after tasting room hours or where a meal is served constitutes an event.

The after-hours limitation is an important provision, particularly for tasting rooms in rural areas. Long duration drinking past 5 pm - into the cocktail and dinner hour - has the potential to create both evening disruption in neighborhoods and road safety issues on lightly-patrolled rural roads. Excluding winemaker lunches, dinners and evening gatherings for the trade from the “after tasting room hours” limitation creates an entitlement to an unlimited number of these events. It also creates a loophole for enforcement, because there is no way to determine if a winemaker dinner was an event solely for the trade or just another promotional event. The impacts from events are the same regardless of what is on someone’s business card. Furthermore, given the County’s long history of limited enforcement, this is a clear opportunity for abuse.

If a winery’s business plan requires lunches and dinners and after-hours gatherings for the trade, these events can be included and evaluated in the event totals requested in the Use Permit application process.

A winery use permit should not allow events on parcels disassociated from the winery – Section D.6. defines Winery Events as events held at wineries and tasting rooms. However, it also makes the conflicting statements that they can “occur on site and/or in the area”. Besides contradicting the first statement, this phrase has the effect of allowing events to be held on parcels geographically disassociated from the winery. The reference to “or in the area” should be removed, otherwise hundreds more parcels, with no protection from a use permit, could be opened up for events. Wineries have the ability to request a zoning permit for a limited number of events in other areas.

Clarify that the Ordinance cannot confer additional entitlements to existing use permit holders

In order to support the County’s contention that the ordinance does not create an intensification of use that would require CEQA review for ordinance adoption, it should explicitly state that the provisions of this ordinance do not confer any visitation related entitlements over what is currently specified in writing and approved in a winery/tasting room’s current use permit.

In addition, it is our opinion that, without the changes proposed in this letter and the redlined mark-up the items listed below, the ordinance DOES in fact change to the County’s “current application review practices,” a finding that would trigger CEQA review for the ordinance due to the following changes:

1. Reclassification of gatherings after tasting-room hours, or with service of a meal, to Wine Trade Partners as “activities” instead of them being specified as “events”
2. The classification of some categories of parties as Winery Visitor Serving Activities and part of normal tasting room business operations
3. Modifying “noise setbacks” to allow a portion of the attenuation distance to be measured on adjacent properties, which is inconsistent with the General Plan Noise Element and the County’s current use permit review practice that measures noise element compliance at the property line.

To avoid the need for CEQA review, the ordinance must correct the above listed changes to “current application evaluation practices”, and clearly state that these definitional changes will only expand the uses that are specifically allowed under current use permits by permit modification.

Additional siting criteria need to be added

Siting criteria, such as minimum road width and parcel size, and a separation or density standard have always been included as part of the ordinance discussions. By setting Siting Criteria, the Ordinance would help the County to screen out projects that would likely be unable to meet mitigation requirements in the use permit process. This early project screening would protect local residents and reduce the risk to developers who may

otherwise spend considerable resources before coming up short in the decision process. It would also relieve staff, commissioners and the public from having to review contentious projects that have significant challenges for approval.

PRSC proposes the following four siting criteria that would address many of the issues raised in stakeholder discussions:

1. Access off minimum 18-ft. wide County roadway
2. 20-acre minimum parcel size for new wineries
3. Separation criteria of no more than two winery driveways in ½ mile
4. No outdoor amplified sound, except under a limited number of events per a zoning permit

Minimum 18 ft. roadway – This requirement was discussed in the Winery Working Group that included first responder personnel, and it was generally agreed between the community groups and wine industry that for, new winery applications, there should be sufficient access/egress for both visitors and emergency vehicles.

20-acre minimum parcel size – In agricultural areas the minimum zoning is generally 10 acres for DA and 20 acres for LEA and LIA zones. However, there are a number of parcels in all ag zones that are well below this threshold and that already have use permits. These small parcels present a challenge because they are usually surrounded by residences, are often located on rural lanes with poor access, and draw water from wells that are in close proximity to neighbors' wells. The 20-acre minimum is included in the Dry Creek guidelines and SVCAC guidelines. A 20-acre minimum standard would reduce many of the siting issues associated with smaller parcels. Permit Sonoma and the BZA are already starting to informally consider this criterion in project reviews.

Separation criteria – a separation criteria that allows a maximum two wineries in a ½ mile stretch of roadway would not only address the over-concentration of winery facilities in the identified areas of concentration, but it would lessen the potential for other areas in the County to become over concentrated over time. Both the City of Healdsburg and the City of Sonoma have enacted standards to address over-concentration of tasting rooms in their jurisdictions, and the Sonoma Valley CAC includes the proposed standard as well. The BZA has also now begun to consider density in project approvals.

No outdoor amplified sound –. In rural areas sound can travel significant distances - greater than the 1600-foot setback recommended by the sound consultant. Even with applicant-monitored "mitigation," amplified sound can be very disruptive to the neighborhood. This is why the vast majority of use permits prohibit outdoor amplified sound.

Summary

With the changes proposed in this letter, including the revisions incorporated in the attached markup, the Ordinance would not restrict the expansion of visitor serving uses in ag-zones overall. The County would continue to issue use permits, and use permit modifications, with project-specific CEQA review. And the County would retain the right of discretionary review that limits development on specific parcels where environmental, safety and neighborhood compatibility, or cumulative impact issues cannot be addressed.

Ideally, an Ordinance with clear definitions and siting criteria would direct development into areas where it can have fewer impacts and, in order to be in compliance with CEQA, the ordinance would not allow current use permit holders to engage in new or unspecified visitor serving uses without first securing approval through a use permit modification.

Thank you

Preserve Rural Sonoma County

Attachment: Redline comments

EXHIBIT “B”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 18. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED USE STANDARDS

26-18-260 – Winery Standards

- A. Purpose. This Section 26-18-260 provides a greater level of detail for the desired character of development in areas zoned LIA - Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA - Diverse Agriculture. For the areas zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, this Section 26-18-260 identifies procedures and criteria applicable to new or modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving activities and winery events. Current use permit holders shall be limited to the visitor and hospitality uses specifically allowed in their use permit conditions. The Standards in this division shall be referred to as “Winery Standards.”
- B. Applicable Areas. The provisions of this section apply to parcels zoned LIA – Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA-Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA -Diverse Agriculture. For split-zoned parcels, the provisions of this section apply to the portion of the parcel zoned for any of the agricultural zoning districts listed above.
- C. Local Advisory Guidelines. Citizen advisory councils/commissions established by the Board of Supervisors review projects subject to this section in accordance with their adopted local advisory guidelines, and make advisory recommendations to the Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.
- D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:
1. **Catering Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A catering kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top, grill or range hood.
 2. **Commercial Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A commercial kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include counter space, sinks, microwave oven(s), warming oven(s), refrigeration, a stove or range, grill and an exhaust hood, and outdoor equipment such as pizza ovens or barbecues.
 3. **Food and Wine Pairing** means providing samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products that are showcased with different wines.
 4. **Rural Area** means any area not located within an urban service area designated on the General Plan Land Use Map.
 5. **Winery** means an agricultural processing facility that converts fruit into wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, administrative offices, tasting rooms, event space, commercial kitchen, and catering kitchen.
 6. **Winery Events** means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite ~~and/or in the area~~ and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR-

6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Events.

7. **Agricultural Promotional Events** are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release/pick-up parties, harvest and wine club parties and similar events.
8. **Industry-Wide Events** are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.
9. **Wine Trade Partners** means distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners and their representatives, ~~winery or tasting room owner(s), winery employees, and tasting room employees.~~
10. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities** means visitor serving activities that are part of normal winery and wine tasting room business operations. There are two types of winery visitor-serving activities: Sales Activities and Wine Trade Activities.
11. **Sales Activities** are wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars and other similar hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales excluding winery events.
12. **Wine Trade Activities** are by-invitation meetings, seminars, harvest parties-wine tastings and similar activities excluding winery events, and attended only by wine trade partners and are not advertised to the consumer.

E. Operating Standards.

1. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities.** Winery visitor serving activities are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. All winery visitor serving activities must be consistent with the tasting room hours of operation, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
2. **Winery Events.** Winery events must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of event days, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and other operational requirements specified in the use permit.
3. **Sizing, permissibility and other parameters** of winery visitor serving activities and winery events, and maximum number of event days is based upon a variety of factors specific to the site and surrounding uses, including, but not limited to, septic capacity, available water supply, emergency access, availability of on-site parking, noise attenuation, increased risk of harm to people or property as a result of hazards, and the potential for negative cumulative effects related to noise, traffic, and water supplies.
4. **Hours of Operation.** The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor serving activities and winery events are specified below, unless further limited by the use permit.
 - a. **Tasting Rooms.** Regular business hours for tasting rooms are 10 am - 5 pm.

- b. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor-serving activities are specified below by activity type.
 - (1) Sales Activities: 10 am – 5 pm.
 - (2) Wine Trade Activities: ~~8~~10 am – ~~4~~5 pm.
- c. Winery Events. The maximum hours of operation for events are specified below by event type.
 - (1) Agricultural Promotional Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 10 pm, with all cleanup occurring no later than between 9:~~30~~00 pm – 10 pm or as otherwise specified in Use Permit conditions.
 - (2) Industry-wide Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 5 pm.
- 5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events.
- 6. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for wineries and tasting rooms:
 - a. 1 parking space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee. The parking standard may be reduced in accordance with Article 86. - Parking Regulations Sec. 26-86-010 (i).
 - b. Use of on-site unimproved overflow parking areas or shuttling may be allowed to accommodate winery events, if specified in the use permit.
 - c. Overflow parking and shuttling shall not be used to accommodate parking for winery visitor serving activities.
 - d. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.
- 7. Food Service. Food service is allowed as specified below.
 - a. All food service must be designed to promote and enhance marketing of wine. Food service shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production, wine sales and education.
 - b. Operating the food service area as a restaurant, café, delicatessen or any food service offering cooked-to-order food is prohibited.
 - ~~e.~~ Food and wine pairings featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with winery visitor serving activities and winery events ~~.~~
 - ~~d-c.~~ Prepared meals featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with ~~wine trade activities and~~ winery events.

e.d. Retail sales of pre-packaged food in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to the following limitations:

- (1) Retail sale of pre-packaged food featuring local foods and food products is allowed during the regular business hours identified in the use permit.
- (2) Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for on-site consumption only. Outdoor seating areas may be allowed for use as outdoor picnic areas.
- (3) Indoor seating area or table service in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food is prohibited.
- (4) Off-site signs advertising retail sales of pre-packaged food are prohibited.

8. Event Coordination and Traffic Management.

a. On-Site Coordinator. An on-site coordinator is required to address complaints about winery events both during and following an event. The on-site Coordinator shall:

- (1) Ensure that the winery's website prominently lists a telephone number for the public to make event-related complaints; and
- (2) Send an annual notice to owners and occupants of lots within 300 feet of the winery/tasting room lot boundaries to provide the "complaint hotline" telephone number.

b. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are required to address the maximum number of people visiting during winery visitor serving activities and winery events. For events exceeding 100 participants and for events that require use of overflow parking, the traffic management plan shall include the following:

- (1) Provisions for event coordination to avoid local traffic delays.
- (2) Parking attendants for each day of the event.
- (3) A shuttle plan, if shuttling is requested, to support each day of the event. A convenient and secure "park and ride" area must be provided.
- (4) A plan for on-site parking requirements and queuing of traffic.
- (5) Enforcement of the on-street parking restrictions.
- (6) Subsequent changes to the approved Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in advance to the Permit and Resource Management Department.
- ~~(6)~~

9. Noise Attenuation Setbacks. Noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source. To ensure compliance with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element thresholds for maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels, winery visitor serving activities and winery events shall meet the required setbacks provided in Table 18-2 below:

Table 18-2: Required Noise Attenuation Setbacks

Noise generating land use	Setback measured from the exterior property line of any adjacent noise sensitive land use
Parking lots	450 feet
Outdoor areas involving groups of people or non-amplified music (i.e. acoustic)	625 feet
Outdoor areas involving amplified music, or loud instruments such as brass instruments, horns, or drums	1,600 feet

Exceptions to the setbacks listed in Table 18-2 above may be allowed when a project-specific noise study prepared in accordance with the Permit and Resource Management Department Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis determines the project will comply with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element due to intervening structures or natural features, ~~available open land on noise sensitive parcels~~, or by incorporating noise mitigation measures.

F. Siting Standards:

1. Parcels for new winery and tasting room development shall be at least 20 acres in size
2. New winery and tasting room project locations cannot result in more than two facilities within a ½ mile distance.
3. Project access shall be off public roads with a minimum 18-foot width
4. Outdoor amplified sound is prohibited

Sonoma County Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee


Christopher Woodcock (Chair)	1 st District
Joe Morgan	2 nd District
Matt Frazier	2 nd District (Alt.)
Vincent Hoagland	3 rd District
Bob Stender	3 rd District (Alt.)
Amy Loukonen (Vice-Chair)	4 th District
Jennifer Neeley	5 th District
Brian Bauer	5 th District (Alt.)



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2021

To: Georgia McDaniel, Permit Sonoma

From: Steven Schmitz, SCBPAC Staff 

Re: SCBPAC Comments on Draft Winery Events Ordinance

On behalf of the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (SCBPAC), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Winery Events Ordinance. Comments are provided below. Should you have any questions, please contact Mark Hansen or me at 585-7516.

In regards to 26-18-260 – Winery Standards Section *E. Operating Standards* part 8. *Event Coordination and Traffic Management*, the committee recommends working with the Transportation and Public Works Department on making the following additions and changes to sub-section *b. Traffic Management Plan*:

1. Lower the threshold for the number of participants at events that would require a traffic management plan.
2. Require that signs, event staff, and queuing vehicles do not obstruct or encroach on any bicycle/pedestrian facilities present along adjacent roadways.
3. Require private shuttles to perform all pick-ups and drop-offs on-site at the events and not on adjacent roadways.
4. Require traffic control attendants for each day of the event.
5. Require bicycle/pedestrian safety signs at events along adjacent roadways.

Cc: Chris Woodcock, SCBPAC Chair
Ken Tam, Regional Parks
Vincenzo Corazza, Transportation and Public Works
Gary Helfrich, Permit Sonoma
Mark Hansen, Sonoma County Transit

From: [Michael Haney](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Fwd: Permit Sonoma Comments
Date: Friday, May 28, 2021 2:03:39 PM

Good Afternoon:

Sonoma County Vintners (SCV) appreciates the work and the staff report produced by Permit Sonoma regarding the proposed winery events ordinance and is encouraged to see this important issue being addressed and moved forward. While the report does assist in addressing winery events and business activities, we feel some additional emphasis and clarification on a few items are needed.

As SCV has presented over the past few years, it is important to create clear definitions of winery events vs winery business activities. SCV has provided these specific proposed definitions to Permit Sonoma.

In addition, the two following areas should also be addressed and or adjusted:

1. The Staff report seems to not accurately present just how the county historically treated promotional activities.
2. The proposed ordinance also does not address or provide a path for events and business activities at existing wineries.

For the first:

The background in the staff report states "Prior to 1989, the zoning code allowed agricultural cultivation by right and retail sales and tasting rooms with a use permit, but did not allow events or promotional activities."

This statement does not represent the historical application of the zoning ordinance.

A more accurate background notes that Ordinance 230, adopted on November 8, 1945 was the county's first zoning ordinance. Wineries and tasting rooms existing prior to that date.

- Ordinance 230 allowed cultivation by right, but required a use permit for an "agricultural processing plant" which addressed commercial packing or canning of agricultural products.
- In the late 1960's or early 1970's, staff determined wineries fell into this category and began requiring use permits for wineries and tasting rooms.
- Use permits issued in this era were generally vague and typically consisted of a few conditions. Events and promotional activities took place during this time such as non-profit, social, public service and political fund-raising events. These activities were considered inclusive of a lawful tasting room.
- The 1989 General Plan recognized the distinction between winery and tasting room.
 - The 1990 zoning code update reflected this distinction and provided a definition for a tasting room as a location where items processed within the county may be tasted and sold. This update specifically named wineries as agricultural processing and explicitly allowed retail sales of items processed on premises with a use permit.
 - Events continued to take place at wineries and tasting rooms. Wineries were allowed to modify their use permits for expanded production and increasing facilities, but were not required to address events as the county considered subordinate marketing activities and events inclusive of a tasting room.
 - In the mid 1990's, the county began to develop policies to address varied and expanding wine marketing activities. Those policies included wedding, food services and

participation in industry wide events.

- Around 1995, the county began to condition event activities via the use permit process by addressing the number of events.
 - Since that time, events have been consistently addressed and conditioned in the use permit process.
 - Before this time, the county considered business activities and events integral to tasting rooms as long as they remained subordinate to the primary agricultural use.
 - The vast majority of use permits contain no explicit approval to participate in industry wide events.
- Based on this historical and changing application of zoning regulations, the statement in the staff report that all events and activities prior to 1989 were not allowed is inaccurate.

#2: The proposed ordinance also does not address or provide a path for events and business activities at existing wineries.

- As recently as 10 years ago Permit Sonoma considered participation in industry wide events inclusive of existing permits, as long as the winery had a use permit approved for public tasting and participation in the event complied with the existing use permit for hours of operation and operational conditions.

Consideration should be given that any draft event ordinance should address a process to recognize those wineries with historical events and business activities.

Thank you again for your time!

Sincerely,

Michael Haney
Executive Director
Sonoma County Vintners
Sonoma County Vintners Foundation
400 Aviation Blvd. Suite 500
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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From: Padi Selwyn <padi.selwyn10@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, May 29, 2021 8:56 AM

To: Lynda Hopkins <Lynda.Hopkins@sonoma-county.org>; David Rabbitt <David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>; Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>; James Gore <James.Gore@sonoma-county.org>; Chris Coursey <Chris.Coursey@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: PRSC's comments re: Winery Event Ordinance

Dear Supervisors,

Attached is input regarding the Winery Event Ordinance draft with additional specific comments in the redlined document attached.

Our group has been involved in rigorously studying these issues and participating in the Winery Working Group as well as numerous CAC's for the past several years. Our input is based on well researched and long discussed issues with our winery neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Padi Selwyn
(707) 569-6876

PRESERVE RURAL SONOMA COUNTY

Visit our website at - <http://www.preserveruralsonomacounty.org>

Like us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/preserveruralsonomacountyg>

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From: [Janus MATTHES](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); greg99pole@gmail.com; [Jacquelynnne Ocana](#); p.davis479@gmail.com; [Todd Tamura](#); Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com
Subject: Winery Events hearing
Date: Monday, May 31, 2021 5:30:24 PM
Attachments: [WWW winery events May 2021.docx](#)

EXTERNAL

www.winewaterwatch.org

May 28, 2021

PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org

To: Permit Sonoma & Planning Commissioners

Greg Carr - greg99pole@gmail.com

Jacquelynnne Ocana - jacquelynnne.ocana@sonoma-county.org

Pam Davis - p.davis479@gmail.com

Todd Tamura - todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org

Kevin Deas - Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com

RE: Winery Event Ordinance

Wine and Water Watch is a local organization of over 300 citizens concerned with the overdevelopment of the wine tourism industry. We promote ethical land and water use. We oppose the industrialization of agricultural lands not growing food, medicine, fiber or silage especially when dwindling resources and climate change is making large impacts to our lives.

We continue to believe strict regulations on events both size, number, definition and timing with high traffic events should be created. The fact is the County already has such a policy and it should be included in the ordinance. Weddings, parties, and business meetings are not agriculture promotions but rather corporate event productions and not ag. Up to date traffic studies, no more than 2 years old, need to be created to map out potential problems due to binge tourism. We are tired of "right turn only" season that this inflated industry creates is both a safety issue and a quality-of-life issue.

Winery event expansion is nothing more than tourism promotion. More tourism via winery events is not an economic cure all. The recent Economic Development Plan, pre-pandemic clearly shows that tourism is not much of a vital an economic generator (6.5% according to the 2021 Economic outlook report by Robert Eyler). Tourism should be supportive to local communities and not dislocate the local population with traditionally low wages, unaffordable housing due to investors, sacrificing our local mom-and-pop businesses that service resident needs and require more taxes to fix the overburdened infrastructure. No more wine industry expansion. We urge the planners to take this into consideration when viewing the regulations. Loopholes must be closed to stop this barely controlled expansion which creates more traffic, noise, drunk drivers and more low wage jobs that make homelessness and inequality even more extreme . With expanded events comes more homes being lost to vacation rentals. **There is a reason Sonoma County is number 3 in homelessness in the entire country.** Regulation of this bloated industry is geared towards corporate interests that come to this county for resources and profit that leave the county. We all supported small family run wineries which are now struggling

to compete with large national corporations.

We suggest that if the wine industry needs more events to survive that as a community, they work together to build a large center that can cater to all wineries and events and has the infrastructure to support the added pressure to our community. The wine industry should be paying for this not more tax increases and aggravation born by residents. Luther Burbank Center type of property close to a major thoroughfare should be the goal not scattered winery events all over the county. This is being done by Central California communities and working successfully as they are located in areas where local businesses can thrive instead of just the wine industry.

Agriculture in this county has had plenty of changes over the years. From potatoes, to hops, prunes, peaches, apples, poultry, pears, hay, dairy, cattle and sheep. Dairy and cattle remain as do some poultry business but pared down into a realistic size industry. **With diminished sales, wine grape glut and lowered worldwide demand, changing tastes and new online marketing, time for this industry to adjust or die.** Those eras did not have the same issues we face today: climate change impacts that may cause our own extinction, scarce water, changing cultural tastes, unaffordable land, social inequality to name a few .

A serious discussion and studies need to be made on the ever-expanding wine industry impacts that are adding considerable amounts of GHG worsening climate change in search of customers, depleting our aquifers and the onslaught of chemical based ag further polluting the water we have. We have paid the price for their endless assaults on our environment. Time for them to make the changes that benefit the community as we all have already sacrificed way too much for their pursuit of profit.

All events must be closed by 5pm, no tasting on disconnected parcels, roadways must be legal (18 feet), no events within a half mile and recent traffic studies to truly see the impacts.

A full Cumulative Impact Report should be made before any changes to the winery event regulations and climate change must be addressed. Added events equals more greenhouse gases by additional vehicle miles traveled is yet to even be broached. The cannabis industry will get a cumulative impact report, why not this industry? As we all suffer through the megadrought, where is the extra water coming from to flush toilets, clean glasses and cater to out of towners? Ag already uses 80% of our shared water resources. More lost "ag" lands to create additional parking lots and visitor centers, is not ag.

We urge the commissioners to close the loopholes and protect the people who actually live here. Our organization looks forward to action on this matter *that reflects the public not what the wine industry wants*. We need strict rules so everyone knows what is expected. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wine & Water Watch Board

Janus Matthes, Deb Preston, Marilyn Joyce, Pamela Singer, Dr. Shepherd Bliss, Charlotte Williams, Sarah Ryan, Tom Conlon, Judith Joinville



www.winewaterwatch.org

May 28, 2021

PRMD-WineryEvents@sonoma-county.org

To: Permit Sonoma & Planning Commissioners

Greg Carr - greg99pole@gmail.com

Jaquelynne Ocana - jaquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org

Pam Davis - p.davis479@gmail.com

Todd Tamura - todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org

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Sincerely,

Wine & Water Watch Board

Janus Matthes, Deb Preston, Merrilyn Joyce, Pamela Singer, Dr. Shepherd Bliss, Charlotte Williams, Sarah Ryan, Tom Conlon, Judith Joinville



May 31, 2021

County of Sonoma

Permit Sonoma

2550 Ventura Avenue

Santa Rosa, Ca. 95403

Attn: Sonoma County Planning Commissioners

Re: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing June 3, 2021

Dear Commissioners,

Valley of The Moon Alliance (VOTMA) has been concerned about the Winery Events issue since 2004 when we conducted a study called "The Potential for Events Facilities on Agricultural Land in the Sonoma Valley – Choices for the future." It examines the potential, under present zoning, for a growing number of visitor-serving and event facilities on Agricultural lands in Sonoma Valley. Just looking at the valley floor from Kenwood to South Valley there was a potential of 400 facilities. That potential has not changed. What has changed is the marketing of wine and the apparent need for 'direct to consumers' contact to sell wine. This is where visitor-serving uses and events have exploded in the last 10 years. The imagination was the only limit. More visitors mean more impacts from noise, traffic and congestion to the rural neighborhoods. Choices for the future have been kicked down the road for too long. We are finally getting a first look at a county ordinance with some resource-based use standards. We appreciate this long-awaited draft ordinance, but feel there may need to be some modifications to achieve the intended goals of protecting the primacy of agricultural production on agriculturally zoned lands, providing clarity on standards for visitor services to the wine industry as well as limiting the impacts to rural roads and neighborhoods.

We agree with the detailed comments and suggested changes submitted by Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) on May 26, 2021, including the redlined draft ordinance. Some of these changes include revising definitions to close loopholes, such as Agricultural Promotional Events and Winery Visitor Serving Activities. Both are intended to sell wine to visitors so what are the differences? Wine tasting

and sales should be limited by the tasting room hours, like a retail store with hours of operation. If marketing to visitors or trade partners is done after tasting room hours or involves a sit-down meal, it should be considered an event. Perhaps a maximum number of visitors, say 30, could be established to minimize the impacts of these visitors if the site can accommodate this number with on-site parking, septic capacity and emergency access.

Another important point to emphasize is that this ordinance should not give additional entitlements to wineries with existing use permits. Unless a winery with an existing use permit reapply to modify their use permit using this ordinance, they are bound by their existing use permit terms. The current evolving trends in marketing may not have been included in the descriptive use permit. It means what is allowed is described in the use permit, if it is not described, it is not allowed. In order to support the County's contention that the ordinance does not create an intensification of use that would require CEQA review for ordinance adoption, it should explicitly state that the provisions of this ordinance do not confer any visitation related entitlements over what is currently specified in writing and approved in a winery/tasting room's current use permit.

Thoughtful consideration of wine industry marketing need to be spelled out by the county ordinance in order to balance the projected needs of the wine industry with the protection of agricultural zoned lands for the production of crops and not visitor-serving uses which are presently to be "incidental and secondary" to agriculture production in Sonoma County.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Kathy Pons

Valley of The Moon Alliance

**Public
Comments
received after first distribution
for PC Hearing
6-3-21**

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jennifer LaPorta** <jenniferlaportal@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, May 26, 2021 at 4:20 PM

Subject: Winery Events Ordinance

To: <greg99pole@gmail.com>, <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, <p.davis479@gmail.com>, <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>

Dear Planning Commissioners

Please do the following:

1. Remove loopholes that allow the Wine Industry to expand hospitality and entertainment uses without environmental review.
2. Ensure no retroactive authorization to grandfather existing or allow new unapproved hospitality uses
3. Add siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

Sincerely,
Jennifer LaPorta
Santa Rosa
95407

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----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Noel Bouck** <noelb@sonic.net>
Date: Thu, May 27, 2021 at 1:17 PM
Subject: Winery events ordinance
To: <Greg99pole@gmail.com>

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June 1, 2021

Greg Carr, Planning Commissioner

Greg99pole@gmail.com

Dear Sir,

The Salmon Creek Watershed Council works to protect the coho salmon that inhabit our watershed's creeks. We write to ask you to please carefully follow the County Plan as you review the Winery Events Ordinance. Do not allow the hospitality industry to put our fragile local salmon at increased risk. We have three main concerns:

1. We fear that there will be an increase in traffic on our local roads that will make them less safe to bikers and walkers, and will also contribute to the die off the coho salmon in our creeks. Salmon Creek, a coastal watershed encompassing Occidental, Bodega and Freestone, is host to ocean-going coho salmon. Unlike other species of anadromous fish, coho salmon are exquisitely sensitive to a toxic quinone that washes into creeks from roads as tires wear down. Any increase in road traffic will increase the runoff of this lethal substance and put these delicate fish at risk.
2. We are worried that if increased water is drawn from our perched aquifers, it will not only compromise the personal wells on which we West County residents depend, but will also limit the seeps that deliver essential oxygenated water to our creeks where young salmon struggle to survive the dry season.
3. As open farmland is converted to hardscape, we fear loss of recharge for these essential aquifers as well as loss of the scenic farmland that is so essential to the beauty of our county.

These concerns move us to ask you

- to remove loopholes that allow the wine industry to expand entertainment facilities independently of environmental review,
- to disallow the grandfathering in of unapproved uses and
- above all, to prevent the citing of facilities in areas where their presence can harm our salmon.

Thank you for considering these points.

Sincerely

Noel Bouck, for
The Salmon Creek Watershed Council
PO Box 453, Occidental, CA 95465

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Michael Cook** <mike@integrapla.com>

Date: Thu, May 27, 2021 at 9:38 PM

Subject: Planning Commission Agenda Item #2

To: <greg99pole@gmail.com>, <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, <p.davis479@gmail.com>, <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>

Good evening Chair Tamura and Sonoma County Planning Commissioners,

Regarding Item #2 on your June 3, 2021 agenda. I understand the reasoning behind getting together this ordinance, but at this point, I am really not understanding the reason for bringing this at this time. Wineries, breweries, event centers can't even have events, they are barely scrapping by, and barely able to hold tasting appointments. I am appalled at this idea of further restricting the very businesses that pay millions and millions of dollars in taxes to the County, and telling them what they can and can't do at this time in the Pandemic. Are you looking to put more businesses out of business? Further restrictions, further regulations, put more businesses out of business. Wineries are our "life blood" at this point, and you're going to enact this regulation on events and you're going to put most of them out of business.

Such bad timing, such a bad idea, and such an unfortunate idea here in Sonoma County. Can't believe the Planning Commission is even considering this at this time.

Mike

Michael Cook, PLA, ASLA, CLIA, CPSI

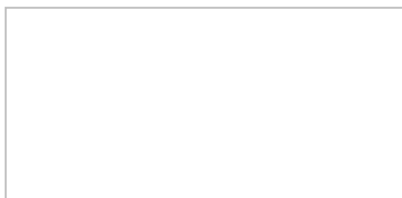
INTEGRA Planning + Landscape Architecture

707.545.5235 office

707.483.6464 mobile

mike@integrapla.com

www.integrapla.com



INTEGRA Planning + Landscape Architecture remains open to serve our clients during this COVID-19 shelter in place order. We are working remotely and ready to assist you. We hope

you are safe and well.

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From: Nancy <healdsburggal@sonic.net>

Date: Thu, May 27, 2021 at 12:48 PM

Subject: Note from Nancy - Winery Event Ordinance

To: Jacquelynne.Ocana@Sonoma-County.org <Jacquelynne.Ocana@sonoma-county.org>, p.davis479@gmail.com <p.davis479@gmail.com>, Todd.Tamura@Sonoma-County.org <Todd.Tamura@sonoma-county.org>, Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>, greg99pole@gmail.com <greg99pole@gmail.com> Cc: Tennis Wick <Tennis.Wick@sonoma-county.org>, James Gore <james.gore@sonoma-county.org>, <lynda.hopkins@sonoma-county.org>, Susan Gorin <Susan.Gorin@sonoma-county.org>, David Rabbit <David.Rabbitt@sonoma-county.org>, <district3@sonoma-county.org>

Good morning Commissioners,

Its been a long road, lots of meetings, workshops and testimony, I have three comments after reading the winery event ordinance draft:

First, please no amplified music necessary. This has such a huge impact, the way sound travels affects so many, so much, please, please, NO amplified music. Keep it off LIA parcels. If tasting rooms are in commercial zones, like many are, then fine. Extremely impactful in a very negative way to us in rural county. Amplified music is NOT farming noise.

Second, if winemaker dinners paired with wine at every course are going to be part of guest experiences here in Sonoma County, are you aware there is no reliable Lyft or Uber that will come out here little alone ten at night? Does our sheriff have the budget to increase patrols in our neighborhoods? How will wineries deal with the issue of their guests drinking and then driving? We can all agree that drinking and driving is not OK.

Third, there is something glaringly missing from this ordinance, and that is accountability. Publicly dismissed by the industry as not their job to self monitor; that responsibility must be part of this expansion of visitor uses the wine industry says they absolutely need to keep afloat. Lots of concern and conversation about this. Yet, so far this is it?

a website phone number, an annual postcard and yet another "pilot" program in Sonoma Valley?

Hey, we've been down this road with vacation rentals, and have learned a few things about visitor impacts. Please apply them here. County wide calendar, reporting, monitoring, annual review of % of use permits like Napa County.

Thanks once again for all your hours and hours you spend doing this work.

Best regards,
Nancy Citro
4160 Westside Road
Healdsburg, CA

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From: ANNA NARBUTOVSKIH <narbutovskih@comcast.net>

Date: Thu, May 27, 2021 at 6:56 PM

Subject: Winery Events Ordinance

To: greg99pole@gmail.com <greg99pole@gmail.com>, jacquelynnne.ocana@sonoma-county.org <jacquelynnne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, p.davis479@gmail.com <p.davis479@gmail.com>, todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>

Planning Commission:

I strenuously urge you to follow the General Plan by keeping agricultural lands, defined as the growing of crops and the rearing of animals, as agricultural. Winery event centers have no place in this. Wineries on land zoned as agricultural need to be restricted to the growing of grapes and the production of wine. Occasional visitors to wineries could be considered within the bounds of the agriculture zoning but tasting rooms are commerce. Tasting rooms, therefore, are outside this definition, and event centers are way out, detrimental to the people and wildlife who live here. If the goal of this ordinance is to maintain the rural character of the area while enhancing the economic viability of farms then move the tasting rooms to the major population centers such as San Francisco or Oakland or Berkeley where they'd get better foot traffic and more sales.

Our county is overwhelmed with weekend tourists to the wineries. The 101 corridor is choked with stop and go traffic, north all day Saturday and south all day Sunday. The local public good is being undermined by private profit to the wineries and event centers. Eliminating the traffic to the tasting rooms and the event centers would eliminate tons of carbon pollution and clear the air for our children. Please consider climate change and the consumption of water and energy, both of which are in short supply, when completing your regulations.

Anna Narbutovskih
14288 Woodland Dr.
Guerneville
narbutovskih@comcast.net
707.869.9062

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From: t <sloowlearner@yahoo.com>
Date: Fri, May 28, 2021 at 12:55 PM

Subject: Re: Winery Events Ordinance

To: greg99pole@gmail.com <greg99pole@gmail.com>, jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, p.davis479@gmail.com <p.davis479@gmail.com>, todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, kevin.deas@deasproperties.com <kevin.deas@deasproperties.com>

Dear Planning Commissioners
Please do the following:

1. Remove loopholes that allow the Wine Industry to expand hospitality and entertainment uses without environmental review.
2. Ensure no retroactive authorization to grandfather existing or allow new unapproved hospitality uses
3. Add siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

Sincerely,
Tim Lantarna
Santa Rosa
95407

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From: <carolvsr@sonic.net>

Date: Sun, May 30, 2021 at 2:46 PM

Subject: Winery Event Ordinance

To: <greg99pole@gmail.com>

Cc: - <p.davis479@gmail.com>

As you know traffic & noise are not what people living in rural areas expected when they purchased their home. Now many tasting rooms and hospitality activities have been approved –many that already had a negative impact on the area. The county in my opinion, did not take into account neighborhood compatibility, road safety, noise , etc. Never should outdoor amplified sound be allowed. I am confident that the planning commission will make the right choices. Neighbors do have a right to the peaceful enjoyment of their land.

Regards,

Carol Vellutini

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From: **Laura Morgan** <thesquig@yahoo.com>

Date: Tue, Jun 1, 2021 at 2:38 PM

Subject: The Winery Event Ordinance hearing on June 3rd

To: <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, <kevin.deas@deasproperties.com>, <greg99pole@gmail.com>,

<pamela.davis@sonoma-county.org>, <Jacquelynn.Ocana@sonoma-county.org>

Cc: <jpseward@gmail.com>

Dear Commissioners,

In addition to our concerns below, we would like to request that you consider limiting wineries on Ag land to marketing only Sonoma County-sourced grapes/wines.

And as background, that you consider the estimate that over 80% of Sonoma County wineries are now owned by large corporations, many of them headquartered out of state, let alone out of county.

Many thanks,
Laura Morgan and Jim Seward

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for all your hard work and loving care of our Sonoma County community and environment.

We ask that in crafting a Winery Event Ordinance, you maintain the General Plan's intentions and policies to safeguard rural character and focus commercial interests within city limits.

Toward that end, we support a winery event ordinance that **includes definitions with specific criteria that cover ALL hospitality and event uses, regardless of any industry labels.** All forms of activities and events have an impact on rural neighborhoods.

We also request that you **require a minimum access road width of 20 feet, for emergency vehicular traffic; a 20-acre minimum parcel size for any new wineries,** to reduce impact on neighbors and their water supplies; **a density limit of 2 wineries per half mile,** to prevent over-concentration of traffic, noise, and commercial activity in rural neighborhoods; and a **ban on outdoor amplified sound.**

Please protect Ag land for agriculture by **preventing conversion of wineries to restaurants and resort accommodations.** Please set **limits on event size and the number of events per winery per year** (even "trade" events). Event **noise should also specifically be limited to 10 PM,** as is customary.

Food service should be **limited to bite-sized appetizers paired with wine.** There should be **no commercial kitchens or meal service outside the hours of specific, permitted events.**

When assessing noise impacts of winery events, **sound measurements should be taken from a neighbor's property line.** Property owners deserve the right to enjoy their land in peace.

Many thanks for your attention and efforts in this matter,

Laura Morgan and Jim Seward
2821 Dyer Ave
Sebastopol, CA
95472
(510) 926-0351

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Anna Ransome** <ransome@sonic.net>

Date: Tue, Jun 1, 2021 at 6:17 PM

Subject: Draft Winery Event Ordinance Comments from FOG

To: <greg99pole@gmail.com>, <"Jacquelynne Ocana" <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, Pam Davis <p.davis479@gmail.com>, Todd Tamura <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>

Dear Commissioners:

This long-overdue ordinance is of utmost importance for the future of Sonoma County. We cannot destroy the appealing rural nature of our county by opening up our ag lands to commercial/industrial scale event centers and non-ag related events. Wise planning is necessary to balance the rights of residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their properties and the rights of the wine industry to keep their businesses viable and able to compete. Please do not take a page from the awkward and unproductive cannabis ordinance development workbook. That has been an unmitigated disaster resulting from industry having exclusive access to staff and from neighbors being left out of the process. The backlash was inevitable and unavoidable.

Just because our General Plan update is long overdue is no reason to ignore how far out of compliance we are with our current plan. We should be making attempts to scale back development until there is a template that brings all the issues into consideration. There are far more tasting rooms permitted than were anticipated in the last update and that should be a sign that a pause in approvals is necessary until the impacts of adding more are studied. Because there has been inadequate oversight of this runaway development of facilities, many wineries have taken advantage of the lack of enforcement. These should not be given the rights to continue flaunting regulation. This rewards bad behavior and constitutes unfair business practices penalizing those who stayed in compliance with their use permits.

The current climate change crisis, not a "drought" but a permanent change according to many scientists, should be the driving force behind all land use decisions in Sonoma County. This includes anticipating more frequent wildfires, which means paying attention to roads that are safe for evacuations and emergency vehicle access at the same time. Cal Fire regulations require 20 foot minimum road width and the ordinance needs to comply with state regulations for the safety of all.

Noise impacts are significant and are difficult to mitigate, no matter the distance. Where I live I can hear festivals in Sebastopol 5 miles away. Sometimes I can actually understand the lyrics with the right wind direction. Amplified sound is unnecessary and should not be allowed for winery events. The idea of freeway-style sound walls is an aesthetic and environmental disaster. Setbacks should be measured to the property line of residences to allow neighbors use of their entire property and events should end by 10 p.m.

My restaurant would have never survived if wineries were allowed to have meal service. This is a potential disaster for local establishments, now struggling to recover from Covid restrictions. Meal service should not be allowed except for special events and full restaurant style kitchens should be banned. These increase the need for water and septic and contribute to the covering of viable ag land.

To discourage over-concentration, limit amounts of wineries to no more than two in a half-mile section of roadway.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.

Anna Ransome for Friends of Graton (FOG)
47 year resident and 3x business owner in Sonoma County

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From: **Charles Collins** <cb_collins133@comcast.net>

Date: Wed, Jun 2, 2021 at 8:38 AM

Subject: Finalizing winery development policies

To: <greg99pole@gmail.com>, <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, <p.davis479@gmail.com>, <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, <Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com>

Along with other **Preserve Rural Sonoma County** supporters, we are advocating for the inclusion of the following policies and requirements in any final ordinance determining the future expansion of wineries and wine industry hospitality activity in Sonoma County:

1) **Definitions** – with specific criteria and covering ALL hospitality and event uses, regardless of whether the industry labels them an Activity or Event.

2) **Siting Criteria** -

- Minimum Road width of 20 feet to support emergency vehicle access
- 20-acre minimum parcel size for new wineries to reduce impact on neighboring residences and wells
- Density standard of no more than two wineries per ½ road-mile to avoid cumulative impacts and keep areas from becoming over-concentrated.
- No outdoor amplified sound'

3) **Operating Standards** -

- Retain the County's current practices as to identifying the number, size, and limits so event noise does not extend past 10 pm.
- Food service (other than for events) should be limited to appetizer size bits for food pairing. No daily service of meals (other than approved events).

4). **Limit noise impacts** -

- No Outdoor amplified sound (except with zoning permit) and stop the reliance on sound walls.
- Measure sound / noise level at property lines.

We respectfully submit the above for your consideration,

Kay Marshall & Charles Collins
101 Harris Hills Drive
Sebastopol, CA 95472

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**Public
Comments
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6-3-21**

From: bluetruthe <bluetruthe@aol.com>
Sent: June 01, 2021 7:09 PM
To: PlanningAgency <PlanningAgency@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: amendments to the County Code, Chapter 26

EXTERNAL

Dear Commissioners,

There's no need for me to voice my personal opinions when Kathy Pons at VOTMA below states my viewpoint so eloquently. I fully agree with her assessment and hope you take the burden of the communities you represent into strong consideration. I've lived here since 1988 and the wineries, wine tasting, events, traffic congestion and parking congestion has grown remarkably. It has infringed on my family and other families' peaceful living in Kenwood. Full parking lots, streets blocked with limos, difficulty getting out on highway 12 at all times, on and on. Please give residents some relief. Please note these well written thoughts below are shared with much of the community as well as my family.

Thank you for your consideration.

A Kenwood resident

This Thursday at 1:50 the Sonoma County Planning Commission will consider amendments to the County Code, Chapter 26, adding standards for new winery visitor serving uses on lands zoned Land Intensive Agriculture, Land Extensive Agriculture, and Diverse Agriculture, outside of the coastal zone.

Attn: Sonoma County Planning Commissioners

Re: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing June 3, 2021

Dear Commissioners,

Valley of The Moon Alliance (VOTMA) has been concerned about the Winery Events issue since 2004 when we conducted a study called "The Potential for Events Facilities on Agricultural Land in the

Sonoma Valley – Choices for the future.” It examines the potential, under present zoning, for a growing number of visitor-serving and event facilities on Agricultural lands in Sonoma Valley. Just looking at the valley floor from Kenwood to South Valley there was a potential of 400 facilities. That potential has not changed. What has changed is the marketing of wine and the apparent need for ‘direct to consumers’ contact to sell wine. This is where visitor-serving uses and events have exploded in the last 10 years. The imagination was the only limit. More visitors mean more impacts from noise, traffic and congestion to the rural neighborhoods. Choices for the future have been kicked down the road for too long. We are finally getting a first look at a county ordinance with some resource-based use standards. We appreciate this long-awaited draft ordinance, but feel there may need to be some modifications to achieve the intended goals of protecting the primacy of agricultural production on agriculturally zoned lands, providing clarity on standards for visitor services to the wine industry as well as limiting the impacts to rural roads and neighborhoods.

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Another important point to emphasize is that this ordinance should not give additional entitlements to wineries with existing use permits. Unless a winery with an existing use permit reapply to modify their use permit using this ordinance, they are bound by their existing use permit terms. The current evolving trends in marketing may not have been included in the descriptive use permit. It means what is allowed is described in the use permit, if it is not described, it is not allowed. In order to support the County’s contention that the ordinance does not create an intensification of use that would require CEQA review for ordinance adoption, it should explicitly state that the provisions of this ordinance do not confer any visitation related entitlements over what is currently specified in writing and approved in a winery/tasting room’s current use permit.

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Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

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From: [Jim DeBonis](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Permit Sonoma Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 1:43:14 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

EXTERNAL

As a winery that has a long history of events, the one issue with the proposal is clean up between 9:30 and 10:00 pm. That is basically impossible. For example, to break down table and chairs for an event that had 150 people, as well as all the janitorial and kitchen clean up, 30 minutes is not enough time. Also, many wineries will use a third party janitorial/cleaning services that come in on a grave shift. I think the point of the event must be over by 10:00 pm with guests departed is the important criteria and is absolutely fair.

Jim Debonis Chief Operating Officer, Trentadue Winery



Phone: [\(707\) 433-3510](tel:7074333510)
Website: www.trentadue.com
Address: 19170 Geyserville Ave
Geyserville, CA 95441
  

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From: [Wendy Krupnick](#)
To: [greg99pole@gmail.com](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#); [p.davis479@gmail.com](#); [todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Hannah Spencer](#); [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Tennis Wick](#); [district3](#); [district5](#); [district4](#); [Susan Gorin](#)
Subject: Re: Draft Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Thursday, June 3, 2021 3:35:59 PM

EXTERNAL

Dear Planning Commissioners and Planners,

I regret that no one else from CAFF was able to comment at the hearing today so I could make personal comments as well. I probably should have submitted my personal comments last week, but am doing so now.

A good friend has been the event coordinator at a well-established local winery for many years. I asked her what she thought about winery events. She said that the shift in marketing they had to do during the pandemic was a complete blessing. Their sales have significantly **increased** and profits even more so by NOT hosting any large events. They started hosing small groups by reservation only during regular tasting room hours and put energy into on-line sales. Expenses, staff time and stress levels have greatly decreased and their customers are having a much better experience.

I feel that the wineries complaining that they will go out of business if they can't host large parties are not creatively committing to their core purpose - to grow quality grapes and produce great wine. Instead they feel they need to be in the hospitality/entertainment business to make ends meet. This is not the business that ag zones are designated to provide.

Thanks for your attention to this difficult issue.

Wendy Krupnick

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From: [Jennifer Mendoza](#)
To: [PlanningCommission](#)
Subject: FW: Constituent Matter: a possible addendum to the winery permitting proposal
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 2:14:18 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: no-reply@sonoma-county.org <no-reply@sonoma-county.org>
Sent: Friday, June 4, 2021 1:53 PM
To: district4 <district4@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Constituent Matter: a possible addendum to the winery permitting proposal

Sent To: County of Sonoma
Topic: Constituent Matter
Subject: a possible addendum to the winery permitting proposal
Message: Dear James and Jenny

In a recent PD article Mike Martini of Taft Street suggested that wineries to just expand a crush pad or other production related facility should not have to go through a complete review by planning This make sense and I wonder if it is just too late in this drafting process to incorporate this idea in the final winery policy Thank you in advance for your thoughts

Sender's Name: andy
Sender's Email: andy@duxoup.com
Sender's Cell Phone: 7075375033
Sender's Address:
9611 w dry creek rd
Healdsburg, CA 95448

**Public
Comments
for PC Hearing
7-15-21**

From: vicky@amistavineyards.com <vicky@amistavineyards.com>

Sent: July 14, 2021 4:45 PM

To: PlanningAgency <PlanningAgency@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Draft Ordinance on Winery Events - ORD16-0001

EXTERNAL

RE: File Number [REDACTED]

Dear Chair Tamura and Commissioners,

On July 14 you are considering a proposed winery events ordinance that has three major challenges:

1. It needs to be aligned with the resolution passed by the BOS in Oct. 2016.
 - a. The ordinance should include County-wide definitions only.
 - b. Siting criteria and limits should be removed and included in local guidelines and individual use permits.
2. It needs to be simpler and clearer.
 - a. It has been nearly a decade since then Supervisor Mike Maguire asked a group to create a set of definitions for winery events.
 - b. It is inevitable that countless hearings, study sessions, public workshops, winery working groups and hundreds of staff hours have resulted in a proposed ordinance that is long, complicated, and confusing.
3. Limits that are embedded in some of the definitions need to be removed.
 - a. Definitions should be just that - definitions - as stated by Commissioner Carr in his letter of Feb. 15, 2021, to Brian Oh,
"1. Keep the definitions simple, using examples to support them. 2. Avoid placing regulations within the definitions. This has been causing some confusion among stakeholders."
 - b. Definitions need to be rewritten to eliminate all limits.

Based on my experience on the Dry Creek Valley CAC and in working with neighbors and wineries to craft the Guidelines adopted by the DCVCAC in 2017, I respectfully, propose two possible options:

1. Vote no on the resolution and encourage local groups to develop guidelines for their areas.
2. Ask staff to come back with an ordinance that includes definitions only.
 - a. Instruct them to start with the definitions developed by the Sonoma County Vintners. Members of the wine community are the only ones who understand the nuances of their business operations and are best able to draft relevant definitions. The staff can then tweak the definitions in ways that are consistent with land use planning conventions.
 - b. Ensure the county definitions do not conflict with definitions approved by the DCVCAC (the only definitions that have been officially approved and in use for the last four years).

With respect,
Vicky Farrow

Vicky Farrow, Proprietor
Amista Vineyards
3320 Dry Creek Road
Healdsburg, CA 95448
707.431.9200



Amista ~ making friends



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Attachments:

[PRSC5 winery ordinance5-28PS.pdf](#)
[Exhibit B PRSC redline markup 5-26.pdf](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Marc Bommersbach** <mbommersbach@att.net>

Date: Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 3:49 PM

Subject: Preserve Rural Sonoma County comments on Winery Event Ordinance

To: Todd Tamura <todd.tamura@sonoma-county.org>, Gregory N Carr

<greg99pole@gmail.com>, Kevin Deas <kevin.deas@deasproperties.com>, Jacquelynnne

Ocana <jacquelynnne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>, ejklaw@yahoo.com <ejklaw@yahoo.com>

Dear Commissioners,

Attached are the comments of Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) regarding the Staff's proposed winery event ordinance (sent prior to June 3 hearing).

PRSC greatly appreciates the County's efforts to conclude a winery event ordinance that codifies many of the County's practices for review and approval of winery use permits.

1. in general PRSC supports the Staff's proposal for definitions and operating standards submitted for the June 3 hearing with the clarifications outlined in the attached letter. Significant points as follows:

- a. All parties are events
- b. Trade meetings are treated like other gatherings with respect to classification as event - after hours or serving a meal is an event
- c. All assessment of noise is done at the property line of adjacent properties

2. The Commission should adopt additional siting criteria as part of the ordinance including:

- a. 20 acre minimum parcel size
- b. 18-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Marc Bombersbach

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July 14, 2021

To: Sonoma County Planning Commission
Georgia McDaniel, Planner

cc: Tennis Wick, Director Permit Sonoma

Supervisors Lynda Hopkins, Chair; Susan Gorin, David Rabbitt, Chris Coursey, James Gore

Re: Draft Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Planning Commissioners and Ms. McDaniel,

Community Alliance with Family Farmers Sonoma County has reviewed the chart prepared by Planning staff comparing proposed definitions and standards for inclusion in the Winery Events ordinance. We are submitting the following recommendations for these definitions and standards. In addition, there are aspects of this issue which have been called for by the public that are not addressed in this chart as well as some key points we have submitted in earlier letters that we would like to emphasize again.

Key points:

- It is imperative for future food security, for carbon and water capture, and to preserve the agricultural economy and character of Sonoma County that all land zoned for agriculture be protected for agricultural production, and that this protection must guide all regulations for uses in these zones.
- All activities *except for* drop-in and by-appointment sales and tastings, tours during tasting room hours for individuals or small groups, and invitation-only business meetings specifically focused on the wine industry with less than 25 attendees should be classified as “events.”
- Size of winery, tasting room, parking lots and other visitor serving areas must be *proportionate* to winery production capacity, which must be based on wine grape production acreage on site or sites owned within the immediate proximity.
- The County should encourage agricultural diversification and allow a variety of farm-produced products to be sold on-site. The ordinance should have clear definitions and be enforceable.
- In order to provide clarity for all, to be enforceable and prevent more areas of over-concentration, the Ordinance, with definitions and standards, should apply county-wide.
- Monitoring and enforcement are a critical part of ordinance and must be included in the Ordinance.

Recommendations from Permit Sonoma Chart:

Definitions:



Commercial kitchens - Explicitly not allowed in ag zones so no definition associated with a winery in an ag zone is appropriate.

Winery - May not include commercial kitchen. Use Sonoma Valley definition but substitute "fruit" for "grapes". (Cideries are technically wineries and subject to same regs).

Winery events - Use County definition

Ag Promo events - Use County definition

Industry-wide events - Use Sonoma Valley definition

Sales activities - Use Public Sales part of Dry Creek definition. Pick up parties, winemaker dinners, etc. **are events**, not regular activities.

Wine trade activities - Must be limited to by invitation only meetings and seminars. Can be earlier than tasting room hours but no later than 5:00.

Wine trade event - Any parties or celebrations, or gatherings that happen after 5:00 are events and must be included as such in the Use permit.

Standards:

Sizing of activities/events & max # of days - Use combination of County and Sonoma Valley. Add limitation based on road access and proximity to main arteries and cities to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled by visitors and staff.

Hours of operation - Use Sonoma Valley and add clarification that regular wine trade activities end at 5:00.

On-site parking - Use County standard and add that capacity for visitors must be tied to volume of on-site agricultural production as well as road accessibility and water availability. No land may be taken out of potential production for parking or other visitor accommodations.

Food service - Use Sonoma Valley standard but allow daytime on-site food prep for wine and food tastings in catering kitchen.

Traffic management - Use Sonoma Valley standard but add accounting for traffic from neighboring wineries and other event centers.

Access - Use Sonoma Valley standards.

Concentration - Enforce GP AR-5g with **maximum** of 2 wineries per half mile and apply county-wide to prevent new areas of over-concentration. Permit Sonoma should research additional methods of preventing more areas of over-concentration.



Event Proposal - Use Sonoma Valley standard.

Maximum size for Tasting Associated areas - Use Sonoma Valley and see On-site parking, above.

Maximum Winery Size - Use Sonoma Valley standard

Minimum Parcel Size - Use Sonoma Valley standard

Water use - Zero net increase in water use for visitor services must be required.

Source of wine grapes - At least 75% of fruit processed should be grown **on site or in the immediate vicinity**. (Not appropriate to be trucking in and processing fruit from other parts of the county. This is an industrial use and such facilities should be in industrial zones.)

As we have previously noted, although many farmers and ranchers welcome the opportunity to host the public and educate them about their products and practices, the business of hospitality is not the same as the business of agriculture. We believe the multiple benefits of preserving agricultural lands for agricultural production are essential for the long-term health of our society, our economy and our planet.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Krupnick, Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County

From: Terry Harrison <terrydh9@gmail.com>

Sent: July 14, 2021 4:04 PM

To: PlanningAgency <PlanningAgency@sonoma-county.org>; Georgia McDaniel
<Georgia.McDaniel@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Winery Events Ordinance

Future Winery Event Permits.

We need to know the impacts on water and climate before creating a new ordinance.

We are now well into the emergency caused by global warming. Our prior winery event regulations and those proposed by Permit were developed before we experienced the temperature extremes, low humidifies, fires and droughts that are now happening regularly. Therefore, it is recommended that no more applications for winery events be considered until the overall impact of the current events and those likely would be approved under the draft ordinance can be considered along with the impact of increases in population. The projected climate impacts would include roads and buildings necessary to serve the events and current and projected impacts of VMTs from visitors attending events in our county along with a water study determining how much water is associated with current events and projected under the proposed ordinance. These studies would take into consideration increases due to additional employees serving winery events.

These water and climate impact studies could then be used for a county wide study of projected water usage including present water permits and an estimate of illegal water uses of which there are a great many and the additional water and climate impacts for the residents that ABAG is requiring the county house and the impacts from an increase in cannabis growing.

We will then have a better idea of how additional winery events would impact water and climate change in Sonoma County. It is altogether possible we have

reached our limits already without additional winery events. A CEQA study would probably be the best method of making these determinations.

Terry Harrison

terrydh9@gmail.com

707-433-6802

1517 Spruce Way Healdsburg CA95448

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From: **Kathy Pons** <282kpons@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 2:25 PM

Subject: Winery Event Definition

To: Greg Carr <greg99pole@gmail.com>

I don't want to compromise you but would it be ok for me to ask a question?

In the spirit of the old event definition, I wonder if something like that below might help clarify what's an event.

If any one of the following is involved in a gathering of people, it would be considered an event:

- Pre-scheduled - by appointment or invitation
- More than 30 people at a time (includes bus loads)
- If a meal is served - food and wine pairing with sample size portions are ok.
- Outside of tasting room hours
- If outside amplified music

You can tell me tomorrow at the meeting if helpful.

Thank you for all the work you have done on this issue...

Kathy

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EXHIBIT “B”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 18. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED USE STANDARDS

26-18-260 – Winery Standards

- A. Purpose. This Section 26-18-260 provides a greater level of detail for the desired character of development in areas zoned LIA - Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA - Diverse Agriculture. For the areas zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, this Section 26-18-260 identifies procedures and criteria applicable to new or modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving activities and winery events. Current use permit holders shall be limited to the visitor and hospitality uses specifically allowed in their use permit conditions. The Standards in this division shall be referred to as “Winery Standards.”
- B. Applicable Areas. The provisions of this section apply to parcels zoned LIA – Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA-Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA -Diverse Agriculture. For split-zoned parcels, the provisions of this section apply to the portion of the parcel zoned for any of the agricultural zoning districts listed above.
- C. Local Advisory Guidelines. Citizen advisory councils/commissions established by the Board of Supervisors review projects subject to this section in accordance with their adopted local advisory guidelines, and make advisory recommendations to the Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.
- D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:
1. **Catering Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A catering kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top, grill or range hood.
 2. **Commercial Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A commercial kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include counter space, sinks, microwave oven(s), warming oven(s), refrigeration, a stove or range, grill and an exhaust hood, and outdoor equipment such as pizza ovens or barbecues.
 3. **Food and Wine Pairing** means providing samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products that are showcased with different wines.
 4. **Rural Area** means any area not located within an urban service area designated on the General Plan Land Use Map.
 5. **Winery** means an agricultural processing facility that converts fruit into wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, administrative offices, tasting rooms, event space, commercial kitchen, and catering kitchen.
 6. **Winery Events** means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite ~~and/or in the area~~ and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR-

6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Events.

7. **Agricultural Promotional Events** are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release/pick-up parties, harvest and wine club parties and similar events.
8. **Industry-Wide Events** are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.
9. **Wine Trade Partners** means distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners and their representatives, ~~winery or tasting room owner(s), winery employees, and tasting room employees.~~
10. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities** means visitor serving activities that are part of normal winery and wine tasting room business operations. There are two types of winery visitor-serving activities: Sales Activities and Wine Trade Activities.
11. **Sales Activities** are wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars and other similar hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales excluding winery events.
12. **Wine Trade Activities** are by-invitation meetings, seminars, harvest parties-wine tastings and similar activities excluding winery events, and attended only by wine trade partners and are not advertised to the consumer.

E. Operating Standards.

1. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. Winery visitor serving activities are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. All winery visitor serving activities must be consistent with the tasting room hours of operation, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
2. Winery Events. Winery events must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of event days, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and other operational requirements specified in the use permit.
3. Sizing, permissibility and other parameters of winery visitor serving activities and winery events, and maximum number of event days is based upon a variety of factors specific to the site and surrounding uses, including, but not limited to, septic capacity, available water supply, emergency access, availability of on-site parking, noise attenuation, increased risk of harm to people or property as a result of hazards, and the potential for negative cumulative effects related to noise, traffic, and water supplies.
4. Hours of Operation. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor serving activities and winery events are specified below, unless further limited by the use permit.
 - a. Tasting Rooms. Regular business hours for tasting rooms are 10 am - 5 pm.

- b. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor-serving activities are specified below by activity type.
 - (1) Sales Activities: 10 am – 5 pm.
 - (2) Wine Trade Activities: ~~8~~10 am – ~~4~~5 pm.
- c. Winery Events. The maximum hours of operation for events are specified below by event type.
 - (1) Agricultural Promotional Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 10 pm, with all cleanup occurring no later than between 9:~~30~~00 pm – 10 pm or as otherwise specified in Use Permit conditions.
 - (2) Industry-wide Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 5 pm.
- 5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events.
- 6. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for wineries and tasting rooms:
 - a. 1 parking space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee. The parking standard may be reduced in accordance with Article 86. - Parking Regulations Sec. 26-86-010 (i).
 - b. Use of on-site unimproved overflow parking areas or shuttling may be allowed to accommodate winery events, if specified in the use permit.
 - c. Overflow parking and shuttling shall not be used to accommodate parking for winery visitor serving activities.
 - d. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.
- 7. Food Service. Food service is allowed as specified below.
 - a. All food service must be designed to promote and enhance marketing of wine. Food service shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production, wine sales and education.
 - b. Operating the food service area as a restaurant, café, delicatessen or any food service offering cooked-to-order food is prohibited.
 - ~~e.~~ Food and wine pairings featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with winery visitor serving activities and winery events ~~_-~~.
 - ~~e-c.~~ Prepared meals featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with ~~wine trade activities and~~ winery events.

e.d. Retail sales of pre-packaged food in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to the following limitations:

- (1) Retail sale of pre-packaged food featuring local foods and food products is allowed during the regular business hours identified in the use permit.
- (2) Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for on-site consumption only. Outdoor seating areas may be allowed for use as outdoor picnic areas.
- (3) Indoor seating area or table service in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food is prohibited.
- (4) Off-site signs advertising retail sales of pre-packaged food are prohibited.

8. Event Coordination and Traffic Management.

a. On-Site Coordinator. An on-site coordinator is required to address complaints about winery events both during and following an event. The on-site Coordinator shall:

- (1) Ensure that the winery's website prominently lists a telephone number for the public to make event-related complaints; and
- (2) Send an annual notice to owners and occupants of lots within 300 feet of the winery/tasting room lot boundaries to provide the "complaint hotline" telephone number.

b. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are required to address the maximum number of people visiting during winery visitor serving activities and winery events. For events exceeding 100 participants and for events that require use of overflow parking, the traffic management plan shall include the following:

- (1) Provisions for event coordination to avoid local traffic delays.
- (2) Parking attendants for each day of the event.
- (3) A shuttle plan, if shuttling is requested, to support each day of the event. A convenient and secure "park and ride" area must be provided.
- (4) A plan for on-site parking requirements and queuing of traffic.
- (5) Enforcement of the on-street parking restrictions.
- (6) Subsequent changes to the approved Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in advance to the Permit and Resource Management Department.
- ~~(6)~~

9. Noise Attenuation Setbacks. Noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source. To ensure compliance with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element thresholds for maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels, winery visitor serving activities and winery events shall meet the required setbacks provided in Table 18-2 below:

Table 18-2: Required Noise Attenuation Setbacks

Noise generating land use	Setback measured from the exterior property line of any adjacent noise sensitive land use
Parking lots	450 feet
Outdoor areas involving groups of people or non-amplified music (i.e. acoustic)	625 feet
Outdoor areas involving amplified music, or loud instruments such as brass instruments, horns, or drums	1,600 feet

Exceptions to the setbacks listed in Table 18-2 above may be allowed when a project-specific noise study prepared in accordance with the Permit and Resource Management Department Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis determines the project will comply with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element due to intervening structures or natural features, ~~available open land on noise sensitive parcels~~, or by incorporating noise mitigation measures.

F. Siting Standards:

1. Parcels for new winery and tasting room development shall be at least 20 acres in size
2. New winery and tasting room project locations cannot result in more than two facilities within a ½ mile distance.
3. Project access shall be off public roads with a minimum 18-foot width
4. Outdoor amplified sound is prohibited



May 28, 2021

County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa CA 95403

Attn: Tennis Wick, Scott Orr, Brian Oh, Georgia McDaniels

RE: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing, June 3, 2021,

Dear Director Wick,

Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Winery Event Ordinance (red line mark-up attached). To meet the County's objective to avoid CEQA review for this Ordinance, the changes proposed in this letter and the attached red-line mark-up address the concerns of many rural residents who have been impacted by tasting rooms as they have morphed from drop in, stand-up tasting, to venues that offer seated wine and food pairing, meals, and potentially thousands of events.

PRSC's proposed changes will reduce land use conflicts in rural communities and provide clarity and more specificity to the County's winery permitting process by:

1. Revising definitions to close loopholes, remove inconsistencies and enhance enforcement.
2. Clarifying the ordinance to ensure any additional entitlements are conferred only under a modification to an existing use permit, with appropriate project-specific environmental review.
3. Adding siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety issues, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

These changes will not limit the wine industry's ability to grow and to adapt to future business conditions.

Background

The need for the Winery Event Ordinance grew out of concerns that the proliferation of tasting rooms and events in rural areas had gotten out of hand – resulting in significant public safety and environmental impacts. The objective of the Ordinance, as codified in the General Plan, is to create clear standards to manage winery hospitality and events on agricultural land and to address unauthorized promotional uses.

The Ordinance was never intended to expand or intensify visitor serving uses, however, efforts to reclassify what have been historically deemed as “events” to “tasting room activities,” and allowing “daily events”, would create a significant expansion of entitlements for promotional uses that have been included in hundreds of Use Permits approved over the last several decades.

PRSC appreciates the efforts, both past and present, of Permit Sonoma, Planning Commissioners and the Supervisors, to regulate hospitality uses through Use Permit-based project approvals that clearly specify the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting. Citizens rely on these criteria and standards to maintain the peace, well-being, and safety of our roads and neighborhoods.

Loopholes in the “Definitions:” section should be closed. For example:

“Parties” are events – The County has long considered parties held for visitors (not employees) to be “events”. These include release/pick-up parties, wine club parties, harvest parties or other holiday or cultural parties. According to the dictionary, the definition of a party is: ***a social gathering of invited guests, typically involving eating, drinking, and entertainment***. The proposed ordinance correctly defines release parties and wine club parties as Agricultural Promotional Events, however, pick-up parties and harvest parties, are listed as activities. This is clearly contradictory, confusing, and inconsistent with past practices. The definition of Ag-promotional events should include all four of the listed “parties” (or any other type of party held for visitors) as “events”. The rather vague and overly broad term “and other hospitality related activities” should be removed or clarified as to what hospitality uses are envisioned in the term “other”.

All visitor gatherings, including Wine Trade Activities, held after tasting room hours or where a meal is served should be considered to be an event - The draft ordinance recognizes the County’s long-standing policy that any gathering of visitors after tasting room hours or where a meal is served constitutes an event.

The after-hours limitation is an important provision, particularly for tasting rooms in rural areas. Long duration drinking past 5 pm - into the cocktail and dinner hour - has the potential to create both evening disruption in neighborhoods and road safety issues on lightly-patrolled rural roads. Excluding winemaker lunches, dinners and evening gatherings for the trade from the “after tasting room hours” limitation creates an entitlement to an unlimited number of these events. It also creates a loophole for enforcement, because there is no way to determine if a winemaker dinner was an event solely for the trade or just another promotional event. The impacts from events are the same regardless of what is on someone’s business card. Furthermore, given the County’s long history of limited enforcement, this is a clear opportunity for abuse.

If a winery’s business plan requires lunches and dinners and after-hours gatherings for the trade, these events can be included and evaluated in the event totals requested in the Use Permit application process.

A winery use permit should not allow events on parcels disassociated from the winery – Section D.6. defines Winery Events as events held at wineries and tasting rooms. However, it also makes the conflicting statements that they can “occur on site and/or in the area”. Besides contradicting the first statement, this phrase has the effect of allowing events to be held on parcels geographically disassociated from the winery. The reference to “or in the area” should be removed, otherwise hundreds more parcels, with no protection from a use permit, could be opened up for events. Wineries have the ability to request a zoning permit for a limited number of events in other areas.

Clarify that the Ordinance cannot confer additional entitlements to existing use permit holders

In order to support the County’s contention that the ordinance does not create an intensification of use that would require CEQA review for ordinance adoption, it should explicitly state that the provisions of this ordinance do not confer any visitation related entitlements over what is currently specified in writing and approved in a winery/tasting room’s current use permit.

In addition, it is our opinion that, without the changes proposed in this letter and the redlined mark-up the items listed below, the ordinance DOES in fact change to the County’s “current application review practices,” a finding that would trigger CEQA review for the ordinance due to the following changes:

1. Reclassification of gatherings after tasting-room hours, or with service of a meal, to Wine Trade Partners as “activities” instead of them being specified as “events”
2. The classification of some categories of parties as Winery Visitor Serving Activities and part of normal tasting room business operations
3. Modifying “noise setbacks” to allow a portion of the attenuation distance to be measured on adjacent properties, which is inconsistent with the General Plan Noise Element and the County’s current use permit review practice that measures noise element compliance at the property line.

To avoid the need for CEQA review, the ordinance must correct the above listed changes to “current application evaluation practices”, and clearly state that these definitional changes will only expand the uses that are specifically allowed under current use permits by permit modification.

Additional siting criteria need to be added

Siting criteria, such as minimum road width and parcel size, and a separation or density standard have always been included as part of the ordinance discussions. By setting Siting Criteria, the Ordinance would help the County to screen out projects that would likely be unable to meet mitigation requirements in the use permit process. This early project screening would protect local residents and reduce the risk to developers who may

otherwise spend considerable resources before coming up short in the decision process. It would also relieve staff, commissioners and the public from having to review contentious projects that have significant challenges for approval.

PRSC proposes the following four siting criteria that would address many of the issues raised in stakeholder discussions:

1. Access off minimum 18-ft. wide County roadway
2. 20-acre minimum parcel size for new wineries
3. Separation criteria of no more than two winery driveways in ½ mile
4. No outdoor amplified sound, except under a limited number of events per a zoning permit

Minimum 18 ft. roadway – This requirement was discussed in the Winery Working Group that included first responder personnel, and it was generally agreed between the community groups and wine industry that for, new winery applications, there should be sufficient access/egress for both visitors and emergency vehicles.

20-acre minimum parcel size – In agricultural areas the minimum zoning is generally 10 acres for DA and 20 acres for LEA and LIA zones. However, there are a number of parcels in all ag zones that are well below this threshold and that already have use permits. These small parcels present a challenge because they are usually surrounded by residences, are often located on rural lanes with poor access, and draw water from wells that are in close proximity to neighbors' wells. The 20-acre minimum is included in the Dry Creek guidelines and SVCAC guidelines. A 20-acre minimum standard would reduce many of the siting issues associated with smaller parcels. Permit Sonoma and the BZA are already starting to informally consider this criterion in project reviews.

Separation criteria – a separation criteria that allows a maximum two wineries in a ½ mile stretch of roadway would not only address the over-concentration of winery facilities in the identified areas of concentration, but it would lessen the potential for other areas in the County to become over concentrated over time. Both the City of Healdsburg and the City of Sonoma have enacted standards to address over-concentration of tasting rooms in their jurisdictions, and the Sonoma Valley CAC includes the proposed standard as well. The BZA has also now begun to consider density in project approvals.

No outdoor amplified sound – In rural areas sound can travel significant distances - greater than the 1600-foot setback recommended by the sound consultant. Even with applicant-monitored "mitigation," amplified sound can be very disruptive to the neighborhood. This is why the vast majority of use permits prohibit outdoor amplified sound.

Summary

With the changes proposed in this letter, including the revisions incorporated in the attached markup, the Ordinance would not restrict the expansion of visitor serving uses in ag-zones overall. The County would continue to issue use permits, and use permit modifications, with project-specific CEQA review. And the County would retain the right of discretionary review that limits development on specific parcels where environmental, safety and neighborhood compatibility, or cumulative impact issues cannot be addressed.

Ideally, an Ordinance with clear definitions and siting criteria would direct development into areas where it can have fewer impacts and, in order to be in compliance with CEQA, the ordinance would not allow current use permit holders to engage in new or unspecified visitor serving uses without first securing approval through a use permit modification.

Thank you

Preserve Rural Sonoma County

Attachment: Redline comments

From: **Kathy Pons** <282kpons@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jul 14, 2021 at 2:25 PM

Subject: Winery Event Definition

To: Greg Carr <greg99pole@gmail.com>

I don't want to compromise you but would it be ok for me to ask a question?

In the spirit of the old event definition, I wonder if something like that below might help clarify what's an event.

If any one of the following is involved in a gathering of people, it would be considered an event:

- Pre-scheduled - by appointment or invitation
- More than 30 people at a time (includes bus loads)
- If a meal is served - food and wine pairing with sample size portions are ok.
- Outside of tasting room hours
- If outside amplified music

You can tell me tomorrow at the meeting if helpful.

Thank you for all the work you have done on this issue...

Kathy

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**Public
Comments
after PC Hearing
7-15-21**

From: [Mike Martini](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Cc: [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Tennis Wick](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#); [Kevin Deas \(Kevin.Deas@deasproperties.com\)](#); [Greg Carr](#); [Todd.Tamura@gmail.com](#); [Jacquelynn Ocana](#)
Subject: Winery Events Comparison Chart and Continued Conversation
Date: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 4:57:31 PM
Attachments: [Dry Creek Valley Guidelines for New Use Permits.pdf](#)
[Exhibit B Planning-Commission-Hearing-06 03 21.pdf](#)
[Sonoma Vintners Winery Use Permit Policy Parameters Definitions.pdf](#)
[Stakeholder Draft Sonoma Valley Guidelines with Map.pdf](#)
[SVCAC Ad Hoc Committee Draft Winery Guidelines.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

I want to thank the Staff for their hard work to bring forward to the Planning Commission and comparison from the draft guidelines and definitions related to new winery use permit applications. Wading through subtle differences in style and template to present an “apples to apples” comparison is a heavy list. I would suggest, however, that the comparison should be among five different documents that I have attached to this email.

Of the three in the comparison only the Dry Creek Guidelines for New Use permits is the only set of guidelines and definitions that have actually been approved and operating. The SVCAC Ad Hoc Committee are in a draft form and resulted from limited review after the Sonoma Valley CAC decided to reject the Stakeholder Draft Valley Guidelines with Map that was the product of neighbors and wineries. Exhibit B is from the Staff Report from the June 3rd Planning Commission Hearing. You should also be considering the Sonoma Vintners Winery Use Permit Policy Parameters as a lot of out reach went into its preparation. There may be another document from other organizations such as Preserve Rural Sonoma County. In any case, the comparison should include all the work that has gone into this issue over the past five years.

What is interesting in comparing these documents is a common theme of mitigating impacts and not micro-managing activities.

I look forward to the continued conversation and ask that you let me know when the item will be heard again.

Thanks!

Mike Martini
Taft Street Winery

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Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

Section 1. Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of definitions and preferred guidelines for use by the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCV CAC) in investigating, discussing and considering applications for new use permits that include visitor serving agricultural uses in agricultural and resource zones in the Dry Creek Valley watershed (map attached). The DCV CAC will provide advisory recommendations to the County of Sonoma and its Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

These guidelines will help to establish clear expectations, so applicants and neighbors have a basis for more open dialogue and common understanding. The guidelines are a pilot program to assess the value of setting standards locally and will also help to inform future actions by the Board of Supervisors on visitor serving agricultural uses.

Section 2. Goals

1. Support agriculture and related agricultural promotion on a scale that best fits the character of Dry Creek Valley.
2. Establish a set of clearly defined guidelines for use by the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council in considering use permits that include new visitor serving agricultural uses.
3. Communicate the guidelines so applicants, neighbors and County representatives have clear expectations and a basis for open dialogue and understanding.
4. Favorably consider new applications where the overall project is substantially consistent with the guidelines.

Section 3. How to Use this Guidance Document

These guidelines are specifically intended to be used in evaluating new use permit applications that request visitor serving agricultural uses (e.g. tasting rooms, promotional activities or events) and for modifications to add visitor serving uses to existing permits that were approved for agricultural processing only.

We recognize that all projects are unique. As such, each will continue to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis considering the specific aspects of the project, property, location, and planned mitigations. The Guidelines provide consistent definitions and a framework for identifying and evaluating important aspects of each project.

There are several categories listed in this document, and for each category, there is associated guidance as to what could be considered appropriate and could contribute to a favorable decision by the DCV CAC. It is not expected that any application would meet each of the preferred guidelines. A less than favorable condition in any one category would not necessarily equate to an overall unfavorable decision. In general, the overall

Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

combination of more and less favorable conditions will be used by CAC members to evaluate the use permit application.

Section 4. Guidelines

1. Access and Traffic

1. Access to the parcel on public roadways of at least 18 feet in width is preferred for use permits with visitor serving agricultural uses.
2. There is adequate ingress and egress to the property, including adequate site distances to the entrance and distance from crossroads and other driveways. The highest volume of expected visitors can enter and exit the property safely without traffic backup on public roadways.

2. Site

1. Parcels of at least 20 acres are preferred for use permits with visitor serving agricultural uses.
2. The majority of the usable land is in agriculture, some portion of which is pertinent to the visitor serving agricultural uses. However, it is not the intent to encourage the removal of woodlands or planting of crops on steep hillsides.
3. There is sufficient water on the parcel to support all new visitor serving agricultural uses without negatively impacting neighboring properties.
4. All parking is on-site. There is no parking along public roadways.
5. Parking plans that utilize road easements have the written agreement of all neighbors who share those easements.
6. Parking in vineyard rows and avenues may be inadequate in wet conditions.

3. Activities and Events

1. All activities and events will promote agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.
2. All activities and events will be hosted by the proprietor, with on-site management by the proprietor's staff. The facility will not be rented out for use by a 3rd party and no rental fees will be charged.
3. New use permits that support the guidelines below will be viewed as more favorable. See Section 6 for the Definitions of Activities and Events.

Activities and Events	Guidelines
Public and Direct Sales Activities During regular hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited to the Maximum Persons at One Time set in the use permit• Limited to the hours of 10am – 5pm

Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

Activities and Events	Guidelines
Direct Sales Activities Outside of regular hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50 visitors at one time, or the Maximum Persons at One Time set in the use permit, whichever is less• Maximum of 12 times a year• Maximum of two per month• Limited to the hours of 8am – 10pm
Trade Marketing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited to the Maximum Persons at One Time set in the use permit• Limited to the hours of 8am – 10pm
Association Sponsored Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 15 event days per year• Traffic and parking plans required if Maximum Persons at One Time is exceeded• Limited to the hours of 10am – 5pm
Agricultural Promotional Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 2 days per quarter• Events outside of regular hours limited to 2 event days per year• Limited to the hours of 8am – 10pm

4. Noise Impact

Noise impact is one of the most complex categories in Use Permits with Visitor Serving Uses. We encourage applicants to pay close attention to the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Noise Element, particularly Policy NE-1c, when crafting their use permit application. Requests for outdoor amplified music, especially after 5pm, will typically require noise studies and mitigation measures and may not be appropriate for some projects.

1. All noise impact conforms to the Sonoma County Noise Standards as set forth in the General Plan.
2. Applicant has noted the distances in each direction from the visitor serving areas to the neighboring residences and indicated noise mitigations, if necessary. Projects with greater than required distances from property lines and existing residences are more favorable.
3. All outdoor amplified music ends by 9pm.

5. Food Service

1. Food service is allowed for wine and food pairings and in conjunction with activities and events, however operating as a restaurant is prohibited. More specifically:

Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

- the predominate activity in the tasting room is wine tasting, wine sales and related wine marketing, not dining
 - meal service is not available to the general public on a regular basis
 - no cooked-to-order food is served.
- 2. Catering and commercial kitchens are acceptable, including indoor or outdoor equipment such as stoves, wood-fired ovens and barbecues.
- 3. Wine and food pairing offered to the general public is allowed between the hours of 10am and 5pm. Showcasing site or locally grown foods is encouraged.
- 4. Sale of pre-packaged foods is allowed.
- 5. All food service requires appropriate health permits under existing County regulations.

6. Facilities

1. Visitor serving areas: The area under roof dedicated to public tasting facilities does not exceed 2500 square feet. This does not include outdoor areas or space dedicated to uses such as kitchens, bathrooms, barrel rooms, storage or seated tasting.
2. New projects with proposed case production that fits with the scale of existing wineries in the Dry Creek Valley will be viewed favorably. Permitted case production for existing wineries in the Dry Creek Valley ranges from 500 cases to 350,000 annually. Eighty percent of the wineries in Dry Creek Valley fall in the range of 3,600 to 30,000 permitted cases. Larger projects will be considered based on compensating factors such as parcel size, road access and proximity to major highways.
3. Facilities are sited to minimize visual impact. Projects with buildings and landscaping that are of an appropriate scale to the area will be considered favorably.
4. Nighttime lighting levels are at the minimum necessary to provide for security and safety of the use and users. Exterior lighting that minimizes glare and spillover onto neighboring parcels will be considered favorably.
5. Marketing accommodations for private guests are allowed, provided that the use promotes, or markets agricultural products grown or processed on the site, the scale of the use is appropriate to the production and/or processing use and no commercial use of private guest accommodations is allowed (i.e. rental fees are not charged).

7. Local Focus

The community of Dry Creek Valley is dedicated to promoting local agriculture and wine grape processing. Projects that acquire agricultural products grown locally, specifically from Dry Creek Valley and Sonoma County, are preferred.

Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

1. New wineries that use at least 75% of grapes from Sonoma County will be viewed favorably.
2. Projects that use local foods from Dry Creek Valley and Sonoma County for visitor serving uses and projects that dedicate acreage for diversified agriculture will be viewed favorably.

8. Concentration

Different areas within the Dry Creek Valley are distinct in terms of concentration of residents, wineries and other developed uses, so it is difficult to establish specific limits. Requests for new use permits that take density into consideration and seek to reduce the impact on nearby existing wineries or residences will be viewed more favorably. Such factors as the proximity to other wineries, residences and intersections will be considered. In general, projects that are not clustered around existing developed uses or are closer to major highways will be viewed as more favorable.

Section 5. Suggested Best Practices

The applicant has met or offered to meet at least once with neighbors to describe and hear reactions to their plans.

1. This includes all neighbors who are likely to be impacted by the project.
2. Best practice suggests that multiple meetings over the course of the planning process are most effective, with one meeting very early in the project before plans are developed in detail.

Section 6. Definitions

A. Maximum Persons at One Time

The Maximum Persons at One Time is defined in each use permit as the total visitors on the site at one time. This number is set on a case-by-case basis in each use permit using a combination of the following factors:

1. Septic system capacity
2. On-site parking as follows:
 - a. 1 space for each employee
 - b. 1 space for every 2.5 visitors
3. Road access
4. Building occupancy levels as authorized by the Fire Department

B. Activities

1. **Public Sales Activities** are defined as wine tasting, tours, wine and food educational pairings, seminars and other hospitality related activities supporting the promotion of wine sales that are open to the public.

Dry Creek Valley

Guidelines for New Use Permits with Visitor Serving Agricultural Uses

- a. Will not exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit established in the use permit.
 - b. Do not require an invitation.
 - c. A fee may be charged.
 - d. May be advertised to consumers.
2. **Direct Sales Activities** are defined as by-invitation activities such as winemaker lunches or dinners, release days or pickup parties designed to promote the sale of agricultural products.
 - a. Will not exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit established in the use permit.
 - b. A fee may be charged.
 - c. Invitations may be issued using such methods as mail, email, websites or social media.
3. **Trade Marketing Activities** are defined as by-invitation activities for staff, trade or distribution partners.
 - a. Will not exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit established in the use permit.
 - b. Are not advertised to the consumers.

C. Events

1. **Association Sponsored Events** (often referred to as Industry Events) are defined as events sponsored by a recognized organization to promote wine sales and tourism, conducted across multiple sites within a specified geographic area.
 - a. Events will meet the requirements and follow the best practices of the association sponsoring the event.
 - b. Have adequate mitigation plans for septic and parking if they exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit.
 - c. Parking along public roadways is not allowed.
 - d. Limited to tasting room hours only.
2. **Other Agricultural Promotional Events** are those events that are expected to exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit.
 - a. Invitations may be issued (using such methods as mail, email, websites or social media).
 - b. Must be explicitly requested in the use permit specifying the number of events annually and the maximum size of each event.
 - c. Require adequate mitigation plans for septic and parking if the visitors expected exceed the Maximum Persons at One Time limit. Parking along public roadways is not allowed.

EXHIBIT “B”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 18. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED USE STANDARDS

26-18-260 – Winery Standards

- A. Purpose. This Section 26-18-260 provides a greater level of detail for the desired character of development in areas zoned LIA - Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA - Diverse Agriculture. For the areas zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, this Section 26-18-260 identifies procedures and criteria applicable to new or modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving activities and winery events. The Standards in this division shall be referred to as “Winery Standards.”
- B. Applicable Areas. The provisions of this section apply to parcels zoned LIA – Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA-Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA -Diverse Agriculture. For split-zoned parcels, the provisions of this section apply to the portion of the parcel zoned for any of the agricultural zoning districts listed above.
- C. Local Advisory Guidelines. Citizen advisory councils/commissions established by the Board of Supervisors review projects subject to this section in accordance with their adopted local advisory guidelines, and make advisory recommendations to the Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.
- D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:
1. **Catering Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A catering kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top, grill or range hood.
 2. **Commercial Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A commercial kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include counter space, sinks, microwave oven(s), warming oven(s), refrigeration, a stove or range, grill and an exhaust hood, and outdoor equipment such as pizza ovens or barbecues.
 3. **Food and Wine Pairing** means providing samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products that are showcased with different wines.
 4. **Rural Area** means any area not located within an urban service area designated on the General Plan Land Use Map.
 5. **Winery** means an agricultural processing facility that converts fruit into wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, administrative offices, tasting rooms, event space, commercial kitchen, and catering kitchen.
 6. **Winery Events** means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite and/or in the area and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR-

6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Events.

7. **Agricultural Promotional Events** are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release parties, and wine club parties and similar events.
8. **Industry-Wide Events** are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.
9. **Wine Trade Partners** means distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners and their representatives, winery or tasting room owner(s), winery employees, and tasting room employees.
10. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities** means visitor serving activities that are part of normal winery and wine tasting room business operations. There are two types of winery visitor-serving activities: Sales Activities and Wine Trade Activities.
11. **Sales Activities** are wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars and other hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales.
12. **Wine Trade Activities** are by-invitation meetings, seminars, harvest parties and similar activities attended only by wine trade partners and are not advertised to the consumer.

E. Operating Standards.

1. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. Winery visitor serving activities are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. All winery visitor serving activities must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
2. Winery Events. Winery events must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of event days, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
3. Sizing of winery visitor serving activities and winery events, and maximum number of event days is based upon a variety of factors specific to the site and surrounding uses, including, but not limited to, septic capacity, available water supply, emergency access, availability of on-site parking, noise attenuation, increased risk of harm to people or property as a result of hazards, and the potential for negative cumulative effects related to noise, traffic, and water supplies.
4. Hours of Operation. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor serving activities and winery events are specified below, unless further limited by the use permit.
 - a. Tasting Rooms. Regular business hours for tasting rooms are 10 am - 5 pm.

- b. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor-serving activities are specified below by activity type.
 - (1) Sales Activities: 10 am – 5 pm.
 - (2) Wine Trade Activities: 8 am – 10 pm.
- c. Winery Events. The maximum hours of operation for events are specified below by event type.
 - (1) Agricultural Promotional Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 10 pm, with all cleanup occurring no later than between 9:30 pm – 10 pm.
 - (2) Industry-wide Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 5 pm.
- 5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events.
- 6. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for wineries and tasting rooms:
 - a. 1 parking space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee. The parking standard may be reduced in accordance with Article 86. - Parking Regulations Sec. 26-86-010 (i).
 - b. Use of on-site unimproved overflow parking areas or shuttling may be allowed to accommodate winery events, if specified in the use permit.
 - c. Overflow parking and shuttling shall not be used to accommodate parking for winery visitor serving activities.
 - d. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.
- 7. Food Service. Food service is allowed as specified below.
 - a. All food service must be designed to promote and enhance marketing of wine. Food service shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production, wine sales and education.
 - b. Operating the food service area as a restaurant, café, delicatessen or any food service offering cooked-to-order food is prohibited.
 - c. Food and wine pairings featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with winery visitor serving activities and winery events.
 - d. Prepared meals featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with wine trade activities and winery events.

- e. Retail sales of pre-packaged food in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to the following limitations:
 - (1) Retail sale of pre-packaged food featuring local foods and food products is allowed during the regular business hours identified in the use permit.
 - (2) Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for on-site consumption only. Outdoor seating areas may be allowed for use as outdoor picnic areas.
 - (3) Indoor seating area or table service in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food is prohibited.
 - (4) Off-site signs advertising retail sales of pre-packaged food are prohibited.
- 8. Event Coordination and Traffic Management.
 - a. On-Site Coordinator. An on-site coordinator is required to address complaints about winery events both during and following an event. The on-site Coordinator shall:
 - (1) Ensure that the winery's website prominently lists a telephone number for the public to make event-related complaints; and
 - (2) Send an annual notice to owners and occupants of lots within 300 feet of the winery/tasting room lot boundaries to provide the "complaint hotline" telephone number.
 - b. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are required to address the maximum number of people visiting during winery visitor serving activities and winery events. For events exceeding 100 participants and for events that require use of overflow parking, the traffic management plan shall include the following:
 - (1) Provisions for event coordination to avoid local traffic delays.
 - (2) Parking attendants for each day of the event.
 - (3) A shuttle plan, if shuttling is requested, to support each day of the event. A convenient and secure "park and ride" area must be provided.
 - (4) A plan for on-site parking requirements and queuing of traffic.
 - (5) Enforcement of the on-street parking restrictions.
 - (6) Subsequent changes to the approved Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in advance to the Permit and Resource Management Department.
- 9. Noise Attenuation Setbacks. Noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source. To ensure compliance with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element thresholds for maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels, winery visitor serving activities and winery events shall meet the required setbacks provided in Table 18-2 below:

Table 18-2: Required Noise Attenuation Setbacks

Noise generating land use	Setback measured from the exterior property line of any adjacent noise sensitive land use
Parking lots	450 feet
Outdoor areas involving groups of people or non-amplified music (i.e. acoustic)	625 feet
Outdoor areas involving amplified music, or loud instruments such as brass instruments, horns, or drums	1,600 feet

Exceptions to the setbacks listed in Table 18-2 above may be allowed when a project-specific noise study prepared in accordance with the Permit and Resource Management Department Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis determines the project will comply with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element due to intervening structures or natural features, available open land on noise sensitive parcels, or by incorporating noise mitigation measures.



Winery Use Permit Policy, Parameters & Definitions

Section 1 – Background

Winery

The establishment and operation of a winery involves many levels of regulation and compliance as it involves the production of an alcoholic beverage subject to state and federal excise tax.

Permits are required from the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (Bonded Winery Permit) and the California Alcoholic Beverage Commission (Winegrower – Type 02 License). This license defines the allowable operations to include:

- the conversion of fruit into wine,
- the sale of wine to consumers for consumption on the licensed property,
- the sale of wine to consumers to remove from the licensed property,
- the sale of wine to licensed retail and restaurants for resale to their customers,
- the sale of wine to licensed distributors for resale to licensed retail and restaurants, and
- the sale of wine to licensed distillers or vinegar producers.

Sonoma County General Plan

The Sonoma County General Plan (in its Agricultural Resources Elements) has many goals, objectives and policies specifically supporting the multi-generational agricultural heritage of Sonoma County and the stabilization of the farmer's economic situation. These goals represent the growing of agricultural crops, the processing of the crop as well as the sales and marketing of the product. Wineries are part of that processing.

Specific goals of note include:

- **GOAL AR-4:** Allow farmers to manage their operations in an efficient, economic manner with minimal conflict with nonagricultural uses.
- **GOAL AR-9:** Provide agricultural permit processing procedures that are rapid and efficient.

Specific policies of note include:

- **Policy AR-4a:** The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.
- **Policy AR-4d:** Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.
- **Policy AR-8b:** Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County

Sonoma County Zoning Code

The Sonoma County Zoning Code describes the uses allowed by right in the Land Use Designations described in the General Plan as well as those uses allowed by application for and approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The CUP outlines the conditions for approval and helps to mitigate and protect underlying goals and policies of the General Plan.

Wineries and Tasting Rooms are allowed by Conditional Use Permit in the three major agricultural land use designations: Land Intensive Agriculture (LIA) Sec 26-04-020; Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA) Sec 26-06-020; and Diverse Agriculture (DA) Sec 26-08-020.

Winery Business Activities

As described in Winery above, a Winery is permitted to sell its products through several channels from directly to a consumer, to a distributor in another state. The General Plan Policy AR-8b “encourages programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products”. This today results in a wide range of sales, marketing and promotion activities associated with a Winery that are a normal part of managing the business.

All wineries, even those without public tasting rooms, must engage in these business activities to survive and be viable.

Non-Winery Events

A Winery is an attractive site for reasons of its location in an agricultural region, its association with food and wine and, very often, interesting architecture and design. As such, these sites are often sought out for events not related to the Winery operation or its sales and marketing of its products.

Section 2 - Parameters

Consideration of an application for a Conditional Use Permit for Winery operation recognizes and incorporates three specific parameters for operation:

- **Production:** This parameter sets the production limits of the winery in terms of cases per year and is determined by facility capacity and production area.
- **Hours:** This parameter sets the hours that the winery may operate and recognizes Production Hours, Business Hours, and Public Access/Serving Hours
- **Capacity:** This parameter sets the Maximum Persons at One Time allowed at the winery, and is determined by floor area, parking, septic, site area and access.

Additional parameters related to compliance with other regulatory agencies including water, hazardous materials, public works/roads, access, and public health are also incorporated into the Conditional Use Permit.

Section 3 - Guidelines

Rather than attempting to lock in a particular business model, a Conditional Use Permit should instead speak to the Winery's impactful usage: Production Activities, Public-Serving Activities (those activities open to the public), and Business Activities (activities limited to staff, consultants, and sales partners). This will enable the Winery to evolve its business while ensuring that it remains a good neighbor.

The following guidelines will be followed in the review and approval of the application:

1. Non-Winery Events event may be limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number and may be subject to additional mitigation.
2. Activities outside of the parameters of Hours and Capacity, as well as Public-Serving Activities that are not Winery-specific (such as industry events) without respect to Hours and Capacity, may be limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number and may be subject to additional mitigation.
3. Business Activities within the parameter of Capacity but outside of Hours are not limited in Conditional Use Permit but may be subject to additional mitigation.
4. Winery-specific Public-Serving Activities within the parameter of Hours but outside of Capacity are not limited in the Conditional Use Permit as to number but may be subject to additional mitigation such as porta potties, parking attendants, offsite parking or provided transportation.
5. Any Activity occurring within the parameters of relevant Hours and, where applicable, Capacity is not limited in the Conditional Use Permit.

Specific Area Guidelines

Sonoma County has identified three areas that have asked for and received special attention in the formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee to develop, review and recommend specific guidelines for that area. They include Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma Valley and Westside Road (pending). Consideration of a Conditional Use Permit for a Winery in one of these areas are subject to recommended guidelines developed for that area but will not be less rigid than the Guidelines described above. No authority is delegated to Citizen Advisory Committees to modify standards or regulations set forth in the General Plan or Zoning Ordinance.

Section 4 – Definitions

Winery

Facilities and equipment for the conversion of fruit into wine and engage in the production and sale of wine (from CA ABC).

Maximum Persons at One Time (MPOT)

Maximum Persons at One Time is the total number of people that can be accommodated on site based on standard calculations of floor area, parking spaces, septic and ingress/egress constraints. The number shall be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Business Hours

Business Hours are the hours that normal winery business is conducted on site covering issues of operations, finance & accounting, human resources, and sales & marketing. Business Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Public Access/Serving Hours

Public Access/Serving Hours are the hours that the winery is open to the public and may offer public tasting and sales of wine to the public. Public Access/Serving Hours may include weekend hours and be adjusted seasonally to reflect Daylight Savings Time. Public Access/Serving Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Production Hours

Production Hours are the hours of winery production and reflect the necessity of production activity based on harvest issues. Production Hours will be spelled out in the Use Permit Application.

Winery Business Activities

Winery Business Activities are any activities taking place at the winery within Business Hours, not open to the public, specifically focused on the production, sale and promotion of wine (an agricultural product), and are within the MPOT described in the Use Permit Application.

Winery Business Activities include, but are not limited to: business to business meetings, trade partner/distributor meetings, sales meetings, wine trade events, wine education/seminars, trade tours and tastings, media tours & tastings, grower relations meetings, employee appreciation activities, and industry receptions. Food including meals may be served in conjunction with these activities as described in “Food Service” below.

In addition, Business Activities include administrative activities such as staff meetings, accounting and finance, and human resources.

Public Access/Serving Activities

Public Access/Serving Activities are any activities taking place at the winery during Public Access Sales Hours open to the public, specifically focused on the sale and promotion of wine (an agricultural product), and are within the MPOT described in the Use Permit Application.

Public Access/Serving Activities include but are not limited to: wine tasting, wine club pick up, new releases, open house, food & wine education, tours & tastings and, tasting room sales.

Food, including meals may be served in conjunction with these activities as described in “Food Service” below.

Non-Winery Events

Non-Winery Activities are any activities that are not directly associated with the sales and marketing of the wine produced at the Winery. Non-Winery Activities will be limited by the Use Permit and may have restrictions on number, hours, and amplified music. Non-Winery Activities will require evidence of mitigation of impacts in the form of notice to neighbors, additional parking, parking attendants, or portable toilets.

Non-Winery Activities include political and charitable fundraising activities; association sponsored events; corporate events and weddings.

Amplified Sound

All activities on a permitted winery are subject to the Noise Element of the Sonoma County General Plan.

Food Service

Food Service is the service of food specifically prepared and paired with the service of the wine in conjunction with Business Activities and Public Access/Serving Activities. Meal Service may be provided by Third Party Vendors (caterers or food trucks) or by onsite kitchens. Third Party Vendors must have required permits from County Public Health. onsite kitchens are subject to compliance with County Public Health as conditioned in the Use Permit.

Food Service is allowed as part of Business Activities and Public Access/Serving Activities.

Effect of Winery Parameters and Definitions

The parameters and definitions provided herein apply prospectively to new winery applications. There is no intent to render any existing winery use non-conforming.

July 27, 2020

DRAFT SONOMA VALLEY WINERY GUIDELINES

Purpose

The purpose of the Sonoma Valley Winery Guidelines (“Guidelines”) is to provide a local framework for evaluating new or modified use permit applications on land that is zoned Agricultural (DA, LIA, LEA). The intention of these Guidelines is to protect Agricultural Zones, to advise how much winery-related activity is allowed on these lands, and to minimize cumulative impacts.

The Guidelines identify evaluation criteria that will be considered by the Sonoma County Citizens Advisory Commission (SVCAC) when considering projects located in Sonoma Valley that are applying for a permit (such as a new winery use permit or modification of an existing use permit). The SVCAC will use the Guidelines to provide advisory recommendations to the Permit Sonoma staff, as well as the Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors when considering these permit applications.

The Guidelines are also intended to advise applicants on the design of their projects and on the events-related facilities and programs when preparing a use permit application. Each project is regarded as unique in the evaluation process, and each will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the SVCAC and by Permit Sonoma.

Siting Criteria

I. Winery Facilities Siting Criteria

A. Access

Public roadways of at least 18’ in width are preferred. The following will be considered with regard to access:

1. **Ingress/Egress.** Is there adequate ingress and egress to the property?
2. **Sight Distance.** Are there adequate sight distances at ingress/egress points to the site?
3. **Peak Capacity.** Can the peak volume of expected visitors enter and exit the property safely without significant traffic backup on public roadways?

Traffic impact analyses shall assess impacts based on project-generated trips as well as a scenario where project-generated trips are inflated by 20% to account for cumulative impacts in the Sonoma Valley concentration area.

B. Setbacks

The following issues will be considered when evaluating the appropriate setback distance from property lines for winery facilities:

1. **Minimum Distance.** Setbacks will be site specific, however a minimum setback to meet the County noise standards at the property lines is required for smaller parcels.
2. **Noise Attenuation.** When considering the proposed activity and intensity of use, setbacks shall be adequate to maintain a 65 db noise standard at the property line. Noise attenuation strategies, including setbacks from property lines and noise muffling interventions, may be combined to meet this standard, however permanent structures and installations for noise muffling must meet Scenic Corridor and Scenic Resource requirements.
3. **Visual Impacts.** Facilities should be sited to minimize visual impact, especially in scenic areas/corridors. Setback distances shall be designed to ensure that the visual impacts of the new facilities are minimized.
4. **Lighting.** Nighttime lighting levels shall be limited to what is necessary to provide security and safety for users. Setbacks shall be sufficient to limit light visibility from public travel ways and to maintain the rural and scenic qualities of the Sonoma Valley. Exterior lighting shall be consistent with Dark Sky standards (e.g. low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare).

II. Tasting Room Siting Criteria

A. Minimum Parcel Size

The minimum parcel size that is required to qualify for a tasting room on land zoned Agricultural is 10 acres. An exception may be made to this minimum when the applicant is a small agricultural producer and when the project is not located in a concentrated area.

B. Maximum Site Area for Tasting Room and Tasting Associated Areas

Experience indicates that tasting rooms can attract increased visitation to an area, and can result in nuisances related to noise, traffic, and site development. When evaluating applications, the SVCAC shall make a recommendation to Permit Sonoma staff and decision-making bodies based on the following considerations:

1. **Rural Character.** In general, the character of the project shall be compatible with the density and intensity of existing developments within 500 feet of the project. For larger properties where the 500 foot limit may not reach beyond the property line, the character of the proposed development shall be compared with the character of existing development on the nearest 5 parcels in all direction of the subject property.
2. **Design and Location.** When considering the parcel size, the level of agricultural production, and the scenic qualities of the property frontage, SVCAC shall consider whether the requested size, location, and design of the tasting room is appropriate.

3. **Maximum Area:** Table 1 below summarizes how the acreage allowed for Accessory Winery Uses should be calculated taking into account parcels of various sizes in the Agricultural Zones in Sonoma County.

The calculations in Table 1 for the area allowed in Accessory Winery Uses on any given parcel are based on the size of the parcel and apply the following methodology:

- Up to 25% of the gross parcel size is allowed for the first 10 acres of the parcel.
- Ten percent (10%) of the gross parcel size may be added based on the portion of the acreage that is in excess of 10 acres.
- A maximum of 6.5 acres for any parcel can be used for accessory uses.
- Acreage for ponds is not included for the purpose of these calculations.
- Of the total of a. and b. above, no more than 70% may be used for production, office space, parking, etc. and no more than 30% may be used for hospitality, such as tasting rooms, food and wine pairing, event space, parking, etc.

Table 1 reflects these calculations, and shows the resulting acreage allowances for varying sizes of parcel in the Agricultural zones.

Table 1: Maximum Percentage of Accessory Winery Uses Allowed per Parcel Acreage

Parcel Acres	Max Total Percent in Accessory Use	Max Total Acres in Accessory Use	Accessory Production Use (70%)	Accessory Promotional Use (30%)	Max Total Acres in Production/Promotional Accessory Uses
First 10 acres	25%	2.5	18%	8%	1.75/0.75
10.01 acres to 50 acres	10%	4.0	7%	3%	2.8/1.2
50 acres or larger	Capped at maximums for a 50-acre parcel				
TOTAL		6.5			4.55/1.95
Examples by Parcel Acreage		Max Total Acres in Accessory Use			Max Total Acres in Production/Promotional Accessory Uses
3		0.75			0.53/0.23
9		2.25			1.58/0.68
15		3.00			2.1/0.9
40		5.50			3.85/1.65
120		6.50			4.55/1.95
300		6.50			4.55/1.95

- C. **Number of Tasting Rooms.** Production has an effect on the size and number of tasting rooms that are appropriate to support the operation of wine facilities of various sizes. Larger wineries with a higher annual case production and a higher number of guests per day may have both a public tasting room and one or more private tasting rooms, the total number of which shall be determined in the Use Permit on a case-by-case basis.

D. **On-Site Parking**

The following on-site parking is required for tasting rooms and winery events:

1. 1 space per 250 square feet; plus
2. 1 space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee.
 - The employee parking requirement may be reduced for wineries that implement an employee commuter program. Reductions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If at any point an approved employee commuter program is discontinued, the winery shall be required to meet the standard parking requirements for employee parking specified in the Guidelines.
3. Where events are proposed that could exceed the parking provided on-site, shuttle service shall be provided to transfer guests to and from off-street parking locations. Shuttles from off-site public parking areas are encouraged, but not required, for all events with over 50 guests.
4. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.

E. **Separation Criteria**

Special consideration should be given to the separation that is required between facilities that are located in areas of the Sonoma Valley that are subject to winery event concentration. See the attached “Winery Event Concentration – Sonoma Valley map” for the current locations of such areas of concentration.

Winery Tasting Room and Events Operating Standards

I. Operations

A. **Hours of Operation**

1. The hours of operation for tasting rooms and industry-wide events shall be limited to 10 am-5 pm., except as follows:
 - a. Tasting rooms may apply for later hours, with approval to be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on site specifics and impacts. If a Tasting room proposes to operate past 5:00pm, applicant must demonstrate that the extended hours will :
 1. have a net positive effect, or no effect, on traffic in the area;

2. occur in areas which have adequate setbacks to neighboring residences;
 3. not impact the dinner hour at neighboring residences.
2. The hours of operation for Agricultural Promotion Events and Private Events shall be limited to 10am-10pm, with the following conditions:
 - a. If the event is in close proximity to neighboring residences, all cleanup after the events shall occur between 9:30 and 10 pm.
 - b. If the event is not within close proximity to residences, then clean up may occur between 10 and 10:30 pm. If complaints are received regarding noise after 10 pm, then clean-up must be rescheduled to prior to 10 pm.
 3. The hours of operation for Wine Trade Events shall be limited to 8am to 10pm (9:30-10pm cleanup)

B. Food Service

Food service is allowed for wine and food pairings or in conjunction with activities and events. More specifically:

1. The primary activity in the tasting room shall be wine tasting related to wine sales and wine marketing, not dining.
2. All food service shall be designed to support the wine experience, and food service shall be secondary to wine sales and education.
3. Operating the food service area as a restaurant is prohibited
4. Catering and commercial kitchens are acceptable only when approved in the Use Permit. As preparation areas for the food service allowed in the Use Permit, they may include indoor or outdoor equipment such as stoves, wood-fired ovens and barbeques.
5. Sale of pre-packaged foods in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to County limitations.
6. Prepared meals or appetizers featuring local foods and food products may be offered in conjunction with agricultural promotional events, such as wine club parties, and winemaker dinners, and with food and wine pairings. Such meals/appetizers may be provided by a licensed caterer or prepared in the approved commercial kitchen located in the location in the winery building shown on the project floor plan.
7. Daytime food and wine pairings may occur during tasting room hours subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Food and wine pairings shall be as selected by the winery, with no menu options allowed.
 - b. Food served with pairings shall be limited to small appetizer-size portions.
 - c. Winery shall not engage in any pre-advertisement of the menu.

C. Food and Wine Pairing

When food and wine pairing is allowed in the evening after 5pm, it is considered an Agricultural Promotional Event under these guidelines and is allowed only when

requested in the use permit application and approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. Food and wine pairings must be selected by the winery, with no menu options allowed.
2. Food pairings must be limited to small appetizer-like portions that showcase site-grown or locally-grown foods.

D. Private Guest Accommodations

Private marketing accommodations and agricultural farmstays are allowed as regulated by the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance.

II. Events

A. Agricultural Promotional Events.

The purpose of agricultural promotional events is to promote local agricultural products grown or processed on-site or the local area. When phased projects are approved, the promotional events shall at all times be subordinate to the winery production itself. See Table 2 in Section II.E. for the maximum number of Agricultural Promotion Events allowed under these Guidelines.

B. Events Other Than Agricultural Promotional Events

Annual private events, such as fundraisers, and concerts, may be permitted if requested and approved in the winery use permit subject to the following conditions:

1. Occasional cultural events-may be permitted with a cultural event permit and are limited to up to four (4) times per year, but for no more than two (2) years in a row.
2. Private and cultural events planning in concentration areas should take into account events at other wineries and the commercial venues in the area to reduce impacts.
3. Sizing of the event should be based upon event space capacity, septic capacity, available water supply, safe access to and from the site, on-site parking, noise mitigation, etc.
4. Renting of winery facilities as a venue for events staged or operated by others is not allowed.
5. See Table 2 in Section II.E. for the maximum number of annual private events allowed under these Guidelines

C. Industry-wide Events (Association Sponsored)

Since most industry-wide event last for 2-3 days, and usually occur over a weekend, the number of industry-wide events is stated in terms of “event days”. Each participating tasting room is limited to the total number of event-days specified in the Use Permit. Industry-wide events shall:

1. Meet the requirements, and follow the best practices, of the association sponsoring the event.

2. Have adequate mitigation plans for septic and parking when septic capacity and the required number of parking spaces when the maximum number of guests are exceeded for these larger events as approved in the use permit.
3. Parking along public roadways is not allowed.
4. See Table 2 in Section II.E. for the maximum number of Industry-wide Events allowed under these Guidelines.

D. On-Site Coordinator

All activities and events must be hosted by the proprietor or have on-site management by the proprietor's staff. A designated person on the proprietor's staff must be available at all times during the events to address complaints or resolve problems. The On-Site Coordinator shall:

1. provide a telephone number listed on the winery's own website through which neighbors and members of the public will have a direct way to make any complaints; and
2. send out a notice to site neighbors to inform them that the "complaint hot line" is available should they wish to call.

E. Maximum Number of Events

These Guidelines recognize that there is already a considerable over-concentration of winery event activity in place in the Kenwood, Cornerstone, and Glen Ellen areas of the Sonoma Valley, and that special provisions need to be made in those areas to limit the impacts and cumulative effects of such over-concentration.

Table 2, therefore, provides a summary of the standards that should be applied in over-concentrated areas as compared with the standards to be applied in areas not yet subject to overconcentration in the Sonoma Valley. The shaded areas on Table 2 show where the guideline standards differ depending on whether a project is inside, or outside, of a concentrated area.

Table 2: Permitted Hours and Maximum Number of Events per Event Type

Event or Activity Type:	Event-days and hours in Concentrated Areas:	Event-days and hours Outside of Concentrated Areas:
Public Agricultural Promotional and Direct Sales:		
Permitted Hours:	10am – 5pm	10am-5pm
Agricultural Promotional Direct Sales Outside of Regular Hours:		
Permitted Hours:	5pm-10pm (9:30-10pm cleanup)	5pm-10pm (9:30-10pm cleanup)
Maximum Number of Events	12/year, max 2/month	24/year, max 3/month
Wine Trade:		
Permitted Hours:	5pm - 10pm (9:30-10pm cleanup)	5pm - 10pm (9:30-10pm cleanup)
Maximum Number of Events	4/year	8/year
Industry-wide:		
Permitted Hours:	10am – 5pm and until 10pm (including clean-up) if permitted in use permit	10am – 5pm and until 10pm (including clean-up) if permitted in use permit
Maximum Number of Events	12 event days/year	12 event days/year
Private Events:		
Permitted Hours:	10am - 10pm (9:30-10PM cleanup)	8am - 10pm (9:30-10PM cleanup)
Maximum Number of Events	2 event days/quarter, or Events outside of regular hours: 2 event days/year	2 event days/quarter, or Events outside of regular hours: 8 event days/year
Cultural Events with Zoning Permit		
Permitted Hours:	10am – 10pm if permitted in zoning permit	10am – 10pm if permitted in zoning permit
Maximum Number of Events	4 event days/year; no more than two years in a row	4 event days/year; no more than two years in a row
Total Max. No. of Event Days	20 event days/year	44 event days/year

In its Use Permit application, the applicant may select the number of events in each category up to the maximum for that category, but the total combined number of event days for agricultural promotional events and for wine trade and industry-wide events combined shall not exceed the Total Maximum Number of Event Days listed in Table 2.

Private and cultural events approved for the site by special permit are not included in the calculation for the Total Maximum Number of Event Days.

III. Required Plans

A. Marketing Plan

Event coordination is the key to improving the over-concentration problem in the areas where it now, and should apply to all agricultural promotional, industry-wide, wine trade, private or special events.

Since the mid-1990s, the County has included a condition in all Use Permits for all newly approved wineries that requires the winery to comply with any event coordination program that may be adopted in the future. All new winery permits also carry this condition. The combined effect is that all winery-related use permits issued from the 1990s through the present already have this particular condition of approval.

A Marketing Plan is also required as a standard Condition of Approval in all new use permits. It should include provisions for event coordination, and require that all activities and events per calendar year be clearly described in the plan and enumerated in the use permit. Non-agricultural promotional events require a use or zoning permit.

In order to monitor the effects of the Marketing Plan, and to confirm that the plan is being followed, the Use Permit should require that data regarding the numbers of visitors from each winery event and the total tasting room attendance for the previous year be submitted to the County annually.

B. Traffic Management Plan

Traffic management and parking plans are standard conditions of approval for new and modifications of winery use permits. These plans should take into account the maximum number of people visiting the tasting room during tasting room hours as well as during agricultural promotional, industry-wide and private events.

Definitions

I. Types of Events

Agricultural Promotional Events

Agricultural promotional events are events that are held outside of regular tasting room hours, and are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches and dinners, release parties, and wine club parties and similar activities. These are the primary types of events permitted in agricultural and resource areas. The number of agricultural

promotional events and maximum number of guests allowed shall be as specified in the use permit.

1. Public Sales Activities

Public Sales Activities include wine tasting, tours, wine and food educational pairings, seminars and other hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales, that are open to the public, and that:

- a. Will not exceed the maximum number of guests allowed in the use permit.
- b. Do not require an invitation to attend.
- c. May require payment of a fee to attend
- d. May be advertised to consumers.
- e. Are consistent with the hours of operation, occupancy limits and operational requirements required by the Use Permit.

2. Direct Sales Activities

Direct Sales Activities are defined as by-invitation activities such as winemaker lunches or dinners, release days or pickup parties that are designed to promote the sale of agricultural products, and that:

- a. Will not exceed the maximum number of guests allowed in the use permit.
- b. May require a fee to attend.
- c. Are by Invitations circulated by mail, email, websites or social media.

Industry-Wide Events (Association Sponsored)

Promotional activities are events that are sponsored by a recognized industry association, may involve multiple wineries or tasting rooms within a specified geographic area, and are generally held during regular tasting room hours. Where required, it will be the responsibility of the industry sponsor to apply for a cultural event permit for the event. Most industry-wide events last 2-3 days, usually over a weekend, so the number of industry-wide events is stated in terms of “event-days”. Each participating tasting room is limited to the total number of event days, as specified in the use permit.

Special Events

“Special event” when related to winery events is a term that was used in the 1990s before the term “agricultural promotional event” became common. Currently, a “special event” in Sonoma County is a specific event (bicycle race, marathon, parade, etc.) that occurs within a roadway right-of-way and requires an encroachment permit.

Therefore, where a “special event” is referenced in an approved use permit in the agricultural or resource zones of Sonoma County, it will be considered an “agricultural promotional event” for the purpose of these Guidelines

Private Events

Private events include charitable events, fundraisers, weddings, concerts and similar events. To be allowed, they shall be identified and described in the use permit, and the winery's marketing plan shall be specific about the number and size of allowed private events.

Cultural Events

Cultural Events are occasional events which attract a large gathering of people (35 or more people) such as parades, concerts, festivals, races, or any large gathering where there is amplified music, where promotion is by advertisement to the general public, or where a fee is charged to attend. A zoning permit is required (although there are exceptions), plus a Fire Permit. Cultural events are permitted no more than 4 event-days in any one-year period and they shall not occur for more than two years in a row.

Wine Industry Trade Events

Wine industry trade events include meetings, seminars, celebrations, parties and dinners that involve multiple trade partners, that do not exceed 35 attendees, and that occur outside normal winery hours or tasting room hours. Wine industry trade events must be requested and approved in the use permit if they are held outside and/or include amplified music or sound. Wine trade events that occur indoors without amplified music do not need to be included in the use permit.

Wine Trade Meetings

Wine trade meetings are by-invitation meetings or seminars with distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners, and employees of the winery that occur during business hours, do not exceed 35 attendees, and are not advertised to the consumer. Wine Trade meetings are not counted as events if they do not create noise or traffic impacts

II. Winery Facilities**Winery**

A winery is a building or property that produces wine, or a business involved in the production of wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories-and administrative offices.

Tasting Room

A facility for the retail sales of wine, hard cider, or fruit distilled spirits made from locally grown agricultural products, in which samples or tastes of products are provided to consumers.

A wine tasting room in an agriculturally zoned area is connected to a licensed winery on the property that produces wine from Sonoma County and/or adjoining counties grapes,

at least some of which are grown on the property. It is a designated area, limited in size, and it is used as an accessory use to a winery.

Normal operating hours are 10am–5 pm. A later closing time may be allowed based upon site specifics and decided on a case-by-case basis. A custom crush facility may have a public tasting room for wines on site, but approval is site specific and decided on a case-by-case basis. With use permit approval, a wine tasting room that is located on a commercially zoned parcel may have operating hours that extend to 10pm.

Event Space

An area used for agricultural promotional and industry-wide events that is separate from the designated tasting room, but that provides samples or tastes of products to consumers during an event. An event space may be physically connected to a winery or it may be a legal separate structure on the property. Event space may also include outdoor event areas allowed in the Use Permit. Permitted private events may be held in event spaces.

If the land on which the winery is located is under the Williamson Act, no permanent structure dedicated to events shall be constructed or maintained on the contracted land per the Sonoma County Uniform Rules. If the land is not under the Williamson Act, hospitality events may be allowed in a separate building, but on a case-by-case basis as approved in the Use Permit.

Accessory Outdoor Space

An outdoor area that is dedicated to visitor-serving uses, such as picnic areas, during regular tasting room hours. It may be a patio under a roof, or an uncovered area with picnic tables. Visitors may use accessory space for sitting and for eating pre-packaged food and wine purchased in the tasting room. Accessory space is separate from the daytime food and wine pairing area.

Accessory Winery Uses

Accessory uses are divided into production, including office space, etc. and hospitality that includes tasting rooms, food and wine pairing, event space, etc. Only a limited percentage of the total winery parcel size may be dedicated to accessory uses as specified in Table 1 of these Guidelines. The actual percentages applied to agriculture and accessory uses will be dependent on site specific factors, such as traffic, setbacks, usable land, septic, water, etc.

Commercial Kitchen

A facility for the preparation of food to be served at winery dinners and trade events. A commercial kitchen includes a stove for cooking food used in wine pairing during tasting room hours and for full meals (like wine maker dinners) that are served after hours during an event approved in the winery's use permit. Restaurants are prohibited.

Catering Kitchen

A commercial kitchen that has warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top or range hood.

III. Winery Event Terms**Food Service**

Food service at wineries is allowed in tasting rooms, and includes:

- a. retail sales of pre-packaged local food products, or
- b. samples or tastes of pre-packaged local food products offered in conjunction with wine tasting;
- c. food and wine pairing;
- d. prepared dinners or appetizers featuring local food products that are offered in conjunction with the agricultural promotional events that are approved in the use permit.

Food service must support the wine experience, and the food served must be secondary to the wine.

Food and Wine Pairing

Applies to the providing of samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products served in small appetizer-like portions that are showcased with different wines.

Locally Grown

Applies to agricultural products that are grown and produced within Sonoma County and/or on adjoining counties,(with exceptions made for years of fire, flood and disease). Agricultural products served on property zoned RRD (Resources and Rural Development) must be produced on site.

Wine Trade Partner

Wine trade partners are distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners, and employees of the winery.

Over-Concentration

Over-concentration of visitor-serving and recreational uses can occur where several winery and winery-event facilities that are regularly conducting events are located in the same area or along the same route. An over-concentration of uses occurs when:

1. road conflicts occur where traffic conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists from the local neighborhoods;
2. traffic levels exceed General Plan objectives on a specific or cumulative basis;
3. groundwater drawn to serve the facilities negatively impacts the aquifer and surrounding neighbor's wells; and
4. the uses are detrimental to rural character of the area.

SVCAC AD HOC COMMITTEE DRAFT SONOMA VALLEY WINERY GUIDELINES

Purpose

The Sonoma Valley Winery Guidelines (“Guidelines”) provide a local framework for evaluating use permit applications on land that is zoned Agricultural (DA, LIA, LEA). The intention of these Guidelines is to protect Agricultural Zones by advising how much winery-related activity is allowed on these lands, and by managing these uses in a way that minimizes cumulative impacts.

The Guidelines identify criteria that will be used by the Sonoma County Citizens Advisory Commission (SVCAC). The Guidelines affect applicants for a new winery or modification to an existing winery. The SVCAC will use the Guidelines to make recommendations to the Permit Sonoma staff, as well as the Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

The Guidelines are also intended to advise applicants on the design of their projects. Each project is regarded as unique in the evaluation process, and each will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the SVCAC and by Permit Sonoma.

With respect to these Guidelines, the following should be noted:

1. While decision makers should make every attempt to follow the Guidelines, the circumstances of each particular application and site may suggest that deviations are appropriate.

For Example: A project applicant may have a parcel that he/she feels would make a good winery site even if the site does not meet the Guidelines for minimum parcel size. The application is for production and processing and does not include a tasting room or events. The site is very compatible with the neighborhood...good noise attenuation, etc. In a case like this the CAC may feel that the project could be recommended in spite of the smaller parcel size.

2. Where these Guidelines establish a maximum level of usage, the permit decision may not ultimately provide for that level.

For Example: A project applicant proposes a winery and tasting room with the maximum number of events allowed under the Guidelines. However, the site is constrained due to topography, nearby residences, parking, etc. etc. In a case like this,

the CAC may feel that a lesser number of events is necessary in order to minimize these problems.

3. A currently permitted project remains subject to the conditions of that permit and is not affected by these Guidelines.

For Example: A winery project that was previously approved with a smaller number of events than allowed under the Guidelines does not automatically get to hold the larger number based upon the new Guidelines. However, the owners could apply for a use permit to increase the number of events. Similarly, a project that was approved for a greater number of events would be able to continue at that level.

4. These Guidelines are intended to complement County regulations. Many issues pertaining to winery permits are addressed through existing County policies, codes, and practices and are not thought to necessitate further guidance in these Guidelines.

For Example: The Guidelines do not include some of the more common aspects of a project, such as septic capacity, building codes, and drainage requirements.

Definitions:

Event. A gathering of 30 or more people at a pre-scheduled date and time, whether or not a fee is required to attend. Gatherings of less than 30 people are considered to be regular day to day activities of the applicable use, unless otherwise identified in the use entitlements. Some events last for two or three days. In these cases, each day is counted as a separate event.

For Example: A tasting room that is open all day every day for walk-in customers would not be considered an event, regardless how many visitors were to attend during the open hours. However, a scheduled gathering...maybe a wine club release party or a charity fundraiser, say on a particular day or night, would not be an event unless it were to involve more than 30 people.

Agricultural Promotion Event. An event that is directly related to the sales and promotion of the agricultural product from the site or local area. Examples include wine club gatherings, wine club releases, wine trade gatherings, and regional tastings as part of Industry-Wide Events.

Industry-Wide Event. An agricultural promotion event that is sponsored by a recognized wine industry association involving multiple wineries or tasting rooms within a specified geographical area.

Private Event: An event other than an agricultural promotion event, such as fundraising for charities, ballot measures, political campaigns, and similar purposes, or parties, concerts, weddings, celebrations, etc.

Winery. An agricultural processing facility that produces wine from wine grapes. A winery may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, and administrative offices.

Tasting Room. A visitor serving use accessory to the production and/or processing of agricultural products. A winery tasting room would include the sampling and retail sales of wine made from locally grown wine grapes and other wine related products.

Event Space. An indoor or outdoor part of a winery or tasting room used for hosting events.

Locally Grown Agricultural Products. Agricultural products that are primarily grown and produced within Sonoma County and/or at neighboring counties in close proximity to the proposed use.

Over-Concentration. Over-concentration of visitor-serving and recreational uses can occur where several wineries, tasting rooms, and events are located in the same area or along the same route. An over-concentration of uses occurs when:

1. road conflicts occur where traffic conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists from the local neighborhoods;
2. traffic levels exceed General Plan objectives on a specific or cumulative basis;
3. groundwater drawn to serve the facilities negatively impacts the aquifer and surrounding neighbor's wells; and
4. the uses are detrimental to rural character of the area.
5. more than two (2) winery and/or tasting room facilities are located within a ½ mile stretch of road.

Siting Criteria

Winery Siting Criteria:

A. Access. Public roadways of at least 18' in width are required. The applicant must show that the design will address:

1. Ingress/Egress. Follow County standards for ingress and egress to the property.
2. Sight Distance. Follow ASHTO sight distance standards.
3. Parking. "No Parking" signs should be installed and enforced along adjacent County roads
4. Traffic. Traffic impact analyses shall assess impacts based on project-generated trips as well as a scenario where project-generated trips are inflated by 20% to account for cumulative impacts in the Sonoma Valley concentration area. No traffic backups on public roadways.
5. Potential evacuation guidance and routes shall be posted on site.

B. Setbacks. Setbacks will be site specific and follow Sonoma County zoning standards from all applicable property lines. These setback standards will also apply to parking lots.

C. Noise Attenuation. When considering the proposed activity and intensity of use, the proposed use must meet the standards of the General Plan Noise Element. In addition, no outdoor amplified sound is allowed during events. Noise attenuation strategies, including setbacks from property lines and noise muffling interventions, may be combined to meet this standard, however permanent structures and installations for noise muffling must meet Scenic Resource requirements.

D. Visual Impacts. Facilities should be sited to minimize visual impact, especially in scenic areas/corridors. Setback distances shall be designed to ensure that the visual impacts of the new facilities are minimized.

E. Lighting. Nighttime lighting levels shall be limited to what is necessary to provide security and safety for users. Setbacks shall be sufficient to limit light visibility from public travel ways and to maintain the rural and scenic qualities of the Sonoma Valley. Exterior lighting shall be consistent with Dark Sky standards (e.g. low mounted, downward casting and fully shielded to prevent glare).

F. Maximum Winery Size. Winery size should be the minimum necessary to process the proposed level of wine grape production that will supply the winery.

For example: The extent of the processing operation should always be in proportion to the proposed production of wine grapes. This is a judgment call for CAC members, BZA members, or Board members as there is not a standard square footage that fits every project. Red wine is different from white wine in terms of the size of the facility. The key is to examine the specific uses of each portion of the facility and be satisfied that the proper relationship exists.

Tasting Room Siting Criteria

A. Tasting rooms are subject to the same Guidelines identified in subsections A-E above. Stand-alone tasting rooms are not allowed. Tasting rooms should be secondary and incidental to the proposed levels of production and processing.

For example: Similar to the previous example for winery size, the extent of facilities for visitor serving uses should be proportional to the extent of wine grape production and/or wine-making. A small production winery should not include a large tasting room or event space, but this is also a judgment call for CAC and decision makers. Again the key is to examine the specific uses of each portion of the facility.

B. Minimum Parcel Size. The minimum parcel size that is required to qualify for a tasting room is 20 acres. An exception may be made to this minimum when the applicant is a small agricultural producer.

C. Maximum Site Area for Tasting Room and Other Accessory Uses

The size of the facility should be secondary and incidental in proportion to the proposed production and/or processing of the winery.

Permanent structures for hospitality uses are limited to 20% of the total size of all of the non-residential buildings on site.

Permanent structures for offices and other administration purposes are limited to 15% of the total size of all of the non-residential buildings on site.

D. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for tasting rooms and events:

1. 1 space per 250 square feet of the winery production facility; plus
2. 1 space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee for the tasting room and events.
3. Where events are proposed that could exceed the parking provided on-site, shuttle service shall be provided to transfer guests to and from off-street parking locations. Shuttles from off-site public parking areas are required, for all events with over 50 guests.
4. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on vineyard roads.

E. Separation Criteria. The entire Sonoma Valley is considered either to be over-concentrated or to become over-concentrated in the near future. Wineries and tasting rooms are limited to 2 per half mile.

F. Source of Wine Grapes. Wines offered for sale or tasting should be produced from at least 75% grown in Sonoma County.

Winery, Tasting Room, and Event Operating Standards

A. Hours of Operation. The hours of operation for wineries and tasting rooms shall be limited to 10 am-5 pm.

The hours of operation for Events shall be limited to 10am-9pm. All cleanup after the events shall occur by 10 pm.

The owner/host or other responsible party shall cancel events during any period when a red flag warning is in effect for the subject area.

B. Food Service. Food service is allowed for wine and food pairings or in conjunction with activities and events, provided that the primary activity in the tasting room shall be wine tasting related to wine sales and wine marketing, not dining.

1. A restaurant is prohibited.
2. Catering is acceptable and may include indoor, but not outdoor equipment such as stoves, wood-fired ovens and barbeques.
3. Sale of pre-packaged foods in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed per County standards.

C. Food and Wine Pairing. Daytime food and wine pairings may occur during tasting room hours, subject to the following conditions, and only with food prepared off-site. Food and wine pairing is allowed in the evening after 5pm only in conjunction with approved events, and the food and wine pairings must be selected by the winery, with no menu options allowed.

D. Private Guest Accommodations. Private marketing accommodations and agricultural farmstays are allowed as regulated by the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance.

E. Agricultural Promotion Events. The purpose of agricultural promotional events is to promote local agricultural products grown or processed on-site or the local area. When phased projects are approved, the promotional events shall at all times be subordinate to the winery production itself. The owner/host, or other responsible party shall provide community notification of events.

F. Industry-wide Events. Industry-wide events are considered to be agricultural promotion events. Each participating tasting room is limited to the total number of events specified in the Use Permit. Industry-wide events shall:

1. meet the requirements, and follow the best practices, of the association sponsoring the event.
2. provide a plan for overflow parking
3. shall not allow parking along public roadways.
4. provide community notification of the event.

G. Private Events. Private events, such as fundraisers and concerts, typically occur on one day. Private events must end before sunset and shall provide community notification in advance of the event.

H. Maximum Number of Events. The total number of events, including agricultural promotion, industry-wide, and private events are limited to a maximum of 12 per year. In addition, events are limited to one per month, except that the one in a month may be an industry-wide event lasting up to 3 days.

I. Event Space. No permanent structure dedicated to events shall be constructed or maintained. Events may be held in any indoor or outdoor area that is commonly used for the winery or tasting room facility.

J. On-Site Coordinator. All activities and events must be hosted by the proprietor or have on-site management by the proprietor's staff. A designated person on the proprietor's staff must be available at all times during the events to address complaints or resolve problems. The On-Site Coordinator shall:

1. provide a telephone number listed on the winery's own website through which neighbors and members of the public will have a direct way to make any complaints; and
2. send out a notice to site neighbors to inform them that the "complaint hot line" is available should they wish to call.

K. Event Proposal. Event coordination is the key to improving the over-concentration problem in Sonoma Valley and should apply to all events. Each application shall clearly state the type of events, the number of events, and the number of attendees for each event.

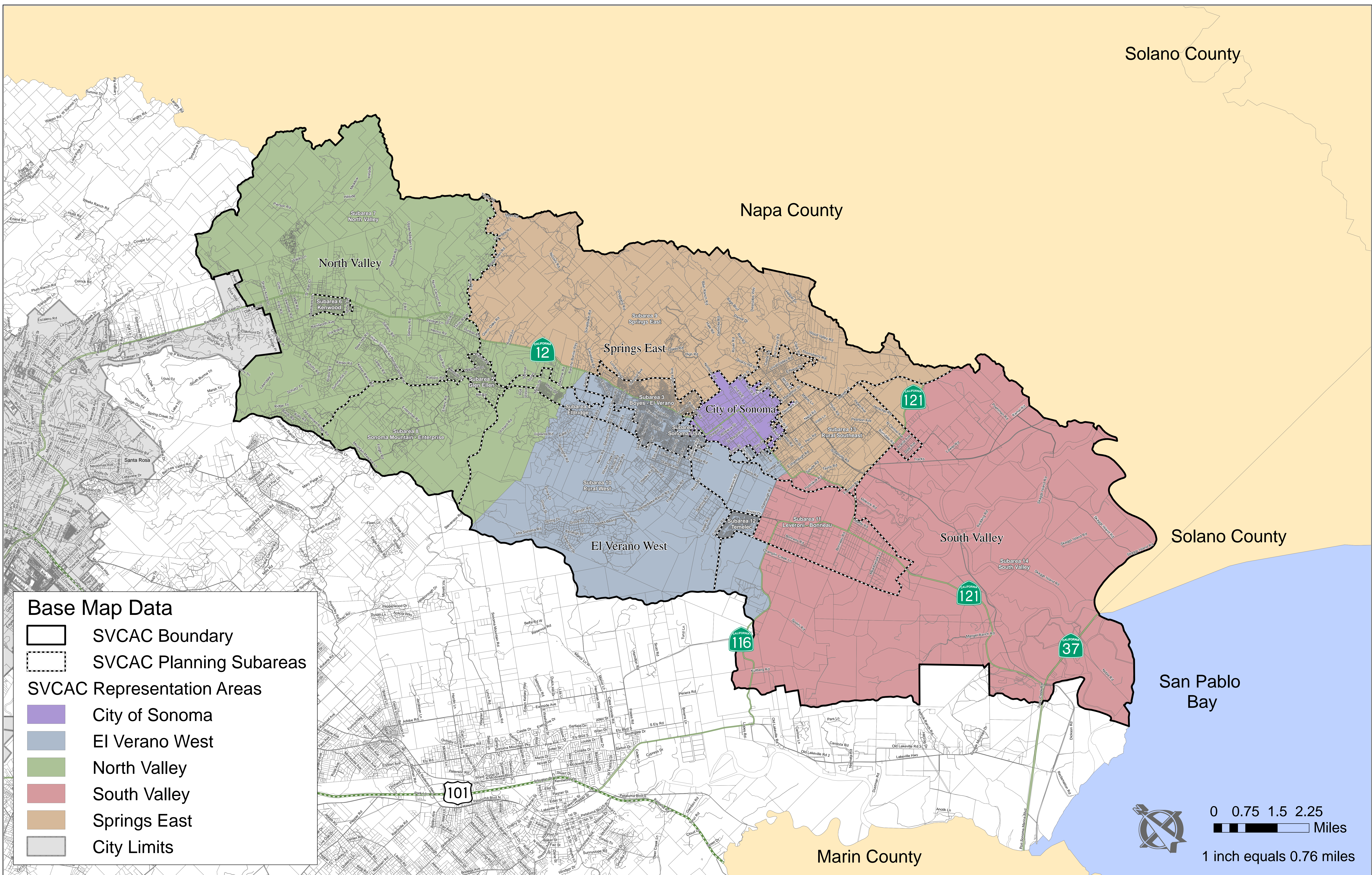
Since the mid-1990s, the County has included a condition in all Use Permits for all newly approved wineries that requires the winery to comply with any event coordination program that may be adopted in the future. All new winery permits also carry this condition. The combined effect is that all winery-related use permits issued from the 1990s through the present already have this particular condition of approval.

The approved event plan should be clearly set forth as a standard Condition of Approval in all new use permits and should include provisions for event coordination.

In order to monitor the effects of the permit, and to confirm that it is being followed, the Use Permit should require that data regarding the numbers of visitors from each winery event and the total tasting room attendance for the previous year be submitted to the County annually.

L. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are standard conditions of approval for new and modifications of winery use permits. These plans should take into account the maximum number of people visiting the tasting room during tasting room hours as well as during any event.

M. Over-concentrated Area Map. The attached map of the Sonoma Valley Planning Area is the area that is considered to be over-concentrated. [Permit Sonoma to provide map]



Sonoma Valley Citizen Advisory Commission Area

On March 11, 2014, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution authorizing Chair to execute Joint Powers Agreement between the County of Sonoma & the City of Sonoma continuing the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission for a period of five (5) years from January 1, 2014, to December 31, 2018. (First District)

Map Scale and Reproduction methods limit precision in physical features displayed. This map is for illustrative purpose only, and is not suitable for parcel-specific decision making. The parcels contained here-in are not intended to represent surveyed data. Site-specific studies are required to draw parcel-specific conclusions. Assessor's parcel data are current as of July 1, 2013. For more current parcel data consult the County of Sonoma Assessor's Office.

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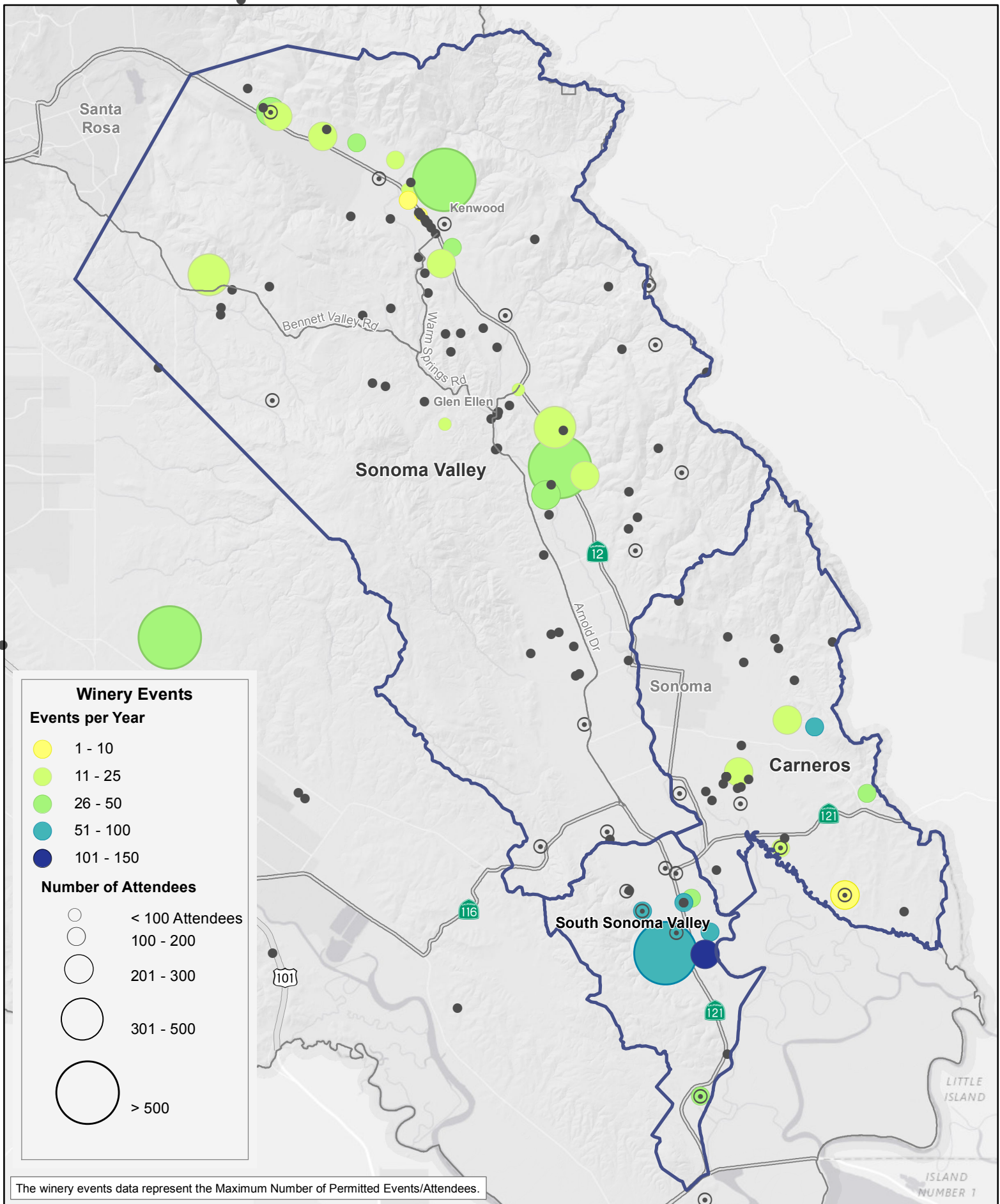
Author: PRMD GIS Date: February 24, 2014 S:\GIS-DATA\PRMD_BASE\PRMD Department Projects\Comprehensive Planning\Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission\MXD\Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission E-size.mxd

Permit and Resource Management Department
DEPARTMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS
COUNTY OF SONOMA

County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403
707-565-1900
FAX 707-565-1103





Winery Event Concentration - Sonoma Valley

- Approved Winery
- Pending Winery
- Winery Event Concentration Area
- US Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Road



0 0.5 1 2 Miles
1 inch = 2.37 miles



County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95403
707-565-1900 FAX 707-565-1103



**Public
Comments
After 2-15-22 distribution
for PC Hearing
2-17-22**

From: [Sara Rathbun](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Cc: [district4](#); [Jenny Chamberlain](#)
Subject: Draft Ordinance on Winery Events - Comments
Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 4:51:29 PM
Attachments: [image004.png](#)
[2022 Letter to Planning Comm.pdf](#)

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley (WDCV) represents hundreds of wineries and grape growers in northern Sonoma County. Since the beginning of the discussions around the events ordinance, the WDCV has been actively involved in finding common ground between our winery partners and the Dry Creek community. As a result of these discussions, there are several key points that we would like to address:

1. Despite the attention that is given to them, winery events are not a widespread problem in Sonoma County. Several Supervisors and Code Enforcement have directly stated that they receive virtually no complaints about events. If there is an issue, it is easily resolved with minimal communication.
2. Many of the entities that the WDCV represents are small family farms that lack the resources necessary to hire consultants, attorneys, and engineers in pursuit of a use permit. Adding layers of complexity and stipulations to an already difficult process hurts these family farmers. Additional regulation will change the core of Sonoma County from small agriculture to large international corporations.
3. Consolidation within wine distribution has led to an increased importance on meeting consumers directly. Wineries are increasingly unable to attract national wine distributors to sell their wine. This has led to more of a focus on marketing directly to consumers. To exist in the future, wineries need the flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. Use permits that are overly restrictive with respect to consumer focused activities will impede their ability to do so.
4. The general plan and zoning code already addresses key issues such as hours of operation, traffic, parking, and noise. To add additional regulations to one singular type of business is unfair to a group that provides thousands of jobs, tax dollars, and philanthropic activities to the local community.

We respectfully request that you either vote No on the current Draft or ask staff to come back with a draft that is consistent with the guidance provided by the Board of Supervisors in their resolution of October 11, 2016.

Sincerely,
Sara Rathbun, WDCV President
On behalf of the Board of Directors

Sara Rathbun

Director of Marketing & Communications

707.433.1000 ext. 128 | office

707.322.8001 | mobile

SaraR@drycreekvineyard.com

3770 Lambert Bridge Rd.

Healdsburg, CA 95448



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February 14th, 2022

Permit Sonoma
2550 Ventura Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Proposed Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley (WDCV) represents hundreds of wineries and grape growers in northern Sonoma County. Since the beginning of the discussions around the events ordinance, the WDCV has been actively involved in finding common ground between our winery partners and the Dry Creek community. As a result of these discussions, there are several key points that we would like to address:

1. Despite the attention that is given to them, winery events are not a widespread problem in Sonoma County. Several Supervisors and Code Enforcement have directly stated that they receive virtually no complaints about events. If there is an issue, it is easily resolved with minimal communication.
2. Many of the entities that the WDCV represents are small family farms that lack the resources necessary to hire consultants, attorneys, and engineers in pursuit of a use permit. Adding layers of complexity and stipulations to an already difficult process hurts these family farmers. Additional regulation will change the core of Sonoma County from small agriculture to large international corporations.
3. Consolidation within wine distribution has led to an increased importance on meeting consumers directly. Wineries are increasingly unable to attract national wine distributors to sell their wine. This has led to more of a focus on marketing directly to consumers. To exist in the future, wineries need the flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing marketplace. Use permits that are overly restrictive with respect to consumer focused activities will impede their ability to do so.
4. The general plan and zoning code already addresses key issues such as hours of operation, traffic, parking, and noise. To add additional regulations to one singular type of business is unfair to a group that provides thousands of jobs, tax dollars, and philanthropic activities to the local community.

We respectfully request that you either vote No on the current Draft or ask staff to come back with a draft that is consistent with the guidance provided by the Board of Supervisors in their resolution of October 11, 2016.

Sincerely,

Sara Rathbun, President
On behalf of the Board of Directors

From: [Andriana Duckworth](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Comment for Sonoma County Winery Events Ordinance Hearing 2/17
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 10:11:48 AM
Attachments: [image001.emz](#)
[image002.png](#)
[SVVGA Letter_FINAL.pdf](#)
Importance: High

February 15, 2022

Commissioners, Planning Division
County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Sonoma County Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Commissioners Carr, Gilardi, McCaffery, Koenigshofer, Chair Ocana and Staff;

Four decades after being formed, and now more than 250 wineries and growers strong, the Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance (SVVGA) carries on the vision of its founders to promote and protect – as well as enhance – the Sonoma Valley region and its six American Viticultural Area (AVA), as a premier winegrowing region. Sonoma Valley's vintner and grower members are deeply committed to driving our local economy, conservation and sustainable farming efforts, and to supporting our local communities through advocacy and charitable work. The Sonoma Valley wine industry thrives on a strong culture of collaboration and is deeply rooted in agricultural heritage, community, and appellation; we are the birthplace of California wine.

On behalf of the Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance Board of Directors, we are writing to request that the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by our organization, in collaboration with other Sonoma County wine organizations, be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance that is presented and considered by the Board of Supervisors.

Like many businesses and industries, our wine and agricultural community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and continued pandemic impacts. Our Valley remains in a state of recovery, that will continue well into the next few years. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and effort, our wine community has survived to this point; however, regulation of our industry that is neither warranted nor necessary is certain to upset the delicate balancing act that we have been able to achieve under historically adverse circumstances. Our wineries rely on marketing directly to consumers in order to sell our wines, especially given the fragile state of the restaurant industry that is expected to persist for years to come. Impacts, as mentioned above, pose an obvious threat to our industry and survival.

We strongly feel that the current draft ordinance is incomplete, and we ask that the commissioners review, consider, and implement the guidelines the Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance have developed and written. The working group guidelines that were rewritten by an “ad hoc” committee were not inclusive of anyone from the wine or agricultural industry.

The Sonoma Valley region, and furthermore the County of Sonoma - its wineries and producers - continue to demonstrate the highest-level of responsibility and commitment to developing and adhering to agricultural and environmental best practices, and working faithfully to maintain transparency and communicate with the community at-large on matters that require resolution. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery activities in our region and those few have been easily resolved with proactive communication. The winery guidance and definitions we have developed in partnership with County Officials for nearly a decade now, best integrate practices that will help mitigate any risk to our communities, while continuing to allow our producers the unhindered ability to drive and boost our local economy.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the SVVGA Board of Directors,



Tom Rouse, Landmark Vineyards
Board President, Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance



Andriana Duckworth, Interim Executive Director
Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance

Andriana Duckworth
Interim Executive Director

Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance
P.O. Box 1698, Sonoma, Ca 95476
C: (707) 490-8171 | O: (707) 935-2162

andriana@sonomavalleywine.com

Check out Sonoma Valley At Home: [Virtual Tastings & Experiences](#), [Special Offers](#), and the [Virtual Video Library](#).

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From: bross@sonic.net
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: ORD16-001 Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:03:35 PM

Re: ORD16-0001
Winery Events Ordinance

As an (almost) lifelong resident of Sonoma County, I have witnessed firsthand the wine industry's significant contributions to and important role in the economy of Sonoma County. The wine industry's influence on Sonoma County is far reaching, as a major employer in its own right, as an industry that supports and partners with many other businesses and industries in the County, and as a crucial participant of the philanthropic community in Sonoma County. The presence of family-owned wineries and vineyards in Sonoma County has played a role in maintaining our County's rural feel. And, during a time when wildfires are a challenge and a threat, vineyards function as fire breaks throughout the County.

Sadly, wineries and their important contributions to the quality of life in Sonoma County are now under threat. Wineries need your support. The consolidation of wine distribution channels has made the ability to market directly to consumers crucial to the survival of small family-owned wineries in particular. The wine industry, like many local industries has been hard hit by the myriad challenges of wildfires, including smoke exposure, power shutoffs, and diminished tourism. The Pandemic has added to the challenges we all face. The wine industry has reacted with ingenuity, creativity, flexibility, and the amazing efforts of our talented workforce to overcome these challenges.

The imposition of additional regulation during this crucial time as the wine industry works through these challenges could threaten the long-term viability of the industry, especially for family-owned wineries.

Further regulation is not warranted nor necessary. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery activities, and those few have been easily resolved with communication. PRMD should focus on compliance with planning documents and mitigation of impacts. Wineries are already subject to the general plan and zoning code which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise.

I urge the Board of Supervisors to consider the wine industries contributions to the health of our economy, as well as to the quality of life we all enjoy. Any winery event draft recommendation or ordinance considered by the Board should incorporate the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Alliance.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. The health of the wine industry, as a

significant contributor to the economy of Sonoma County, hangs in the balance.

Rebecca Ross

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From: [Steven Lande](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Re: ORD16-0001
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:26:43 PM

Re: ORD16-0001
Winery Events Ordinance

I own a home here in Northern California and have worked in both restaurants and wineries.

Sonoma needs more visitors driving up from the Bay Area as well as from around the Country to keep our Hotels, Restaurants, Retail Stores and Bars full. These clients are mainly attracted to visit our area due to the World Class Wines we produce.

By restricting business for a Winery in reality this really restricts jobs and potential revenue for all employees in the food, beverage and hospitality industry.

The more creative we let individual winery's attract clients the more it will positively impact Jobs and Salaries for the entire business community that serves these visitors.

Steven Lande

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From: [Audrey Green](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Re: ORD16-0001 Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:23:06 PM

As a resident and winery employee I am well aware of the industry's contribution to the economy of Sonoma County and the vitality our communities. Not only do wineries want to attract visitors to help bolster the economy, the wineries are a source of employment as well as support for local businesses with whom they work.

The presence of family-owned wineries and vineyards in Sonoma County has played a role in maintaining our County's rural feel. In a time when wildfires are a challenge and a threat, vineyards function as fire breaks throughout the County.

Sadly, wineries and their important contributions to the quality of life in Sonoma County are now under threat. Wineries need your support.

The wine industry, like many local industries has been hard hit by the myriad challenges of wildfires, including smoke exposure, power shutoffs, and diminished tourism. The Pandemic has added to the challenges we all face. The wine industry has reacted with ingenuity, creativity, flexibility, and the amazing efforts of our talented workforce to overcome these challenges.

The imposition of additional regulation during this crucial time as the wine industry works through these challenges could threaten the long-term viability of the industry, especially for family-owned wineries.

Further regulation is not warranted nor necessary.

Thank you for your consideration!

Regards,
Audrey Green

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From: [Melina Acuros](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: ORD16-0001 Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:26:31 PM

RE: ORD16-0001
Winery Events Ordinance

I was born and raised in Sonoma County, primarily in Kenwood, but I have also lived in Sonoma and Santa Rosa. The natural beauty of the area is greatly enhanced and protected by the many wineries and vineyards that grace our county. Like the many residents of Sonoma County, it was only natural to seek employment at a winery at a young age. I fell in love with the industry, not only for the high quality product it produced, but also for the social aspect and the diversity it brings to our county. In my 30+ years working for Sonoma County wineries I have never personally observed a negative impact on the land or county's residents and have only seen the joy it brings to tourists and those who work in the industry. Without the wineries and their ability hold events and draw in tourists, the local restaurants and hotels would take a huge hit. I understand there are rules we must all follow to be considerate of our neighbors and make this work for all who live in the county. Putting further restrictions on wineries while we are all still attempting to recover from the pandemic and keep our county healthy and prosperous would be seriously detrimental to the economic health Sonoma County.

Thanks you for your consideration and the ability to weigh in on this important topic.

Best Regards,
Melina Acuros



MELINA ACUROS
Accounting Manager
707.933.2808 direct
707.239.2894 mobile
melina@ifwinery.com

1 VINTAGE LANE, GLEN ELLEN, CA 95442
TEL: 707.933.2800 FAX: 707.933.2801
LASSETERFAMILYWINERY.COM

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From: [Jeremy Kreck](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#); [district4](#); [Jenny Chamberlain](#)
Subject: Winery Events Ordinance Hearing Comments
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:30:05 PM
Attachments: [WineryEventsOrdinance.docx](#)

EXTERNAL

Hi,

Please find attached comments from the Winegrowers of Westside Road related to the Winery Events Ordinance Hearing on 2/17.

Thank you,
Jeremy Kreck

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WINEGROWERS *of* WESTSIDE ROAD

Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Winegrowers of Westside Road (WoWR) represents over a dozen wineries and grape growers in supervisorial districts 4 and 5. Our board members have been very involved with both the formation of the Dry Creek Valley CAC and the meetings of the Westside Road Advisory/Stakeholders Committee. Throughout these discussions, there are a couple of key issues that we would like to address with respect to the proposed winery event ordinance:

1. We live here too. Wineries work hard to be good neighbors. Every WoWR board member lives within Sonoma County and most reside on Westside Road. We have every desire to maintain the area as the bucolic setting that it is.
2. Additional regulation hurts small farms. While larger corporate entities have the resources to hire consultants, attorneys, and engineers to navigate the already complicated use permit process, small family farms do not. Adding additional restrictions and regulations favors the shift from small agriculture to large corporations.
3. Winery events are not a significant issue within the county. Sonoma County Code Enforcement has reported that there are virtually no complaints about winery events. This sentiment is echoed by multiple county Supervisors. This ordinance is an unnecessary solution in search of a problem.
4. Our family farms need the flexibility and Use Permit latitude to quickly adapt to a changing marketplace. For example, the consolidation of wine distributors led to wineries needing to market directly to consumers and bring consumers on-site, because it has become nearly impossible for small brands to attract meaningful national sales. It is essential that the County Use Permit structure embraces the need to adapt: put boundaries around the things that impact neighbors and the community, but within those constraints allow the permit holder flexibility, rather than baking in a particular business model.
5. The Sonoma County Wine Industry is the gold standard of agriculture. As a high value product, the industry is able to employ thousands of people within the county, contribute millions of dollars annually to charity, and generate a significant amount of tax revenue to support the County overall.

Sincerely,

The Winegrowers of Westside Road

Pam Bacigalupi, Board President
Claire Ramey, Board Treasurer and Secretary
Ridge Evers, Board Member
John Bucher, Board Member
Jeremy Kreck, Board Member

From: [Yael Bernier](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Draft Winery Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 5:07:16 PM

February 16, 2022

To Sonoma County PRMD and BZA:

In 2016 the 4 members of the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCV CAC0 and board members from both the Dry Creek Valley Association and Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley collaborated to craft a guidance document for the County to use when considering applications for use permits that include visitor serving uses in agriculture zones in the Dry Creek Valley.

The document was approved in 2017 and slight changes were added in 2018. This document has been in effect in Dry Creek Valley for the last five years and it has served the community of Dry Creek, both wineries and rural residents well. We appreciated the opportunity have input and we have seen that the guidelines work well. These guidelines were crafted by our local folks and people involved in the ag industry who know the Valley well. We support this document and recommend the continued use of the Guideline Document as originally crafted in evaluating new use permit applications that request visitor serving agricultural uses (e.g. tasting rooms promotional activities or events)and for modifications to add visitor serving uses to existing permits that were approved for agricultural processing only.

Respectfully,

Yael Bernier/President of the Dry Creek Valley Association

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From: [Yael Bernier](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Attachment regarding the Draft Winery Event Ordinance tomorrow
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 5:47:58 PM
Attachments: [Draft Winery Event Ordinance Feb 16.docx](#)

Respectfully submitted for the record. Yael Bernier

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DRY CREEK VALLEY ASSOCIATION

CULTIVATING VALLEY LIVES & LIVELIHOODS

February 16, 2022

To Sonoma County PRMD and BZA:

In 2016 the 4 members of the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council (DCV CAC) and board members from both the Dry Creek Valley Association and Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley collaborated to craft a guidance document for the County to use when considering applications for use permits that include visitor serving uses in agriculture zones in the Dry Creek Valley.

The document was approved in 2017 and slight changes were added in 2018. This document has been in effect in Dry Creek Valley for the last five years and it has served the community of Dry Creek, both wineries and rural residents well. We appreciated the opportunity have input and we have seen that the guidelines work well. These guidelines were crafted by our local folks and people involved in the ag industry who know the Valley well. We support this document and recommend the continued use of the Guideline Document as originally crafted in evaluating new use permit applications that request visitor serving agricultural uses (e.g. tasting rooms promotional activities or events) and for modifications to add visitor serving uses to existing permits that were approved for agricultural processing only.

Respectfully,

Yael Bernier/President

From: [Melanie Schafer](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Gloria Ferrer
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 10:02:42 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

To Whom It May Concern,

As a wine community we have all been faced with unforeseen challenges between wildfires, months of poor air quality because of outlying fires, power outages and an ongoing pandemic and employee shortages. With each challenge we've had to adjust and redefine how we do business. Some of these changes have been needed and are good business practices, some have been more challenging. Whatever the challenges, we are all large contributors to the Sonoma County economy.

Gloria Ferrer has always done our best to work with the community we are a part of. We work in cooperation with our neighbors and have always been extremely conscious of the footprint we leave in the county as a business and neighbor. We are part of the IWCA and are committed to sustainability and a regenerative business model. We farm to the best of our ability, and we are proud to employ some of what we think are the best vineyard workers in the valley.

Our tasting room gives the consumer the opportunity to taste what has been labored over in the vineyard. Since the onset of Covid many changes had to be made to offer wine tasting to consumers. We have elevated the experiences we offer while at the same time see fewer people than pre-pandemic. Our customers enjoy wine and food experiences which is the responsible way to offer wine tasting. We see fewer guests now than before COVID. The events we have are smaller than prior years and adhere to all ordinances.

Overall, Gloria Ferrer and all the Sonoma County wineries employ our residents and bring business to our community, our hotels, restaurants, tour companies, etc. Changes to the current permitting will ill effect business, community and people, please consider this in your decision.

Thank you!

Melanie Schafer

Vice President of DTC & Marketing



23555 Arnold Drive, Sonoma CA 95476
Cell 510-872-3199

From: [Julie Pedroncelli St John](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Comments for the Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 3:29:34 PM

February 16, 2022

To The Planning Commission.

I would like to address some of the issues surrounding the ordinance being discussed at the Planning Commission's meeting on February 17.

I am from a longtime grape growing and winemaking family winery. We have farmed in Sonoma County and have proudly included the Sonoma County name on our wines since the 1950s. We are located in the Dry Creek Valley where it is considered an 'area of concentration'. One of the ways this has been addressed is the formation of the Dry Creek Valley CAC (Citizens Advisory Council). It adds an advisory layer for projects and are made up of local DCV residents, vintners and/or grape growers. At this level it is key for wine related projects to be reviewed by those it would affect and then sent to be approved at the next level.

I think we can all agree there have been some challenges to our wine community whether it was fire, flood or PSPS (we were shut down for a week during one of the longest shut offs). The pandemic didn't help and has curtailed the number of visitors that we depend on, in part, to buy our wine- which in turn affects our bottom line as well as our future. With an ordinance I feel we don't need more regulation when we have the general plan and zoning codes which clearly identify everything from facility capacity to hours of operation, traffic, parking, noise and sanitation. Not to mention the DCVCAC which is in place to advise and direct these types of projects.

Lastly, I would ask you to include the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by the Sonoma County Vintners in to any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Board of Supervisors. These guidelines and definitions were already approved and used by the DCVCAC to determine the best course when considering wine related projects.

Thank you for your time.

Julie Pedroncelli St. John
3rd Generation Family Owner
Pedroncelli Winery

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From: [Maureen Davison](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Proposed Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 3:54:33 PM

Dear Planning Commission-

I am concerned by the increased regulations that the Ordinance places on wineries.

I am from a family winery that has been in operation for over 90 years and has been able to co-exist with my neighbors (and continues to).

When residents choose to live in wine country they must accept that there will be wineries. It is like someone who chooses to live near an airport or the fly zone and then complains that the airplanes are too noisy. (In all likelihood was the resident's choice to live here a result of visiting a winery?)

Wineries are a major mainstay of the county.

In order for wineries to thrive they need to sell their product. The market place for sales is changing. Direct to consumer sales is a key to winery success.

The last 2 years have been a big game changer. As such the traffic and other studies may be outdated.

General plan and zoning code already exists for wineries which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation and noise. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with existing planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. **We don't need an ordinance to further define something that is already in place.**

Dry Creek Valley has successfully created a plan within their community through the DCVCAC. Westside Road area needs to do the same. They need to work it out instead of having the County create code that does not work for other communities. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.

If the Ordinance is kept I request that the Winery Guidance and Definitions developed by Sonoma County Vintners be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Board of Supervisors. The suggested Ordinance definitions between events and parties and dinners, etc. is mind boggling and shows that the County does not fully understand the vast differences between one winery and the next and there are site specific differences in capacity and how wineries operate.

Thank your consideration to the above points.

Maureen Davison
6905 Geysers Road

Geyserville, Ca 95441
707.857.3741 (h)
707.292.5096 (c)
maureen@avispmail.com

Maureen Davison
Epperson Associates, LLC
Bothwell & Swaner Company
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maureen@avispmail.com

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From: raymond.willmers@gmail.com
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: FW: Winery Events
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:19:02 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to speak out.

We, the county seem to never want to discuss the cumulative impact of winery events and events in general. I live in Kenwood and pre-Covid, every weekend night in June, you can hear 2 to 4 bands playing simultaneously. July and August seem to slow down to one night per weekend.

This data does not include non-permitted, non-winery events that are also occurring simultaneously.

I believe Chateau St. Jean has a permit for 100 or more events...that is why Foley Family Wines just purchased them. Years ago, prior to the 2017 fire, we tried hard to get the commission to NOT pass Chateau St. Jean/Treasury Wine Estates request...the county managers gave the winery exactly what they wanted without listening to the public at the open meeting....I wish Dick Fogg was still with us.

We all know about outdoor amplified music...10 p.m. rule, etc., etc....but it is ignored most weekends. And the poor Sheriff's department has more important issues to deal with on summer weekends.

Chateau St. Jean plays their music indoors with one wall completely open to the outdoors. Hence, the sound travels as if it is outside...check it out.

Lastly, with the new hotel, spa, restaurant and winery on the old Greywood Ranch property here in Kenwood currently going up...sleepy Sonoma Valley will continue to see an increase in noise, light and traffic pollution.

Thank you,

Raymond Willmers

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From: [Kim Stare Wallace](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Comments for Proposed Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:20:06 PM
Attachments: [image004.png](#)
[Letter to Permit Sonoma Kim Stare Wallace.pdf](#)

Please see my attached letter and comments regarding the proposed Winery Events Ordinance.

Kim Stare Wallace

President

707.433.1000 ext. 130

Kim@drycreekvineyard.com

3770 Lambert Bridge Rd.

Healdsburg, CA 95448

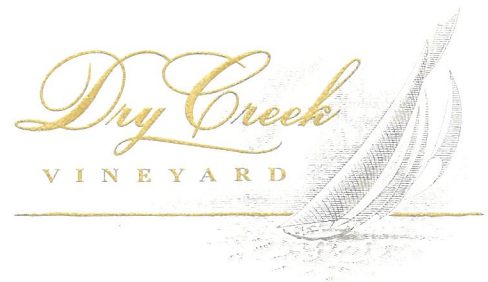


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February 16, 2022

Permit Sonoma
2550 Ventura Ave.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403



RE: Proposed Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I am the President and second-generation owner of Dry Creek Vineyard, our family winery celebrating our 50th Anniversary this year. Our winery was founded by my father and was the first new winery in the Dry Creek Valley following Prohibition. Having grown up in the Dry Creek Valley, I have seen the vast changes in our County and witnessed our quiet farming community turn into a thriving tourist destination.

Over the last few years, our community has experienced wildfires, floods, smoke exposure, diminished tourism and the impacts of a global pandemic. Many local businesses have shut down, but those that are left standing need your support so that those businesses and wineries that remain, can continue to employ a large portion of our community. In addition, it is imperative that we are still able to play the crucial role in the success of our local economy by giving back to our local community through contributions and charitable giving.

Having served on the Sonoma County Vintners (SCV) Board for the last 8 years and still involved with the SCV Government Relations Committee, it is very clear how important these critical business activities are that help gain and retain wine club members. I have been very active in ensuring that the voices of winery operators and grape growers in Sonoma County are being heard. Several events ordinance discussions have taken place and my hope is that the Sonoma County Planning Commissioners can determine the new standards for winery events/business activities while taking into account the perspectives of those whose livelihood is operating a winery as well consider the concerns of the community.

As you may know, the changing landscape of distributor consolidation has greatly affected the wine industry and most wineries have a very difficult time selling their wines in the wholesale system. It is absolutely essential for our survival that we are able to continue to build consumer relationships, as well as market and sell wine through the Direct-to-Consumer channels (tasting room, wine club and e-commerce). In order to be a successful winery business, we need to have the ability to engage directly with our consumers through wine club functions, educational events and tasting room visits in order to sell our product. This is particularly true for the hundreds of family-owned wineries upon which the Sonoma County wine industry was built, and it is what led to the revitalization of our County's economic base, which contributes \$13 billion each year. Adapting to the ever-changing marketplace is something we do well, but in order to exist in the future, we need flexibility in marketing directly to our customers.

ESTABLISHED 1972
DRY CREEK VALLEY
SONOMA COUNTY

POST OFFICE BOX T
3770 LAMBERT BRIDGE RD
HEALDSBURG, CA 95448

TELEPHONE 707.433.1000
FACSIMILE 707.433.5329
WWW.DRYCREEKVINEYARD.COM

It is important to recognize that the vast majority of wineries in Sonoma County are extremely conscientious small business owners, running their wineries with a high degree of integrity and ethics. Most business owners are considerate neighbors and play by the rules. In fact, there are minimal complaints related to winery activities and those that have occurred, were handled with simple communication. As you can see, unnecessary regulation is not the solution and with it we cannot survive. Key issues such as noise, parking, traffic, sanitation and hours of operation are already addressed through the general plan and zoning code.

Many of our wineries have partnered with regional organizations to create thoughtful and realistic approaches to the definitions behind the distinction between “activities” and “events” for the benefit of both the wineries and the surrounding neighbors. The Winery Guidance and Definitions, developed by Sonoma County Vintners, is an example of this collaboration, and should be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors so that all stakeholders are involved. It’s important that these terms are universally agreed upon by all stakeholders.

I urge you — please do not make the dire situation that is the revitalization of our local businesses into an impossible one. Let’s enforce the rules, and accept that Direct to Consumer business practices that allow us personal interaction with our customers and sell our product are essential to our survival in this ever-increasing competitive world of wine. Sonoma County is dependent on the health, economic impact and vibrancy of our wine and grape industries. We can do better than a one-size-fits-all approach in this “new normal” of unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Stare Wallace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "S".

Kim Stare Wallace
President

From: [Robert Conard](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: PRMD - Winery Events
Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:45:18 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[Winery Events - PRMD - 2-16-2022.pdf](#)

February 16, 2022

Dear Planning Commission,

Regarding the proposed Winery Events Ordinance, it is extremely important that the differences between winery “Events” and the daily “Activities” that wineries do to conduct business are addressed. Over the past few years Sonoma County Code Enforcement has reported extremely minimal complaints relating to winery activities. These would be things like Wine Club Pick-Up’s, Vineyard Tours, Winemaker Luncheons, Dinners, and other ancillary activities that directly relate to the education and sale of our product. These types of activities are crucial to small agricultural businesses like ours to survive.

Over the past five years, wine wholesale and distribution consolidation and bulk wine “brands” taking up the majority of retail store shelf space has diminished the ability for small to midsize wineries to get representation in the three-tier market and get our products distributed. Family-owned businesses like ours are now, more than ever, required to market directly to our consumers and sell directly to them to simply keep our people employed and stay in business.

Viticulture has been a part of Sonoma County culture since 1812 and Sonoma County Vintners has been representing agricultural businesses like ours since 1944. I would strongly urge the Planning Commission to incorporate the “Winery Guidance and Definitions” developed by Sonoma County Vintners be incorporated into any draft recommendation or ordinance to be presented and considered by the Board of Supervisors.

The Sonoma County Wine industry and the community of businesses that support them are major employers in this county and as such these businesses contribute greatly to the Sonoma County economy. As we as a community push our way through this pandemic, please help us to keep our Sonoma County economy thriving.

Sincerely,

Robert Conard
Director of Hospitality & Retail Sales
Dry Creek Vineyard
3770 Lambert Bridge Rd.
Healdsburg, CA 95448



February 16, 2022

Dear Planning Commission,

Regarding the proposed Winery Events Ordinance, it is extremely important that the differences between winery "Events" and the daily "Activities" that wineries do to conduct business are addressed. Over the past few years Sonoma County Code Enforcement has reported extremely minimal complaints relating to winery activities. These would be things like Wine Club Pick-Up's, Vineyard Tours, Winemaker Luncheons, Dinners, and other ancillary activities that directly relate to the education and sale of our product. These types of activities are crucial to small agricultural businesses like ours to survive.

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The Sonoma County Wine industry and the community of businesses that support them are major employers in this county and as such these businesses contribute greatly to the Sonoma County economy. As we as a community push our way through this pandemic, please help us to keep our Sonoma County economy thriving.

Sincerely,

Robert Conard

Director of Hospitality

Dry Creek Vineyard

ESTABLISHED 1972

DRY CREEK VALLEY

SONOMA COUNTY

POST OFFICE BOX T

3770 LAMBERT BRIDGE RD

HEALDSBURG, CA 95448

TELEPHONE 707.433.1000

FACSIMILE 707.433.5329

WWW.DRYCREEKVINEYARD.COM

From: Protect San Antonio Valley <admin@protectsav.org>

Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 4:58 PM

To: Greg Carr; Pat Gilardi; Jacquelynne Ocana; Shaun McCaffery; Eric Koenigshofer

Subject: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing February 17, 2022

EXTERNAL

Dear Commissioners Carr, Gilardi, Ocana, McCaffery, and Koenigshofer

Protect San Antonio Valley ("PSAV") appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed Winery Event Ordinance. While there are few wineries in our local area it is our understanding that the Ordinance, once adopted, will inform permitted uses on agricultural properties generally. For that reason, we think it is important to share our perspective.

We concur with the position laid out by Protect Rural Sonoma County in its letter to the commissioners. In addition, we would like to highlight the following concerns.

- 1) **All parties should be considered "Events."** The proposed ordinance appropriately defines winemaker lunches, dinners, release parties & club parties as "Events." This is consistent with past practices and in line with common understanding. However, designation of harvest parties and pickup parties as "Activities" would be inappropriate and inconsistent. It falsely differentiates between gatherings depending on how and to whom they are promoted, rather than on the nature of what is actually taking place. This is confusing and would create an opportunity for significant abuse.
- 2) **All visitor gatherings including "Trade Partners" held outside of normal business hours (10-am - 5pm) should be considered Events.** Wineries, just like retail stores, manufacturers, and professional service firms, have regular hours of operation. Visitor gatherings that occur outside of normal business hours are not ordinary operations and should be considered Events.
- 3) **Outdoor amplified sound should not be permitted.** Outdoor amplified sound is not essential to the production and sale of agricultural products. It has significant negative impacts on neighbors and the community in general, especially in valleys where sound travels easily and far.
- 4) **Siting criteria should include:** 20 Acre minimum parcel size, 18 ft minimum access road, and a density standard of no more than 2 facilities per half mile.
- 5) **Tasting rooms and event spaces in city and town centers should be encouraged.** These tasting rooms and event spaces reduce impacts on rural agricultural areas, provide access to accommodations, and are linked to

transportation corridors. They significantly improve safety by limiting potentially impaired driving on rural roads.

The wine industry's push to expand visitor serving uses is designed to promote new hospitality "experiences" rather than activities related to the production and sale of their products. It would put pressure on Sonoma County's restaurant industry and blur the line between agricultural production and a hospitality or event center. Wineries are zoned as agricultural businesses. To preserve and enjoy the benefits of that designation, they should operate as agricultural businesses and not hospitality venues.

Thank you for your consideration,

Protect San Antonio Valley



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**Public
Comments
after publication
for PC Hearing
2-17-22**

From: [Brian Oh](#)
To: [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Hannah Spencer](#)
Subject: FW: Planning Commission Meeting on the Wine Event Ordinance
Date: Monday, February 14, 2022 9:21:57 AM

EXTERNAL

This is so important. Please consider the following points in fashioning the Ordinance.

1. All parties are events. There is no rational basis for the Staff including Release and Wine Club parties as events and categorizing Pick-up Parties and Harvest Parties as activities and thus not subject to the limitation in use permits on events. All parties must be considered events as has been the County's practice for decades. Creating carve-outs for certain types of events that are not subject to the limitations in use permits, particularly when there is little if any practical difference in impacts between such types of events, will create a compliance nightmare. The County must include in the ordinance its long-standing practice that all parties - wine club, pick-up, release, harvest or any other such party be counted as an event and covered under the winery's use permit.

2. Trade gatherings that include a meal or that are held after hours must be categorized as an event just the County treats a such a gathering of other visitors to the winery and included in the use permit. By proposing a carve-out to allow events for "Trade Partners" that do not count as events under a winery's use permit creates a major loophole for wineries to expand entitlements. There is no practical means for the public or the County to assess if an event held for the "trade" was truly trade event or some other event for customers of the winery. Furthermore, the impacts to the neighborhood resulting from an event held for the "trade" are exactly the same as the impacts created by an event held for any other group of visitors to the winery. Wineries have the ability to conduct trade events; however, such gatherings need to be specified in the use permit application so the County can assess the potential impacts to the neighborhood, just like the County does with all other types of gatherings.

3. Since the County is not conducting any CEQA analysis, the ordinance has to be absolutely clear that any existing use permit holder must get a modification to it use permit for any increase in its hospitality operations

4. The Commission should adopt additional siting criteria as part of the ordinance including:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 18-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

Our future depends on this.

Thank you,

Nancy Feehan
30090 Seaview Road
Cazadero CA 95421

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From: [Ted Lemon](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: winery events ordinance
Date: Wednesday, February 09, 2022 2:37:13 PM

Dear PRMD:

Regarding the proposed ordinance: we would like to see further clarity on what is classified as an event as compared to a business activity. We would like to see wine pick up days, winemaker lunches and distributor dinners classified as a business activity and not count as an event on the winery use permit. These activities already fall within the winery's use permit guidelines for parking, max capacity, sewage etc. In particular, wine pick up days are important customer relations days. Many of us do not have cased good storage of any significance on site. There is no way for us to accommodate holding wine for customers over many weeks or months while they dribble in to pick up their wines. The latter format also places a much heavier burden on our staff and takes away from precious time with new customers.

Thank you,

Ted Lemon
Proprietor
Littorai Wines
788 Gold Ridge Rd
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Tel: 707-823-9586
Fax: 707-823-9589

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From: [Michael Haney](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Events/Business Activities
Date: Friday, February 11, 2022 3:19:36 PM



February 11, 2022

Good Afternoon:

I am writing in anticipation of the Sonoma County Planning Commission's Update on Winery Events scheduled for Tuesday, February 17.

Sonoma County Vintners Association once again wants to communicate and support our previous proposal and efforts over the past few years recommending our County adopt clear definitions as to what constitutes a winery event versus a winery business activity.

The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Like other Use Permits, conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADA compliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

Similarly, a winery produces wine and sells that wine through several different channels allowed under their permits from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control and the federal TTB.

These are business activities inherent to the operation of the winery that allow the winery to be successful.

With wholesale wine distribution undergoing vast consolidation over the past five years, now more than ever, wineries, especially small family owned wineries, cannot secure adequate wholesale distribution. Direct to Consumer sales and the related business activities are without a doubt critical for winery survival in today's market.

We support the definitions and proposal that wine pick up days, winemaker lunches, distributor dinners and additional consumer sales related activities be classified as a business activity and not count as an event on a winery use permit. These activities will fall within the wineries use permit guidelines for parking, max capacity, sewage...

Other activities outside a winery operations business model (i.e. weddings, political gatherings, philanthropic fundraisers) or those that exceed the winery's managed capacity, can be regulated as events. The number of these events can be spelled out in the winery's Use Permit.

The past five years have been stressful for our family owned wineries as they have responded to fires, flood, power cutoffs and now pandemic challenges. Our wineries have been resilient and demonstrated creativity in order to survive and remain one of our

counties main economic and employment leaders, as well as a main charitable contributor. Now is not the time to handcuff them further with guidelines or an ordinance that does not clearly identify what an allowed business activity is conditioned by the property's ability to mitigate impacts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Haney
Executive Director
Sonoma County Vintners
Sonoma County Vintners Foundation

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From: [Brian Oh](#)
To: [Hannah Spencer](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: FW: ORD16-0001 Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Monday, February 14, 2022 9:22:51 AM

Dear Planning Commissioner:

I support the winery ordinance and applaud the work everyone has done so far.

The purpose of the ordinance is to provide clarity for staff, avoid conflicts and close loopholes while protecting local residents from unauthorized events, parties and other gatherings.

What continues to trouble me is the the new proposed definition of events and activities. While the Staff's table is generally consistent with long-standing practices, the ordinance needs further clarification and the closure of a few significant loopholes.

Here are areas that need to be addressed:

1- Anytime visitors are invited it is an event, whether it be pick-up parties, harvest parties, trade gatherings, weddings, educational outings or whatever.

2- Staff lists winemaker lunches, dinners, release parties and wine club parties as promotional events. That's fine. Exempting lunches or dinners for a certain class of Trade Meeting attendees will create an unverifiable and unenforceable standard. There will never be an effective way to monitor this. It is an invitation to abuse with no means of enforcement.. A gathering has the same impact whether held for trade or members of the public. There should be no exemptions for wine trade members.

3- The County has long maintained parties held for visitors (not employees) are events. If wine club and release parties are events so are pick-up and harvest parties. The invitation to gather and the impacts are the same no matter what name you give it.

4- Trade Meetings should be treated the same as other AG promotional events and all parties should be classified as events.

5- No "Honor System" will be sufficient here. We need clearly defined rules to make the ordinance effective.

Climate change and drought conditions are not going away. We want businesses to thrive as well as take care of our lands and ecosystem. Let's do this ordinance to protect everyone and everything.

Thank you for your cooperation.

CHRISTINA MEYER
Rohnert Park

Greetings~

Thank you for helping to support homes and residents that are subjected to winery noise elements, including congestion on roads! We desperately need support from our elected officials.

We live in a neighborhood of homes and apartments that are greatly impacted pretty much every day by a loud winery and their events.

The winery has basically turned into an event center. They have amplified music almost everyday but two, parties/events, weddings and happy hours in addition to their regular wine tastings. Patrons have very raised conversations due to the amplified music and drinking. There are loud arguments. Advertised Happy hours go from 5:00 to 9:00 at night. Not the normal 3:00-5:00. At any given time there can be 60 plus cars in their parking lot. There is no turn lane into the property from the Highway. This is an example of over concentration and abuse of any permits? And where is the septic? These are legitimate concerns.

When approached by their neighbors about the events and noise the response from the owner is, "We will do what it takes to make our customers happy" When asked what their noise policy is, there is no response. There is no monitoring or enforcement. When all else fails, calling the sheriff, the response is "There is no noise ordinance" When asked to build a sound wall, the answer is no. When calling to complain they accuse us of harassing them.

This establishment is not focused on ag/vineyards to learn about wine making etc. There is no wine making on site.

This obtrusive situation has become a health problem and contributes to stress. It decreases property values. It also interferes with sleep and concentration.

The question is what are the set back requirements in a residential area? The outdoor patio events are 30 feet from property lines. The wedding site is even less from property line. Why does there have to be amplified music? This has been going on for years.

We feel defeated with no recourse, and no rights.

Thank you for your help, no one should have to endure this frustrating situation.

Susan and Keith Evans
West County Residents of 27 years

From: [Brian Oh](#)
To: [Hannah Spencer](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: FW: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Monday, February 14, 2022 9:22:39 AM

Dear Commissioners:

So much time has passed since the Commission originally began the discussions, it is imperative to remind you of the community groups' concern about the potential for the ordinance to expand entitlements for entertainment and hospitality services at wineries located in ag and rural areas.

The proposed ordinance has a number of loopholes (see below) that have the effect of rolling back long-standing County standards and making enforcement of standards virtually impossible.

1. All parties are events. There is no rational basis for the Staff including Release and Wine Club parties as events and categorizing Pick-up Parties and Harvest Parties as activities and thus not subject to the limitation in use permits on events. All parties must be considered events as has been the County's practice for decades. Creating carve-outs for certain types of events that are not subject to the limitations in use permits, particularly when there is little if any practical difference in impacts between such types of events, will create a compliance nightmare. The County must include in the ordinance its long-standing practice that all parties -- wine club, pick-up, release, harvest or any other such party -- be counted as events and covered under the winery's use permit.

2. Trade gatherings that include a meal or that are held after hours must be categorized as events just the County treats such gatherings of other visitors to the winery and included in the use permit. A carve-out to allow events for "Trade Partners" that do not count as events under a winery's use permit creates a major loophole for wineries to expand entitlements. There is no practical means for the public or the County to assess if an event held for the "trade" was truly a trade event or some other event for customers of the winery. Furthermore, the impacts to the neighborhood resulting from an event held for the "trade" are exactly the same as the impacts created by an event held for any other group of visitors to the winery. Wineries have the ability to conduct trade events; however, such gatherings need to be specified in the use permit application so the County can assess the potential impacts to the neighborhood, just like the County does with all other types of gatherings.

3. Since the County is not conducting any CEQA analysis, the ordinance has to be absolute clear that any existing use permit holder must get a modification to its use permit for any increase in its hospitality operations

4. The Commission should adopt additional siting criteria as part of the ordinance including:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 18-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

Thank you for your consideration of my perspectives.

-- Rick Luttmann

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From: [Chris Koch](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Comments on winery events
Date: Sunday, February 13, 2022 2:00:31 PM

Dear Planning Commission,

You have many issues to address with respect to the winery events. I would like to focus on one.

I like the wine industry. I am a consumer. I think it's important to the character of the County. I want it to be financially successful.

BUT, I believe **amplified music** at winery events is an unfair and annoying inconvenience imposed on neighbors. County noise standards are not the answer, as the sound of amplified music can and does carry considerable distances. Winery events should not impose noise pollution on neighbors.

If a winery needs amplified music to sell its wine, it should get a new winemaker. The Winery Ordinance should not allow amplified music at events.

If a winery feels it needs amplified music at a particular event, let it apply for a special permit. Amplified music should not be a part of the Winery Ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chris Koch
Kenwood

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From: sonomacountyhospitality@gmail.com
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: Sonoma County Planning Commission's Update on Winery Events - Letter From SCHA
Date: February 14, 2022 9:32:02 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[Winery Events Letter to Supervisors Planning Commission.pdf](#)
Importance: High

EXTERNAL

Please review the attached letter regarding the Sonoma County Planning Commission's Update on Winery Events scheduled for Tuesday, February 15.

Thank you,

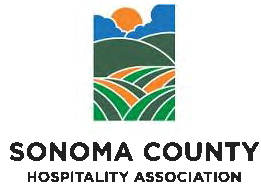
Debbie Osborn
Senior Program Director
Sonoma County Hospitality Association
PO Box 6181
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SonomaCountyHospitality@gmail.com



SONOMA COUNTY
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

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February 11, 2022

Sonoma County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors:

The Sonoma County Hospitality Association (SCHA) represents a wide range of area businesses, from small restaurants to large hotels, wineries, breweries, transportation, attractions and guest facing retail. As a trade group SCHA tends to focus on training, networking, member relations and advocacy. SCHA believes in “stronger together” and recognizes that decisions made that have a negative effect on one effect all.

We are writing in anticipation of and in regard to the Sonoma County Planning Commission’s Update on Winery Events scheduled for Tuesday, February 15.

We agree and support the Sonoma County Vintners Association proposal and our Sonoma County wine community efforts over the past few years as they have worked with the County and suggested solutions in order for our County to adopt clear definitions as to what constitutes a winery event versus a winery business activity.

The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Like other Use Permits. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADA compliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered. A winery produces wine and sells that wine through several different channels allowed under their permits from the California Alcoholic Beverage Control and the federal TTB. These are business activities inherent to the operation of the winery that allow the winery to be successful. Other activities outside a winery operations business model (i.e., weddings, political gatherings, philanthropic fundraisers) or those that exceed the winery’s managed capacity, can be regulated as events. The number of these events can be spelled out in the winery’s Use Permit.

Direct to Consumer sales and the related business activities are without a doubt critical for winery survival in today’s market.

So, we support the Vintners proposal that wine pick up days, winemaker lunches, distributor dinners and additional consumer sales related activities be classified as a business activity and not count as an event on a winery use permit.

The past five years have been more than stressful for our family-owned wineries as they have responded to fires, flood, power cutoffs and now pandemic challenges. Our wineries have been resilient and demonstrated creativity in order to survive and remain one of our counties main economic and employment leaders, as well as a main charitable contributor.

Now is not the time to handcuff them further with guidelines or an ordinance that does not clearly identify what an allowed business activity is conditioned by the property's ability to mitigate impacts.

Eric Markson

SCHA Board Chair, President

From: [Marc Bommersbach](#)
To: [Brian Oh](#); [Scott Orr](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Fw: Preserve Rural Sonoma County's comments on the Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:05:38 AM
Attachments: [Exhibit B PRSC redline markup 5-26.pdf](#)
[PRSC5 winery ordinance5-28PS.pdf](#)

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Marc Bommersbach <mbommersbach@att.net>
To: greg.carr@sonoma-county.org <greg.carr@sonoma-county.org>; Pat Gilardi <pat.gilardi@sonoma-county.org>; Jacquelynne Ocana <jacquelynne.ocana@sonoma-county.org>; shaun.mccaffery@sonoma-county.org <shaun.mccaffery@sonoma-county.org>; Eric Koenigshofer <eric.koenigshofer@sonoma-county.org>
Sent: Saturday, February 12, 2022, 11:17:56 AM PST
Subject: Preserve Rural Sonoma County's comments on the Winery Event Ordinance

Dear Commissioners,

PRSC greatly appreciates the County's efforts to conclude a winery event ordinance that codifies many of the County's practices for review and approval of winery use permits.

Attached are Preserve Rural Sonoma County's (PRSC) markup of the Staff's proposed ordinance and comment letter that were submitted into the record for the last hearing.

To expeditiously get to the essence of this ordinance, the Commissioners should review PRSC's proposed changes highlighted in red (attached).

As you can see from the attached markup, the changes PRSC proposes are relatively few, but critically important to have a meaningful and enforceable ordinance.

Key issues:

1. All parties are events. All parties must be considered events as has been the County's practice for decades. Creating carve-outs for certain types of events that are not subject to the limitations in use permits, particularly when there is little if any practical difference in impacts between such types of events, will create a compliance nightmare. The County must include in the ordinance its long-standing practice that all parties - wine club, pick-up, release, harvest or any other such party be counted as an event and covered under the winery's use permit.

2. Trade gatherings held after hours or where meals are provided must be categorized as an event just the County treats a such a gathering of other visitors to the winery. Creating a carve-out for "Trade Partners" that do not count as events under a winery's use permit creates a major loophole for wineries to expand entitlements. The impacts to the neighborhood resulting from an event held for the "trade" are exactly the same as the impacts created by an event held for any other group of visitors to the winery. Furthermore, there is no practical means for the public or the County to assess if an event held for the "trade" was truly trade event or some other event for customers of the winery. Wineries have the ability to conduct trade events; however, such gatherings need to be specified in the use permit application so the County can assess the potential impacts to the neighborhood, just like the County does with all other types of gatherings.

3. Since the County is not conducting any CEQA analysis, the ordinance has to be absolutely clear that any existing use permit holder must get a modification to it use permit for any increase in its hospitality operations

In addition, siting criteria for new winery/tasting rooms was included in discussions from the inception of the County's efforts to manage development in ag areas. The following siting criteria should be included in the ordinance.

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 20-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Marc Bombersbach

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EXHIBIT “B”
CHAPTER 26. SONOMA COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 18. AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE-BASED USE STANDARDS

26-18-260 – Winery Standards

- A. Purpose. This Section 26-18-260 provides a greater level of detail for the desired character of development in areas zoned LIA - Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA - Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA - Diverse Agriculture. For the areas zoned LIA, LEA, and DA, this Section 26-18-260 identifies procedures and criteria applicable to new or modified use permit applications for winery visitor serving activities and winery events. Current use permit holders shall be limited to the visitor and hospitality uses specifically allowed in their use permit conditions. The Standards in this division shall be referred to as “Winery Standards.”
- B. Applicable Areas. The provisions of this section apply to parcels zoned LIA – Land Intensive Agriculture, LEA-Land Extensive Agriculture, and DA -Diverse Agriculture. For split-zoned parcels, the provisions of this section apply to the portion of the parcel zoned for any of the agricultural zoning districts listed above.
- C. Local Advisory Guidelines. Citizen advisory councils/commissions established by the Board of Supervisors review projects subject to this section in accordance with their adopted local advisory guidelines, and make advisory recommendations to the Permit and Resource Management Department, Board of Zoning Adjustments, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors.
- D. Terms and phrases used in this section are defined as follows:
1. **Catering Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A catering kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include warming ovens, sinks and refrigeration, but no stove top, grill or range hood.
 2. **Commercial Kitchen** means a facility used for the preparation of food to be served in conjunction with winery visitor-serving activities and/or winery events. A commercial kitchen associated with a winery and/or tasting room can include counter space, sinks, microwave oven(s), warming oven(s), refrigeration, a stove or range, grill and an exhaust hood, and outdoor equipment such as pizza ovens or barbecues.
 3. **Food and Wine Pairing** means providing samples or tastes of site-grown or locally-grown food products that are showcased with different wines.
 4. **Rural Area** means any area not located within an urban service area designated on the General Plan Land Use Map.
 5. **Winery** means an agricultural processing facility that converts fruit into wine. Wineries may include crush areas, production rooms, case goods and barrel storage, tank rooms, warehouses, bottling lines, laboratories, administrative offices, tasting rooms, event space, commercial kitchen, and catering kitchen.
 6. **Winery Events** means events held at wineries and tasting rooms for the purpose of promoting and marketing agricultural products grown or processed in the County. Winery events are secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities occurring onsite ~~and/or in the area~~ and are consistent with General Plan Policy AR-

6d. There are two types of winery events: Agricultural Promotional Events and Industry-Wide Events.

7. **Agricultural Promotional Events** are directly related to public education, sales and promotion of agricultural products to consumers, including but not limited to: winemaker lunches, dinners, release/pick-up parties, harvest and wine club parties and similar events.
8. **Industry-Wide Events** are promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.
9. **Wine Trade Partners** means distributors, wine trade buyers, restaurant owners and their representatives, ~~winery or tasting room owner(s), winery employees, and tasting room employees.~~
10. **Winery Visitor Serving Activities** means visitor serving activities that are part of normal winery and wine tasting room business operations. There are two types of winery visitor-serving activities: Sales Activities and Wine Trade Activities.
11. **Sales Activities** are wine tasting, pickup parties, tours, seminars and other similar hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales excluding winery events.
12. **Wine Trade Activities** are by-invitation meetings, seminars, harvest parties-wine tastings and similar activities excluding winery events, and attended only by wine trade partners and are not advertised to the consumer.

E. Operating Standards.

1. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. Winery visitor serving activities are considered part of normal winery and tasting room business operations. All winery visitor serving activities must be consistent with the tasting room hours of operation, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and operational requirements specified in the use permit.
2. Winery Events. Winery events must be consistent with the hours of operation, maximum number of event days, maximum number of guests allowed, building occupancy limits, and other operational requirements specified in the use permit.
3. Sizing, permissibility and other parameters of winery visitor serving activities and winery events, and maximum number of event days is based upon a variety of factors specific to the site and surrounding uses, including, but not limited to, septic capacity, available water supply, emergency access, availability of on-site parking, noise attenuation, increased risk of harm to people or property as a result of hazards, and the potential for negative cumulative effects related to noise, traffic, and water supplies.
4. Hours of Operation. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor serving activities and winery events are specified below, unless further limited by the use permit.
 - a. Tasting Rooms. Regular business hours for tasting rooms are 10 am - 5 pm.

- b. Winery Visitor Serving Activities. The maximum hours of operation for winery visitor-serving activities are specified below by activity type.
 - (1) Sales Activities: 10 am – 5 pm.
 - (2) Wine Trade Activities: ~~8~~10 am – ~~4~~5 pm.
- c. Winery Events. The maximum hours of operation for events are specified below by event type.
 - (1) Agricultural Promotional Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 10 pm, with all cleanup occurring no later than between 9:~~30~~00 pm – 10 pm or as otherwise specified in Use Permit conditions.
 - (2) Industry-wide Events may occur during the hours of 10 am – 5 pm.
- 5. Wineries and tasting rooms shall not be rented out to third parties for events.
- 6. On-Site Parking. The following on-site parking is required for wineries and tasting rooms:
 - a. 1 parking space per 2.5 guests and 1 space per employee. The parking standard may be reduced in accordance with Article 86. - Parking Regulations Sec. 26-86-010 (i).
 - b. Use of on-site unimproved overflow parking areas or shuttling may be allowed to accommodate winery events, if specified in the use permit.
 - c. Overflow parking and shuttling shall not be used to accommodate parking for winery visitor serving activities.
 - d. No parking is permitted along any public or private roadways or on shared vineyard roads.
- 7. Food Service. Food service is allowed as specified below.
 - a. All food service must be designed to promote and enhance marketing of wine. Food service shall be secondary and incidental to agricultural production, wine sales and education.
 - b. Operating the food service area as a restaurant, café, delicatessen or any food service offering cooked-to-order food is prohibited.
 - ~~e.~~ Food and wine pairings featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with winery visitor serving activities and winery events ~~.-~~
 - ~~e-c.~~ Prepared meals featuring local foods and food products is allowed in conjunction with ~~wine trade activities and~~ winery events.

e.d. Retail sales of pre-packaged food in conjunction with wine tasting is allowed subject to the following limitations:

- (1) Retail sale of pre-packaged food featuring local foods and food products is allowed during the regular business hours identified in the use permit.
- (2) Retail sale of pre-packaged food is allowed for on-site consumption only. Outdoor seating areas may be allowed for use as outdoor picnic areas.
- (3) Indoor seating area or table service in conjunction with retail sales of pre-packaged food is prohibited.
- (4) Off-site signs advertising retail sales of pre-packaged food are prohibited.

8. Event Coordination and Traffic Management.

a. On-Site Coordinator. An on-site coordinator is required to address complaints about winery events both during and following an event. The on-site Coordinator shall:

- (1) Ensure that the winery's website prominently lists a telephone number for the public to make event-related complaints; and
- (2) Send an annual notice to owners and occupants of lots within 300 feet of the winery/tasting room lot boundaries to provide the "complaint hotline" telephone number.

b. Traffic Management Plan. Traffic management and parking plans are required to address the maximum number of people visiting during winery visitor serving activities and winery events. For events exceeding 100 participants and for events that require use of overflow parking, the traffic management plan shall include the following:

- (1) Provisions for event coordination to avoid local traffic delays.
- (2) Parking attendants for each day of the event.
- (3) A shuttle plan, if shuttling is requested, to support each day of the event. A convenient and secure "park and ride" area must be provided.
- (4) A plan for on-site parking requirements and queuing of traffic.
- (5) Enforcement of the on-street parking restrictions.
- (6) Subsequent changes to the approved Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in advance to the Permit and Resource Management Department.
- ~~(6)~~

9. Noise Attenuation Setbacks. Noise is attenuated by distance from the noise source. To ensure compliance with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element thresholds for maximum allowable exterior noise exposure levels, winery visitor serving activities and winery events shall meet the required setbacks provided in Table 18-2 below:

Table 18-2: Required Noise Attenuation Setbacks

Noise generating land use	Setback measured from the exterior property line of any adjacent noise sensitive land use
Parking lots	450 feet
Outdoor areas involving groups of people or non-amplified music (i.e. acoustic)	625 feet
Outdoor areas involving amplified music, or loud instruments such as brass instruments, horns, or drums	1,600 feet

Exceptions to the setbacks listed in Table 18-2 above may be allowed when a project-specific noise study prepared in accordance with the Permit and Resource Management Department Guidelines for the Preparation of Noise Analysis determines the project will comply with the Sonoma County General Plan Noise Element due to intervening structures or natural features, ~~available open land on noise sensitive parcels~~, or by incorporating noise mitigation measures.

F. Siting Standards:

1. Parcels for new winery and tasting room development shall be at least 20 acres in size
2. New winery and tasting room project locations cannot result in more that two facilities within a ½ mile distance.
3. Project access shall be off public roads with a minimum 18-foot width
4. Outdoor amplified sound is prohibited



May 28, 2021

County of Sonoma
Permit and Resource Management Department
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa CA 95403

Attn: Tennis Wick, Scott Orr, Brian Oh, Georgia McDaniels

RE: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing, June 3, 2021,

Dear Director Wick,

Preserve Rural Sonoma County (PRSC) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Winery Event Ordinance (red line mark-up attached). To meet the County's objective to avoid CEQA review for this Ordinance, the changes proposed in this letter and the attached red-line mark-up address the concerns of many rural residents who have been impacted by tasting rooms as they have morphed from drop in, stand-up tasting, to venues that offer seated wine and food pairing, meals, and potentially thousands of events.

PRSC's proposed changes will reduce land use conflicts in rural communities and provide clarity and more specificity to the County's winery permitting process by:

1. Revising definitions to close loopholes, remove inconsistencies and enhance enforcement.
2. Clarifying the ordinance to ensure any additional entitlements are conferred only under a modification to an existing use permit, with appropriate project-specific environmental review.
3. Adding siting criteria to address neighborhood compatibility and road safety issues, while preventing new areas of over-concentration.

These changes will not limit the wine industry's ability to grow and to adapt to future business conditions.

Background

The need for the Winery Event Ordinance grew out of concerns that the proliferation of tasting rooms and events in rural areas had gotten out of hand – resulting in significant public safety and environmental impacts. The objective of the Ordinance, as codified in the General Plan, is to create clear standards to manage winery hospitality and events on agricultural land and to address unauthorized promotional uses.

The Ordinance was never intended to expand or intensify visitor serving uses, however, efforts to reclassify what have been historically deemed as “events” to “tasting room activities,” and allowing “daily events”, would create a significant expansion of entitlements for promotional uses that have been included in hundreds of Use Permits approved over the last several decades.

PRSC appreciates the efforts, both past and present, of Permit Sonoma, Planning Commissioners and the Supervisors, to regulate hospitality uses through Use Permit-based project approvals that clearly specify the size, number, type, and time of day for all uses beyond normal drop-in or by appointment wine tasting. Citizens rely on these criteria and standards to maintain the peace, well-being, and safety of our roads and neighborhoods.

Loopholes in the “Definitions:” section should be closed. For example:

“Parties” are events – The County has long considered parties held for visitors (not employees) to be “events”. These include release/pick-up parties, wine club parties, harvest parties or other holiday or cultural parties. According to the dictionary, the definition of a party is: ***a social gathering of invited guests, typically involving eating, drinking, and entertainment***. The proposed ordinance correctly defines release parties and wine club parties as Agricultural Promotional Events, however, pick-up parties and harvest parties, are listed as activities. This is clearly contradictory, confusing, and inconsistent with past practices. The definition of Ag-promotional events should include all four of the listed “parties” (or any other type of party held for visitors) as “events”. The rather vague and overly broad term “and other hospitality related activities” should be removed or clarified as to what hospitality uses are envisioned in the term “other”.

All visitor gatherings, including Wine Trade Activities, held after tasting room hours or where a meal is served should be considered to be an event - The draft ordinance recognizes the County’s long-standing policy that any gathering of visitors after tasting room hours or where a meal is served constitutes an event.

The after-hours limitation is an important provision, particularly for tasting rooms in rural areas. Long duration drinking past 5 pm - into the cocktail and dinner hour - has the potential to create both evening disruption in neighborhoods and road safety issues on lightly-patrolled rural roads. Excluding winemaker lunches, dinners and evening gatherings for the trade from the “after tasting room hours” limitation creates an entitlement to an unlimited number of these events. It also creates a loophole for enforcement, because there is no way to determine if a winemaker dinner was an event solely for the trade or just another promotional event. The impacts from events are the same regardless of what is on someone’s business card. Furthermore, given the County’s long history of limited enforcement, this is a clear opportunity for abuse.

If a winery’s business plan requires lunches and dinners and after-hours gatherings for the trade, these events can be included and evaluated in the event totals requested in the Use Permit application process.

A winery use permit should not allow events on parcels disassociated from the winery – Section D.6. defines Winery Events as events held at wineries and tasting rooms. However, it also makes the conflicting statements that they can “occur on site and/or in the area”. Besides contradicting the first statement, this phrase has the effect of allowing events to be held on parcels geographically disassociated from the winery. The reference to “or in the area” should be removed, otherwise hundreds more parcels, with no protection from a use permit, could be opened up for events. Wineries have the ability to request a zoning permit for a limited number of events in other areas.

Clarify that the Ordinance cannot confer additional entitlements to existing use permit holders

In order to support the County’s contention that the ordinance does not create an intensification of use that would require CEQA review for ordinance adoption, it should explicitly state that the provisions of this ordinance do not confer any visitation related entitlements over what is currently specified in writing and approved in a winery/tasting room’s current use permit.

In addition, it is our opinion that, without the changes proposed in this letter and the redlined mark-up the items listed below, the ordinance DOES in fact change to the County’s “current application review practices,” a finding that would trigger CEQA review for the ordinance due to the following changes:

1. Reclassification of gatherings after tasting-room hours, or with service of a meal, to Wine Trade Partners as “activities” instead of them being specified as “events”
2. The classification of some categories of parties as Winery Visitor Serving Activities and part of normal tasting room business operations
3. Modifying “noise setbacks” to allow a portion of the attenuation distance to be measured on adjacent properties, which is inconsistent with the General Plan Noise Element and the County’s current use permit review practice that measures noise element compliance at the property line.

To avoid the need for CEQA review, the ordinance must correct the above listed changes to “current application evaluation practices”, and clearly state that these definitional changes will only expand the uses that are specifically allowed under current use permits by permit modification.

Additional siting criteria need to be added

Siting criteria, such as minimum road width and parcel size, and a separation or density standard have always been included as part of the ordinance discussions. By setting Siting Criteria, the Ordinance would help the County to screen out projects that would likely be unable to meet mitigation requirements in the use permit process. This early project screening would protect local residents and reduce the risk to developers who may

otherwise spend considerable resources before coming up short in the decision process. It would also relieve staff, commissioners and the public from having to review contentious projects that have significant challenges for approval.

PRSC proposes the following four siting criteria that would address many of the issues raised in stakeholder discussions:

1. Access off minimum 18-ft. wide County roadway
2. 20-acre minimum parcel size for new wineries
3. Separation criteria of no more than two winery driveways in ½ mile
4. No outdoor amplified sound, except under a limited number of events per a zoning permit

Minimum 18 ft. roadway – This requirement was discussed in the Winery Working Group that included first responder personnel, and it was generally agreed between the community groups and wine industry that for, new winery applications, there should be sufficient access/egress for both visitors and emergency vehicles.

20-acre minimum parcel size – In agricultural areas the minimum zoning is generally 10 acres for DA and 20 acres for LEA and LIA zones. However, there are a number of parcels in all ag zones that are well below this threshold and that already have use permits. These small parcels present a challenge because they are usually surrounded by residences, are often located on rural lanes with poor access, and draw water from wells that are in close proximity to neighbors' wells. The 20-acre minimum is included in the Dry Creek guidelines and SVCAC guidelines. A 20-acre minimum standard would reduce many of the siting issues associated with smaller parcels. Permit Sonoma and the BZA are already starting to informally consider this criterion in project reviews.

Separation criteria – a separation criteria that allows a maximum two wineries in a ½ mile stretch of roadway would not only address the over-concentration of winery facilities in the identified areas of concentration, but it would lessen the potential for other areas in the County to become over concentrated over time. Both the City of Healdsburg and the City of Sonoma have enacted standards to address over-concentration of tasting rooms in their jurisdictions, and the Sonoma Valley CAC includes the proposed standard as well. The BZA has also now begun to consider density in project approvals.

No outdoor amplified sound – In rural areas sound can travel significant distances - greater than the 1600-foot setback recommended by the sound consultant. Even with applicant-monitored "mitigation," amplified sound can be very disruptive to the neighborhood. This is why the vast majority of use permits prohibit outdoor amplified sound.

Summary

With the changes proposed in this letter, including the revisions incorporated in the attached markup, the Ordinance would not restrict the expansion of visitor serving uses in ag-zones overall. The County would continue to issue use permits, and use permit modifications, with project-specific CEQA review. And the County would retain the right of discretionary review that limits development on specific parcels where environmental, safety and neighborhood compatibility, or cumulative impact issues cannot be addressed.

Ideally, an Ordinance with clear definitions and siting criteria would direct development into areas where it can have fewer impacts and, in order to be in compliance with CEQA, the ordinance would not allow current use permit holders to engage in new or unspecified visitor serving uses without first securing approval through a use permit modification.

Thank you

Preserve Rural Sonoma County

Attachment: Redline comments

From: vicky@amistavineyards.com
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Cc: [district4](#); [Jenny Chamberlain](#); ["Yael Bernier"](#); sara@drycreekvineyard.com
Subject: Draft Ordinance on Winery Events - Comments
Date: February 15, 2022 7:57:03 AM
Attachments: [BOS Resolution of Intention on Winery Events Oct 11 2016 - Highlighted.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

To: Members of the Board of Zoning Adjustments

Re: Draft Winery Events Ordinance - ORD16-0001

I urge you to direct staff to come back with a Draft Ordinance for Winery Events that is consistent with the direction established by the Board of Supervisors in their resolution of October 11, 2016. The current draft ordinance over-complicates and over-steps what the supervisors resolved.

Winery Events were discussed at a Board of Supervisors study session on July 12, 2016. The clear consensus was that county wide definitions of events and food service were needed and that siting criteria and standards were best set at the local level.

In their meeting on Oct. 11, 2016, the supervisors approved a resolution directing the staff to establish county wide definitions of events and food service and to establish limits in local areas (see attached Resolution).

Following the resolution, the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council set out to create a set of guidelines for the Dry Creek Valley. As a member of the CAC at the time, I was intimately involved in this process. The Dry Creek Guidelines were drafted, rigorously debated, and ultimately agreed by the boards of the Dry Creek Valley Association and the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley.

The Guidelines were presented for public comment on two publicly noticed meetings of the Dry Creek Valley CAC. They have been utilized by the CAC and applicants to prepare and evaluate winery permit applications since April of 2017. The Guidelines were added to the DCVCAC Blue Book by unanimous

approval of the Board of Supervisors on October 16, 2018.

The Dry Creek Valley Guidelines have been working successfully for nearly five years. As it is currently written the draft ordinance would negate these local guidelines. That is not what the supervisors intended.

I understand and support the value of having a consistent set of definitions at the County level with siting criteria and guidelines set at the local level. I respectfully request that you either vote No on the current Draft or ask staff to come back with a draft that is consistent with the guidance provided by the Board of Supervisors in their resolution of October 11, 2016.

Sincerely,

Vicky Farrow

Vicky Farrow, Proprietor
Amista Vineyards
3320 Dry Creek Road
Healdsburg, CA 95448



Amista ~ making friends

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County of Sonoma Agenda Item Summary Report

Clerk of the Board
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Agenda Item Number: 10

(This Section for use by Clerk of the Board Only.)

To: Board of Supervisors

Board Agenda Date: October 11, 2016

Vote Requirement: Majority

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit and Resource Management

Staff Name and Phone Number:

Jennifer Barrett 565-2336
Dean Parsons 565-1948

Supervisory District(s):

All

Title: Winery Events Study Session Report

Recommended Actions:

1. Receive a report on the results of the winery events study session, adopt a limited Resolution of Intention for development of specific code amendments, and direct staff to develop standards and siting criteria for areas of local concentration, to be adopted either as guidelines or code amendments.
2. Approve the use of contingency funds in the amount of \$68,272 for the County Counsel's Office for legal review of code amendments and development and operational guidelines.

Executive Summary:

On July 12, 2016, the Board held a study session on Winery Events to consider key issues and policy options that could reduce the potential for neighborhood conflicts and provide more certainty to the permitting process. The Board discussed the policy options, and directed staff to return with a summary of the Board's comments and a revised Resolution of Intention.

Staff requests that the Board consider the revised Resolution of Intention limited to code amendments to define events and food service, allow tasting rooms in the Industrial Park zone where processing is sited, and require cultural event permits for industry wide events. Staff would also bring policy options for enhanced code compliance. As requested by some Board members, staff will develop guidelines for winery events that would apply only to specific geographical areas (West Dry Creek, Westside Road and Sonoma Valley).

BOARD COMMENTS

Code Compliance

At the July 12, 2016, meeting, the Board expressed a desire to ensure compliance with existing code, given the difficulty of a “one size fits all” approach in our geographically diverse County. The Board identified new tools to facilitate enforcement and compliance, such as an administrative citation program, third party staff to respond to night and weekend complaints, designation of on-site contacts to respond to complaints, and a progressive discipline (or “three strikes”) approach to use permit modification or revocation. The Board has adopted similar measures to this end in the vacation rental program. Some members of the Board also expressed interest in a Napa County-style auditing and fee program.

Code Amendments

The Board recognized the need to clarify the definition of events; giving vintners and the public a clearer idea of what constitutes an event and food service is good policy, and enables both compliance and enforcement efforts. A countywide definition would not change how events are defined in approved use permits, but would apply to new use permit applications. Other proposed code amendments would require cultural event permits for industry-wide events to better coordinate their occurrence in the public right-of-way with triathlon, cycling and running events. The Board also expressed support for a code amendment to allow tasting rooms and events in Industrial Park zones where facilities already provide processing.

Development and Operational Guidelines

Some Board members expressed interest in developing standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, potentially including Sonoma Valley, Dry Creek Valley and Westside Road. Two Board members expressed concern that a singular approach would not be sensitive to local needs, and observed that the use permit process tends to ferret out issues based on the circumstances of each case. In order to address areas of local concentration without applying a singular approach to the entire County, Staff could develop siting criteria and standards for those areas only addressing, among other things, the following:

- Minimum parcel size;
- Minimum site area for outdoor events;
- Graduated thresholds (event size/lot size);
- Amplified sound;
- Setbacks for noise;
- Complaint 24/7 contacts;
- Parking management;
- Peak hour limitations;
- Local fruit for custom crush; and
- Incentivizing local foods/produce in tasting rooms.

The Board directed staff to return with options to adopt these types of standards either as part of the zoning code or as separate guidelines. Staff would work through the advisory bodies for the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council and the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission to develop the criteria and standards.

NEXT STEPS

Once the Board adopts the recommended Resolution of Intention, staff will complete the policy analysis, including the Traffic and Noise Studies that are underway. Staff will prepare a recommended draft ordinance that will go to the Planning Commission for consideration and a public hearing. Government Code Section 65855 requires that the Board receive a written recommendation from the Planning Commission on zoning code amendments before Board consideration. Sonoma County Code Section 26-96-010 states that zoning code amendments may be initiated by a resolution of intention by the Board or Planning Commission.

Prior Board Actions:

July 12, 2016 – Board Study Session

December 9, 2014 – Approve the Comprehensive Planning Work Plan

September 10, 1996 – Adopt resolution of intention to allow limited food service

March 9, 1993 – Adopt Ordinance updating Zoning Code to reflect new policies for agricultural promotion

March 23, 1989 – Adopts General Plan including new Agricultural Resources Element

Strategic Plan Alignment Goal 2: Economic and Environmental Stewardship

Agricultural promotional activities and events are considered essential to the economic viability of the wine industry. These activities can also impact neighborhoods as well as agricultural operations and create potential conflicts with incompatible uses. The goal of existing General Plan policies is to balance these competing interests and preserve agricultural lands while maintaining rural character of the area.

Fiscal Summary - FY 16-17

Expenditures		Funding Source(s)	
Budgeted Amount	\$ 96,510	County General Fund	\$ 96,510
Add Appropriations Req'd.	\$ 68,272	State/Federal	\$
	\$	Fees/Other	\$
	\$	Use of Fund Balance	\$
	\$	Contingencies	\$ 68,272
	\$		\$
Total Expenditure	\$ 164,782	Total Sources	\$ 164,782

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts (If Required):

PRMD planning staff hours for this effort were estimated at \$96,510 in the approved Winery Events Work Plan and are included in the approved budget for FY16/17.

Additional legal review by County Counsel is required and is estimated at \$68,272 for FY 16/17. This adjustment would be made at second quarter consolidated budget adjustments.

Staffing Impacts			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A – I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):			
Attachments:			
Draft Board of Supervisors Resolution of Intention			
Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:			



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: October 11, 2016

Item Number: _____
Resolution Number: 16- _____

ORD16-0001 Jennifer Barrett

☐ 4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of Intention of the Board of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Directing Staff To Initiate Zoning Code Amendments To Address Key Issues Associated With Winery Events And Promotional Activities, and To Develop Siting Criteria and Standards for Areas of Local Concentration

Whereas, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element allows for the sale and promotion of agricultural products grown or processed in the County, including promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production; and

Whereas, the General Plan Agricultural Resources Element contains a number of policies relating to the definition and limitations for agricultural promotional events; and

Whereas, General Plan Policies AR-6f and AR-6g state that local concentrations of visitor serving and recreational uses can be detrimental to the primary use of the land for production of food, fiber and plant materials and may constitute grounds for denial of such uses. Detrimental concentration can be caused by the following factors: road access conflicts, negative impacts to neighboring wells, and rural character; and

Whereas, General Plan Policy AR-6g calls for the Board to “define in the Development Code compatible visitor serving uses such as tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events which support and are incidental to local agricultural production, and define their permissible sizes and intensities”; and

Whereas, in 2014 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Work Plan for Comprehensive Planning that included development of guidelines, policies, and implementation programs addressing agricultural promotional events and potential overconcentration in areas including Sonoma Valley and West Dry Creek/ Westside Road; and

Whereas, the PRMD Director formed a Winery Working Group of County stakeholders to provide input and guidance on potential regulation of promotional event activities at wineries and tasting rooms and policies to address areas of concentration. The Working Group was comprised of community volunteers, including representatives from the wine industry, grape growers and neighborhood groups. The Working Group met over a period of six months and a number of issues and concerns emerged from their meetings, including: 1) business need for direct marketing activities; 2) neighborhood compatibility; 3) potential impacts related to noise, traffic, dust and water supplies; 4) commercialization of agricultural lands and concentration; and 5) maintaining rural agricultural character; and

Whereas, following the Working Group meetings, staff conducted a public workshop attended by an estimated 500 people and received written comments from various groups. Staff reviewed regulations from other counties, completed an audit of use permits issued to date, updated the winery database and contracted with qualified traffic and noise consultants to assist with the analysis. The traffic and noise reports are currently in progress.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Supervisors hereby directs staff to prepare a draft ordinance amending the County Zoning Code for consideration by the Planning Commission and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to clarify the definition of events and food service, require cultural event permits for industry-wide events, and allow tasting rooms and events in Industrial Park zones where facilities already provide processing. The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines.

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:	Zane:	Gore:	Carrillo:
Ayes:	Noes:	Absent:		Abstain:

So Ordered.

From: [Brian Oh](#)
To: [Hannah Spencer](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Scott Orr](#)
Subject: FW: Feb. 17 Winery Events Ordinance hearing
Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 2:04:02 PM
Attachments: [Winery Events- CAFF 7-14-21.pdf](#)
[Winery Events- CAFF 5-28-21.pdf](#)

From: Greg Carr <Greg.Carr@sonoma-county.org>
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 1:58 PM
To: Brian Oh <Brian.Oh@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Fw: Feb. 17 Winery Events Ordinance hearing

From: Wendy Krupnick <wlk@sonic.net>
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 1:53 PM
To: Greg Carr; Pat Gilardi; Jacquelynne Ocana; Shaun McCaffery; Eric Koenigshofer
Subject: Feb. 17 Winery Events Ordinance hearing


Dear Planning Commissioners,

The Sonoma County chapter of Community Alliance with Family Farmers, (CAFF), is re-submitting two comment letters sent last year regarding the proposed Winery Events Ordinance. We have submitted a number of comment letters over the six years the County has acknowledged the problems associated with winery events and need for such an ordinance. We have been dismayed that during this time events at wineries have continued and more permits for more wineries with events have been approved, often exacerbating these widely acknowledged problems.

As several of you had not received our comment letters last year, they are attached here. We hope that the Commission will move forward with a strong, clear and enforceable ordinance that will address the current problems and prevent such problems in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our views,
Wendy Krupnick
Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County



July 14, 2021

To: Sonoma County Planning Commission
Georgia McDaniel, Planner

cc: Tennis Wick, Director Permit Sonoma

Supervisors Lynda Hopkins, Chair; Susan Gorin, David Rabbitt, Chris Coursey, James Gore

Re: Draft Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Planning Commissioners and Ms. McDaniel,

Community Alliance with Family Farmers Sonoma County has reviewed the chart prepared by Planning staff comparing proposed definitions and standards for inclusion in the Winery Events ordinance. We are submitting the following recommendations for these definitions and standards. In addition, there are aspects of this issue which have been called for by the public that are not addressed in this chart as well as some key points we have submitted in earlier letters that we would like to emphasize again.

Key points:

- It is imperative for future food security, for carbon and water capture, and to preserve the agricultural economy and character of Sonoma County that all land zoned for agriculture be protected for agricultural production, and that this protection must guide all regulations for uses in these zones.
- All activities *except for* drop-in and by-appointment sales and tastings, tours during tasting room hours for individuals or small groups, and invitation-only business meetings specifically focused on the wine industry with less than 25 attendees should be classified as “events.”
- Size of winery, tasting room, parking lots and other visitor serving areas must be *proportionate* to winery production capacity, which must be based on wine grape production acreage on site or sites owned within the immediate proximity.
- The County should encourage agricultural diversification and allow a variety of farm-produced products to be sold on-site. The ordinance should have clear definitions and be enforceable.
- In order to provide clarity for all, to be enforceable and prevent more areas of over-concentration, the Ordinance, with definitions and standards, should apply county-wide.
- Monitoring and enforcement are a critical part of ordinance and must be included in the Ordinance.

Recommendations from Permit Sonoma Chart:

Definitions:



Commercial kitchens - Explicitly not allowed in ag zones so no definition associated with a winery in an ag zone is appropriate.

Winery - May not include commercial kitchen. Use Sonoma Valley definition but substitute "fruit" for "grapes". (Cideries are technically wineries and subject to same regs).

Winery events - Use County definition

Ag Promo events - Use County definition

Industry-wide events - Use Sonoma Valley definition

Sales activities - Use Public Sales part of Dry Creek definition. Pick up parties, winemaker dinners, etc. **are events**, not regular activities.

Wine trade activities - Must be limited to by invitation only meetings and seminars. Can be earlier than tasting room hours but no later than 5:00.

Wine trade event - Any parties or celebrations, or gatherings that happen after 5:00 are events and must be included as such in the Use permit.

Standards:

Sizing of activities/events & max # of days - Use combination of County and Sonoma Valley. Add limitation based on road access and proximity to main arteries and cities to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled by visitors and staff.

Hours of operation - Use Sonoma Valley and add clarification that regular wine trade activities end at 5:00.

On-site parking - Use County standard and add that capacity for visitors must be tied to volume of on-site agricultural production as well as road accessibility and water availability. No land may be taken out of potential production for parking or other visitor accommodations.

Food service - Use Sonoma Valley standard but allow daytime on-site food prep for wine and food tastings in catering kitchen.

Traffic management - Use Sonoma Valley standard but add accounting for traffic from neighboring wineries and other event centers.

Access - Use Sonoma Valley standards.

Concentration - Enforce GP AR-5g with **maximum** of 2 wineries per half mile and apply county-wide to prevent new areas of over-concentration. Permit Sonoma should research additional methods of preventing more areas of over-concentration.



Event Proposal - Use Sonoma Valley standard.

Maximum size for Tasting Associated areas - Use Sonoma Valley and see On-site parking, above.

Maximum Winery Size - Use Sonoma Valley standard

Minimum Parcel Size - Use Sonoma Valley standard

Water use - Zero net increase in water use for visitor services must be required.

Source of wine grapes - At least 75% of fruit processed should be grown **on site or in the immediate vicinity**. (Not appropriate to be trucking in and processing fruit from other parts of the county. This is an industrial use and such facilities should be in industrial zones.)

As we have previously noted, although many farmers and ranchers welcome the opportunity to host the public and educate them about their products and practices, the business of hospitality is not the same as the business of agriculture. We believe the multiple benefits of preserving agricultural lands for agricultural production are essential for the long-term health of our society, our economy and our planet.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Krupnick, Vice president, CAFF Sonoma County



May 28, 2021

To: Sonoma County Planning Commission
Georgia McDaniel, Planner

cc: Tennis Wick, Director Permit Sonoma

Supervisors Lynda Hopkins, Chair; Susan Gorin, David Rabbitt, Chris Coursey, James Gore,

Re: Draft Winery Events Ordinance

Dear Sonoma County Planning Commissioners and Ms. McDaniel,

The Sonoma County chapter of Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) appreciates the work Permit Sonoma staff has done to draft the long-awaited and much-needed Winery Events Ordinance. While we were pleased with several of the provisions included in the Draft Ordinance, we feel that the current draft proposal has many inconsistencies and loopholes so some modifications will be required to achieve the intended goals of protecting the primacy of agricultural production on agricultural lands, providing clarity on standards for visitor services to the wine industry, and limiting impacts to rural roads and neighborhoods.

We agree with the detailed comments and suggested changes submitted by Preserve Rural Sonoma County this week. In addition, we would like to bring attention to the following issues and proposed solutions with sections of the Draft Ordinance referenced where applicable:

1. In defining terms and phrases for Winery Standards, it is important to clarify that the definitions are specific to wine and wineries so they are not confused with other types of agricultural events or services. Specifically, the term "Agricultural Promotional Events" should be changed to "Wine Promotional Events" (*Section D-7*), "Industry-Wide Events" should be changed to "Industry-Wide Wine Promotion Events" (*Section D-8*), and "Sales Activities" should be changed to "Wine Sales Activities" (*Section D-11*).
2. The Draft Ordinance defines "Winery Visitor Serving Activities" as being "part of normal winery and tasting room business operations." Parties where full meals are served and where gatherings after normal tasting room hours are not part of normal tasting room business, so must be considered as events. This includes pick-up parties, harvest parties, and Wine Trade parties. (*Section E*)
3. The County should encourage agricultural diversification and allow a variety of farm-produced products to be sold on-site. Off-site consumption of local food and food products, eg., olive oil, table olives, canned salsa, jam, and applesauce, sold at a tasting room should be allowed. (*Section E-7*)
4. The ordinance should have clear definitions and be enforceable. Specifically, how will "local food and food products" be defined and enforced? (*Section E-7*)



5. In order to provide clarity for all, and to be enforceable, there should be mention in the Ordinance of the presence and role of the Area Guidelines that are proposed for the areas of the County that are considered to be "over-concentrated". Definitions and criteria should be provided regarding what an "over-concentrated" area is, as well as information on accessing proposed Area Guidelines. There should be indication regarding how an area experiencing accelerated development in the future can be designated as "over-concentrated" and the procedure for doing that. Current proposed Area Guidelines seem to be an overly complex yet ineffective and unfair layer of bureaucracy. **We recommend that the most restrictive provisions of the Area Guidelines should be incorporated into the Ordinance, and should apply county-wide.**
6. The Ordinance should include explicit provisions to identify, and if possible prevent, new areas of concentration.
7. Any new winery proposal should include an analysis of its effect on the cumulative impacts of wineries in the region, and must be evaluated for water availability and Vehicle Miles Traveled by both staff and visitors.
8. Climate considerations must be included in all ordinances if the County is to be seen as serious about meeting stated State and local climate goals.
9. The size of tasting room and other visitor serving areas must be proportionate to winery production capacity, which itself must be based on wine grape production acreage on site or sites owned within a designated proximity. The ordinance should establish a maximum site area devoted to tasting room and visitor serving uses to ensure the use is incidental to agriculture. We recommend that only one tasting room be allowed per site in agricultural zoned lands, and that tasting rooms be permitted only where grape growing and processing takes place,
10. The size of the processing areas the number of custom crush operations in agricultural zones should be required to be proportionate to vineyard production,
11. The need for monitoring and enforcement has been repeatedly called for in public comment and are critical to the effectiveness of the Ordinance, yet they appear to be missing from the draft. Our earlier recommendations on this are included below:
 - Establish an annual monitoring and educational program to periodically review use permits.
 - Require events to be calendared at the beginning of each year, and require annual reports including quarterly information.
 - Require that the applicant hire staff or contract for services to respond to complaints of event activities or other infractions (i.e. parking/noise) including on nights and weekends.
 - Increase fines and penalties for unpermitted event activities.
 - Place a time limit for existing wineries which have been hosting events without a use permit to obtain use permits and impose significant fines on any that do not meet that



deadline. Include the cumulative impacts of existing and “historic” wineries and/or their events in mitigations and in the analysis of cumulative impacts over time

- Require fees for permits that cover administration and monitoring of programs, including traffic/road impact fees.
- Develop and execute an improved system for notifying local area residents of permit applications.

As we have previously noted, although many farmers and ranchers welcome the opportunity to host the public and educate them about their products and practices, the business of hospitality is not the same as the business of agriculture. We believe the multiple benefits of preserving agricultural lands for agricultural production are essential for the long-term health of our society, our economy and our planet, and we strongly urge that the demands of the hospitality industry not be allowed to interfere with the protection of those benefits in Sonoma County.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Krupnick, Vice President, CAFF Sonoma County

From: [Judith Olney](#)
To: greg99pole@gmail.com; [Pat Gilardi](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#)
Cc: [Brian Oh](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Input - Feb 17 Planning Commission Briefing
Date: Tuesday, February 15, 2022 11:46:46 AM
Attachments: [2-17-22_Olney_Winery_Ordinance.pdf](#)

February 15, 2022

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Judith Olney – long-time community advocate (pdf Attached)

RE: Feb 17, 2022 Winery Event Ordinance Briefing

I am submitting this letter for the benefit of our Planning Commissioners who may not have the bandwidth to review the decade-long administrative record for the draft Winery Event Ordinance. Since 2011, I have proactively represented community interests as a board member for the Dry Creek Valley Association and Westside Community Association, as well as a co-Chair of Preserve Rural Sonoma County.

Point 1: I question the wisdom of adopting an Ordinance and/or associated Guidelines that neither addresses the current economic challenges of the wine industry, nor protects the legal rights of surrounding land owners. Sadly, for those of us who have worked for over a decade on the hospitality-industry impact issue, the draft Ordinance does little to uphold the goals of our General Plan to “...protect agricultural land and preserve rural character.”

A set of policies, standards and definitions that both transfers the external costs of winery events to surrounding properties and waives the application/environmental analyses requirements/costs to winery/event center Applicants places additional tax burdens on residential taxpayers while diminishing the value of their properties.

Granted, both Sonoma County’s wine and cannabis industries currently are facing significant economic challenges and County officials are looking for ways to bolster these industries. This “solution” does not address the root causes of over-supply and out of county competition; thus, will not result in a robust tourism economy.

Out of date assumptions, internally-inconsistent, unenforceable definitions and loop-holes that one can drive a truck through; however, will accelerate the decline of Sonoma County’s competitive advantage. Tourists come here, versus other wine destinations, because we are rural, with beautiful open space and agricultural landscapes– when we damage these qualities, Sonoma County will have killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

My second point is that there are many new Planning Commissioners who may not have had adequate time to research the changes in Sonoma County’s economic foundation. And, recent Planning Commission recommendations reinforce the concern that new commissioners are not fully briefed on the policies, standards and protections in our General Plan and Zoning Code.

Adopting Ordinances that allow industry self-regulation may ultimately do more economic harm than good.

History: In 2011, the issues related to detrimental concentration and impacts of winery events were brought to the attention of County officials by the Dry Creek Valley Association. In 2012, the Westside Community

Association and VOTMA, Sonoma Valley joined in; we wrote a joint letter to the County, and presented at Planning Commission workshops. Presentations were made to the Board of Supervisors in 2013 and 2014, and in 2015, the Winery Event Ordinance Stakeholder Group was funded.

At the conclusion of this expensive public process, wine industry representatives stated they did not endorse the findings from studies and benchmarking, and would continue to advocate directly with the Supervisors. The wine industry's position document proposed unenforceable definitions and limited "events" to weddings and concerts, and industry-wide events – hospitality uses that are not "agricultural promotional uses" as defined in the General Plan.

Although, County staff defined Areas of Concentration and completed traffic studies for Sonoma Valley, a partial study for Dry Creek and a study to clarify noise standards, the County continued to approve new wineries and event centers.

For over a decade, Community Groups and coalitions, such as Preserve Rural Sonoma County, prepared studies showing that the high rate of new wineries and event center approvals was promoting destructive competition within the Sonoma County wine market. The "ARMS race" to attract wine club members to one's winery and away from other local wineries, compounded by the costs of events, shrunk everyone's bottom line. (per Silicon Valley Bank, State of the Wine Industry Report 2015-16)

Meanwhile, distracted tourism and wine industry planners did not focus on the changes necessary to compete in the emerging global market, not to mention, the impacts of changes in demographics that showed a decline in wine sales. (Silicon Valley Bank, State of the Wine Industry Report 2021-22)

Early public hearings and drafts of the Ordinance represented a balanced view with enforceable definitions and standards. However, this is not true of the current draft Ordinance even though the 2021 public process validated many of the community advocates long-standing points. And, public processes feel disingenuous when wine industry representatives continue to assert that they are by-passing public discourse and compromise to exclusively deal directly with Supervisors.

County staff has turned over a few times and only one Planning Commissioner has experienced the full process. In fact the draft Ordinance is so out of date that the State Fire Safe Road Regulations changed after 2015; thus, it should be edited to require access roads of 20 feet – the newer State standard - not the 18 feet as specified in the draft Ordinance.

Another major concern with the process is that our new Planning Commissioners are not upholding the environmental analyses designed to protect surrounding property owners. The General Plan Noise Element has clear requirements for technical noise analyses at all wineries and event centers, and the technical studies completed for the draft Winery Event Ordinance clarified these standards. Despite these requirements, in December 2021, the Commissioners approved outdoor amplified music for a Use Permit Modification without any required supporting noise analyses – only the experienced Planning Commissioner dissented.

It's seven (7) years past the official start of this process. In June, 2021 and February, 2022, the draft Winery Event Ordinance has resurfaced. It's doubtful that the one remaining commissioner even remembers positions taken over six (6) months ago, which is immaterial as the other Planning Commissioners did not sit for the June hearing.

More importantly, over the past seven years tourism has changed in numerous ways. No one could have predicted COVID and the switch to on-line wine marketing and the preference for spirits. In 2021-22, Silicon Valley Bank reported,

"We predicted there would be a reopening celebration, and it turns out we were correct," he said. "But the reopening celebration that took place in 2021 didn't include the wine industry."

Sonoma County pays significant tax revenue to the Tourism Board for policy and economic strategy advice – what is our return on this investment?

The pre-pandemic proliferation of competing wine areas and the consequent shrinking California's market share was a known factor. Wildfire impacts have been evident since 2017. And, for several years now, Silicon Valley Bank's predictions for future growth in the wine segment – based on trends in demographics and consumer values – have been strong warnings of declining sales.

Future predictions indicate strategic economic planning – not another marketing campaign - is needed now: Per the enclosed February 8, 2022 New York Times article titled, **The Wine Business Sees a Problem: Millennials Aren't Drinking Enough**, that summarizes the annual State of the Wine Industry Report, wine sales are expected to decline. And, grape growing and wine making methods must change to suit millennial values; however, those types of farming and processing changes take time. And, the time to start was several years ago.

To quote the conclusion of the article,

... “If, as Mr. McMillan argues, younger consumers are truly concerned with social justice and environmental issues, what will an anodyne marketing campaign achieve?”

In my little corner of the wine world, I see younger people drawn to natural wines and to traditional styles. These sorts of wines meet many of the concerns that Mr. McMillan expressed, and have demonstrated their appeal.

The winemakers do that by showing their concern with the environment by farming conscientiously, sticking with traditional ingredients and processes and, increasingly, I hope, by addressing social justice and equity issues that are as apparent in natural wine as anywhere else.

It's not just a question of perception, it's a matter of action, of demonstrating a commitment to change and to making the effort.”

The new economic reality – balanced by the protections within our General Plan and a Zoning Code that requires all hospitality and other uses to be specified in a Use Permit or Use Permit Modification - is the context within which the Planning Commissioners should review the draft Winery Event Ordinance on February 17, 2022. Perhaps this draft Ordinance is not the best course of action for a healthy long-term economy.

Preparing for February 17th: The public was led to believe that the June 2021 Planning Commission hearing was closed; although wine industry representatives submitted information after that date.

We only recently learned that the Staff will brief the Commission as the majority of the members have limited experience in implementing the General Plan and Zoning Code protections.

Instead of reiterating out of date assumptions about “on-site direct to consumer sales” that will do little to bolster wine industry profits while proposing unenforceable definitions and standards that continue to harm adjacent property owners, perhaps the briefing should include data, conclusions and advice provided by Silicon Valley Bank from 2015 to the present.

In addition, the Commissioners should be briefed on the economic realities of cannabis over-supply and the longer-term implications for County costs versus tax revenue – factors that will decide Sonoma County's economic future.

Cannabis economic realities were discussed by the Humboldt County Supervisors who just slashed cannabis

industry taxes by 85% - reducing planned tax revenue from this sector from an expected \$14-20M to a mere \$2M. Who will cover the short-fall and the future costs of cleaning up abandoned cannabis operations? Undoubtedly, other County taxpayers.

Sonoma County growers, especially those in the PRP program, share similar attributes with Humboldt growers. Humboldt Supervisor Wilson concluded:

“The main factor in the local market collapse is out-of-county competitors who are “growing a plant in a more efficient and less costly way and delivering it to the market at a much lower price than the methodology that was created in Humboldt to grow cannabis under prohibition.”

Perhaps the Commissioners should read [this story from CalMatters](#), published in January 2022, which dispels the myth of the small family cannabis farmer and quotes Nicole Elliott, director of the California Department of Cannabis Control:

“It is an oversimplification to say that tax reduction will solve all of the industry’s problems. It’s just a vast oversimplification of the number of variables that impact the health of the legal market and that support or foster illegal activity. It is not tax alone.”

Bottom Line: Subsidizing the wine and cannabis industries by proposing reduced permit fees or exempting Applicants from conducting State-required environmental analyses is not a long-term strategy. The public has not been provided information as to whether these industries are no longer covering the County’s current costs of administering required land use, zoning and enforcement programs.

Should other taxpayers be burdened with covering current County costs plus the future costs of unstudied impacts and/or the costs of cleaning up intensely developed parcels in remote areas when the normal economic cycle bankrupts’ certain operators?

The taxpayers rely on County officials to use taxpayer money wisely and to protect public health and safety. Our tourism economy has been severely impacted by travel bans, wildfire fears, external competition and classic market forces leading to over-supply and reduced prices.

The root cause of our tourism industry’s current troubles ranges from factors related to basic economic supply and demand cycles to larger structural issues. Adopting an Ordinance with unenforceable definitions and loopholes that basically require impacted, adjacent neighbors (which may be a resident, a grape grower or another winery whose high-end buyer’s wine tasting is impacted by adjacent outdoor amplified music) to check attendee business cards in order to determine compliance, will not meet the objectives set in our General Plan, the protections in our Zoning Code requiring Use Permit modifications, or help restore a robust economy.

With an Opinion, Judith Olney, private citizen. 3300 Westside Road, Healdsburg

2 Enclosures – Recent articles in New York Times and North Bay Business Journal

1 Link – CalMatters January 31, 2022 article on Cannabis economic issues

Enclosure 1 THE POUR – NEW YORK TIMES - FEB 8, 2022

The Wine Business Sees a Problem: Millennials Aren’t Drinking Enough

As baby boomers retire and buy less wine, producers need new ways to tempt a White Claw generation back from other alcoholic drinks, according to a new report.

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Credit...Cat O'Neil



By [Eric Asimov](#)

Published Feb. 7, 2022Updated Feb. 8, 2022

The American wine industry believes it has a problem: millennials.

More specifically, it's the fact that aging baby boomers — currently the prime market for wine

— are nearing retirement age, the time of life when consumerism typically declines.

Millennials, the generation that began to come of age after the turn of the century, have given no indication that they are poised to step in. They buy much less wine than boomers, and the wine industry has not done enough to entice them to become regular consumers.

In his annual [State of the U.S. Wine Industry report](#), presented last month, Rob McMillan, an executive vice president of Silicon Valley Bank in Santa Clara, Calif., and a longtime analyst of the American wine market, issued a forceful warning that a day of reckoning was coming.

“In prior reports, we noted that the falling interest in wine among younger consumers, coupled with the encroaching retirement and decreasing wine consumption of baby boomers, poses a primary threat to the business,” Mr. McMillan said. “That issue has yet to be addressed or solved, and the negative consequences are increasingly evident.”

Sales of American wine could plummet by 20 percent in the next decade, he said. It’s not exactly clear what the industry can do to change this dynamic. As the father of two millennial sons, I am something of an expert on being unable to persuade millennials to do as I suggest. But Mr. McMillan, who has analyzed the wine industry for decades, has more than a few ideas for an effective strategy.

First, some background: In this discussion it may seem as if Generation X, the generation between the boomers and the millennials, has been overlooked.

This group is smaller than both the baby boomers, the huge population born roughly from 1946 to 1964, and the millennials, born from 1980 to 1995.

Because of the size difference, Generation X has less buying power, although its wine-buying behavior does not seem that different from boomers’. Generation Z, born, approximately, after 1995, has too few years of legal drinking to really figure into the data.

Mr. McMillan quoted a Harris Poll of nearly 2,000 adults from November, which asked what beverage they would bring to share at a party. The choices were wine, beer, spirits, flavored malt beverages, hard seltzer or cider.

Wine was the overwhelming choice among those 65 and older. The top choice was roughly split between wine and beer for those 35 to 64, with the other options trailing in the distance. But people ages 21 to 34 were almost evenly split among five options, with cider trailing.

Wine simply is not preferred by younger people. Mr. McMillan pointed to the reopening of restaurants in 2021 after Covid-19 vaccines became available; during that period, sales of wine declined as sales of spirits rose.

“We predicted there would be a reopening celebration, and it turns out we were correct,” he said. “But the reopening celebration that took place in 2021 didn’t include the wine industry.”

The increase in competition is a real thing. When I, a late boomer, was drawn into wine, domestic beer was still almost entirely in the thrall of huge breweries with insipid products. Craft beer was not yet widely available in the United States, and spirits and cocktails were what older people drank, bought more for their alcoholic punch than for the aesthetic pleasures they might have offered. Single malt Scotch was barely a thing.

Gen Xers and millennials have grown up in an entirely different world. Beers now come from hundreds of small breweries in dozens of historic and newly created styles. Cocktail-making has become an esteemed craft in which every ingredient counts, and high-end spirits producers are all over, working in every style.

This rising interest in the culture and beauty of ingredients isn't restricted to just alcoholic beverages: Chocolate, olive oil and honey, just to name a few, have been marketed according to their provenance and quality to a growing audience of people who appreciate such things.

Millennials grew up in a world that has been far more encouraging of connoisseurship than when boomers were young. Social media has given everybody the opportunity to exercise their critical voices, for better or worse. Millennials are a more discerning generation, at a younger age, than baby boomers were.

But as Mr. McMillan of Silicon Valley Bank points out, millennials have less disposable income than their parents and more economic fears. They are often burdened by student debt, have fewer middle-class job opportunities and cannot assume they will ever be able to afford real estate.

That's a primary reason that millennials have gravitated to beer and spirits rather than wine. The difference between a mass-market brew and a world-class beer is just a few dollars. A really good cocktail at a restaurant might cost the same as a glass of mediocre wine.

By comparison, good wine is more expensive than beer or spirits of comparable quality, and [benchmark wines are often shockingly expensive](#). Partly, this is because wine costs far more today, relatively speaking, than it did in the 1980s and '90s, as Mr. McMillan acknowledges.

"Premium wine was far less expensive in the mid-90s, even on an inflation-adjusted basis," he said.

At the same time, sales of the least expensive wines, those under \$9 a bottle, have been shrinking, while sales of wine priced above \$15 have been rising. The industry calls this move toward more expensive bottles "premiumization." Although the state-of-the-industry report focuses on the United States, this phenomenon has occurred all over the world as people choose to drink less wine but of better quality.

These are structural issues, but Mr. McMillan also noted the shortcomings of the wine industry in appealing to younger consumers. First, it has failed to recognize the changing demographics that millennials represent.

"While only 28 percent of the boomer population is nonwhite, 45 percent of the millennial population — and almost half of Gen Z — is nonwhite," he said.

Without question, the wine industry has been slow to adapt. After the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and the racial reckoning that followed, the wine industry, or rather a small part of it, began to make some effort to diversify its appeal and its work force. But the experiences of [Black wine professionals](#) and [Black consumers](#) show how far the industry has to go to make it a more welcoming, inclusive place.

Mr. McMillan also asserted that millennial consumers are more concerned with social justice

and with health and environmental issues, including climate change. “A brand’s social values are increasingly connected to a consumer’s decision to purchase particular products, including wine,” he said.

Among his recommendations, he suggests that producers list their ingredients and offer nutritional data, like calories per serving, and that they be clear about their social values, their efforts to address environmental concerns and their strategies for lowering their carbon footprints.

“The strange reality is that it would be easy to start talking about wine in an evolved way and to reference the many things that are already a part of what we do to produce wine, and that would resonate with younger consumers,” Mr. McMillan said. “Yet as an industry we are not doing it.”

This is where his report seems problematical. The American wine industry is by no means united in supporting social-justice causes or meaningfully diversifying its work force. It has no industrywide plan for combating climate change, reducing chemical farming or cutting its carbon footprint. It has fought tooth and nail to avoid listing ingredients and nutritional data.

The report suggests that a marketing campaign might be the answer, something along the lines of the [“Got Milk?”](#) promotion that began in the 1990s.

These sorts of slogans are likely to be bland and inoffensive, as they must represent a wide range of producers with wildly differing points of view. I don’t know much about marketing, but it strikes me that actual change in the industry would go a lot further in appealing to young people than targeting them with a public-relations campaign.

That means attacking complicated, thorny issues with solutions that are just as divisive in the wine industry as they are in the country as a whole.

If, as Mr. McMillan argues, younger consumers are truly concerned with social justice and environmental issues, what will an anodyne marketing campaign achieve?

In my little corner of the wine world, I see younger people drawn to natural wines and to traditional styles. These sorts of wines meet many of the concerns that Mr. McMillan expressed, and have demonstrated their appeal.

The winemakers do that by showing their concern with the environment by farming conscientiously, sticking with traditional ingredients and processes and, increasingly, I hope, by addressing social justice and equity issues that are as apparent in natural wine as anywhere else.

It’s not just a question of perception, it’s a matter of action, of demonstrating a commitment to change and to making the effort. Slogans will not paper over a failure to do that.

END

Meanwhile in Sonoma County, its Planning Commission is set to revisit [the draft winery events ordinance](#) at a virtual meeting Feb. 17. The county and industry advocates have been going back and forth on the matter for six years, with long delays after the wildfires and during the pandemic.

One of the key changes that has coming in the most recent draft of the ordinance is defining “business activities” separately from “events,” according to Michael Haney, executive director of trade group Sonoma County Vintners.

“This is not about big parties,” Haney said. “We tell people that vineyards they see when driving around are not landscaping. That’s how we feed our families. Our wine community says what we need is a clear set of definitions.”

One of the key arguments the trade group has made is that hosting wholesaler and retailer representatives at the winery for a lunch or dinner and having consumers come to the property to pick up wine is notably different for the resilience of agribusiness from holding weddings, concerts and related events.

“Across the nation with wholesalers there is a massive constriction, so many smaller wineries if they want a distributor in another state they can’t get them,” Haney said. “That’s why marketing directly to the consumer is so vital. If you want to hold a charity event or political fundraiser at the winery, that is another matter.”

However, some aren’t sold on this change in definitions. Preserve Rural Sonoma County is reiterating what it told the Planning Commission when the draft ordinance was last year, in June 2021.

“We want to clarify what has been the county position for the past 15 years, that parties are events,” said Marc Bommersbach, a group member, wine grape grower and part of the Westside Community Association. “Trade meetings are fine, but if they are after hours and serving foods, it is the same impact, regardless if it’s the trade or the public. A trade meeting during day with winetasting is fine, but when it turns into an event, it needs to be addressed.”

The group views wine club pick-ups, harvest parties and similar activities as events.

“Creating carve-outs for certain types of events that are not subject to the limitations in use permits, particularly when there is little if any practical difference in impacts between such types of events, will create a compliance nightmare,” the group wrote to the Planning Commission last year.

The organization also wants the county to specify where wineries can be located, perhaps tailored to the concentration of vintners in a given area: 20-acre minimum parcel size, 18-foot minimum access road width, no outdoor amplified sound and a density standard of no more than two facilities in a half-mile.

END

February 15, 2022

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Judith Olney – long-time environmental advocate

RE: Feb 17, 2022 Winery Event Ordinance Briefing

I am submitting this letter for the benefit of our Planning Commissioners who may not have the band width to review the decade-long administrative record for the draft Winery Event Ordinance. Since 2011, I have proactively represented community interests as a board member for the Dry Creek Valley Association and Westside Community Association, as well as a co-Chair of Preserve Rural Sonoma County.

Point 1: I question the wisdom of adopting an Ordinance and/or associated Guidelines that neither addresses the current economic challenges of the wine industry, nor protects the legal rights of surrounding land owners. Sadly, for those of us who have worked for over a decade on the hospitality-industry impact issue, the draft Ordinance does little to uphold the goals of our General Plan to “...protect agricultural land and preserve rural character.”

A set of policies, standards and definitions that both transfers the external costs of winery events to surrounding properties and waives the application/environmental analyses requirements/costs to winery/ event center Applicants places additional tax burdens on residential taxpayers while diminishing the value of their properties.

Granted, both Sonoma County’s wine and cannabis industries currently are facing significant economic challenges and County officials are looking for ways to bolster these industries. This “solution” does not address the root causes of over-supply and out of county competition; thus, will not result in a robust tourism economy.

Out of date assumptions, internally-inconsistent, unenforceable definitions and loop-holes that one can drive a truck through; however, will accelerate the decline of Sonoma County’s competitive advantage. Tourists come here, versus other wine destinations, because we are rural, with beautiful open space and agricultural landscapes– when we damage these qualities, Sonoma County will have killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

My second point is that there are many new Planning Commissioners who may not have had adequate time to research the changes in Sonoma County’s economic foundation. And, recent Planning Commission recommendations reinforce the concern that new commissioners are not fully briefed on the policies, standards and protections in our General Plan and Zoning Code.

Adopting Ordinances that allow industry self-regulation may ultimately do more economic harm than good.

History: In 2011, the issues related to detrimental concentration and impacts of winery events were brought to the attention of County officials by the Dry Creek Valley

Association. In 2012, the Westside Community Association and VOTMA, Sonoma Valley joined in; we wrote a joint letter to the County, and presented at Planning Commission workshops. Presentations were made to the Board of Supervisors in 2013 and 2014, and in 2015, the Winery Event Ordinance Stakeholder Group was funded.

At the conclusion of this expensive public process, wine industry representatives stated they did not endorse the findings from studies and benchmarking, and would continue to advocate directly with the Supervisors. The wine industry's position document proposed unenforceable definitions and limited "events" to weddings and concerts, and industry-wide events – hospitality uses that are not "agricultural promotional uses" as defined in the General Plan.

Although, County staff defined Areas of Concentration and completed traffic studies for Sonoma Valley, a partial study for Dry Creek and a study to clarify noise standards, the County continued to approve new wineries and event centers.

For over a decade, Community Groups and coalitions, such as Preserve Rural Sonoma County, prepared studies showing that the high rate of new wineries and event center approvals was promoting destructive competition within the Sonoma County wine market. The "ARMS race" to attract wine club members to one's winery and away from other local wineries, compounded by the costs of events, shrunk everyone's bottom line. (per Silicon Valley Bank, State of the Wine Industry Report 2015-16)

Meanwhile, distracted tourism and wine industry planners did not focus on the changes necessary to compete in the emerging global market, not to mention, the impacts of changes in demographics that showed a decline in wine sales. (Silicon Valley Bank, State of the Wine Industry Report 2021-22)

Early public hearings and drafts of the Ordinance represented a balanced view with enforceable definitions and standards. However, this is not true of the current draft Ordinance even though the 2021 public process validated many of the community advocates long-standing points. And, public processes feel disingenuous when wine industry representatives continue to assert that they are by-passing public discourse and compromise to exclusively deal directly with Supervisors.

County staff has turned over a few times and only one Planning Commissioner has experienced the full process. In fact the draft Ordinance is so out of date that the State Fire Safe Road Regulations changed after 2015; thus, it should be edited to require access roads of 20 feet – the newer State standard - not the 18 feet as specified in the draft Ordinance.

Another major concern with the process is that our new Planning Commissioners are not upholding the environmental analyses designed to protect surrounding property owners. The General Plan Noise Element has clear requirements for technical noise analyses at all wineries and event centers, and the technical studies completed for the draft Winery Event Ordinance clarified these standards. Despite these requirements, in

December 2021, the Commissioners approved outdoor amplified music for a Use Permit Modification without any required supporting noise analyses – only the experienced Planning Commissioner dissented.

It's seven (7) years past the official start of this process. In June, 2021 and February, 2022, the draft Winery Event Ordinance has resurfaced. It's doubtful that the one remaining commissioner even remembers positions taken over six (6) months ago, which is immaterial as the other Planning Commissioners did not sit for the June hearing.

More importantly, over the past seven years tourism has changed in numerous ways. No one could have predicted COVID and the switch to on-line wine marketing and the preference for spirits. In 2021-22, Silicon Valley Bank reported,

"We predicted there would be a reopening celebration, and it turns out we were correct," he said. "But the reopening celebration that took place in 2021 didn't include the wine industry."

Sonoma County pays significant tax revenue to the Tourism Board for policy and economic strategy advice – what is our return on this investment?

The pre-pandemic proliferation of competing wine areas and the consequent shrinking California's market share was a known factor. Wildfire impacts have been evident since 2017. And, for several years now, Silicon Valley Bank's predictions for future growth in the wine segment – based on trends in demographics and consumer values – have been strong warnings of declining sales.

Future predictions indicate strategic economic planning – not another marketing campaign - is needed now: Per the enclosed February 8, 2022 New York Times article titled, **The Wine Business Sees a Problem: Millennials Aren't Drinking Enough**, that summarizes the annual State of the Wine Industry Report, wine sales are expected to decline. And, grape growing and wine making methods must change to suit millennial values; however, those types of farming and processing changes take time. And, the time to start was several years ago.

To quote the conclusion of the article,

...“If, as Mr. McMillan argues, younger consumers are truly concerned with social justice and environmental issues, what will an anodyne marketing campaign achieve?”

In my little corner of the wine world, I see younger people drawn to natural wines and to traditional styles. These sorts of wines meet many of the concerns that Mr. McMillan expressed, and have demonstrated their appeal.

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The new economic reality – balanced by the protections within our General Plan and a Zoning Code that requires all hospitality and other uses to be specified in a Use Permit or Use Permit Modification - is the context within which the Planning Commissioners should review the draft Winery Event Ordinance on February 17, 2022. Perhaps this draft Ordinance is not the best course of action for a healthy long-term economy.

Preparing for February 17th: The public was led to believe that the June 2021 Planning Commission hearing was closed; although wine industry representatives submitted information after that date.

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Instead of reiterating out of date assumptions about “on-site direct to consumer sales” that will do little to bolster wine industry profits while proposing unenforceable definitions and standards that continue to harm adjacent property owners, perhaps the briefing should include data, conclusions and advice provided by Silicon Valley Bank from 2015 to the present.

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“It is an oversimplification to say that tax reduction will solve all of the industry’s problems. It’s just a vast oversimplification of the number of variables that impact the health of the legal market and that support or foster illegal activity. It is not tax alone.”

Bottom Line: Subsidizing the wine and cannabis industries by proposing reduced permit fees or exempting Applicants from conducting State-required environmental analyses is not a long-term strategy. The public has not been provided information as to whether these industries are no longer covering the County’s current costs of administering required land use, zoning and enforcement programs.

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Enclosure 1

THE POUR – NEW YORK TIMES

The Wine Business Sees a Problem: Millennials Aren’t Drinking Enough

As baby boomers retire and buy less wine, producers need new ways to tempt a White Claw generation back from other alcoholic drinks, according to a new report.



Credit...Cat O'Neil



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More specifically, it's the fact that aging baby boomers — currently the prime market for wine — are nearing retirement age, the time of life when consumerism typically declines.

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“The strange reality is that it would be easy to start talking about wine in an evolved way and to reference the many things that are already a part of what we do to produce wine, and that would resonate with younger consumers,” Mr. McMillan said. “Yet as an industry we are not doing it.”

This is where his report seems problematical. The American wine industry is by no means united in supporting social-justice causes or meaningfully diversifying its work force. It has no industrywide plan for combating climate change, reducing chemical farming or cutting its carbon footprint. It has fought tooth and nail to avoid listing ingredients and nutritional data.

The report suggests that a marketing campaign might be the answer, something along the lines of the [“Got Milk?”](#) promotion that began in the 1990s.

These sorts of slogans are likely to be bland and inoffensive, as they must represent a wide range of producers with wildly differing points of view. I don’t know much about marketing, but it strikes me that actual change in the industry would go a lot further in appealing to young people than targeting them with a public-relations campaign.

That means attacking complicated, thorny issues with solutions that are just as divisive in the wine industry as they are in the country as a whole.

If, as Mr. McMillan argues, younger consumers are truly concerned with social justice and environmental issues, what will an anodyne marketing campaign achieve?

In my little corner of the wine world, I see younger people drawn to natural wines and to traditional styles. These sorts of wines meet many of the concerns that Mr. McMillan expressed, and have demonstrated their appeal.

The winemakers do that by showing their concern with the environment by farming conscientiously, sticking with traditional ingredients and processes and, increasingly, I hope, by addressing social justice and equity issues that are as apparent in natural wine as anywhere else.

It's not just a question of perception, it's a matter of action, of demonstrating a commitment to change and to making the effort. Slogans will not paper over a failure to do that.

END

Enclosure 2 – North Bay Business Journal – Jeff Quackenbush – Feb 14, 2022

Meanwhile in Sonoma County, its Planning Commission is set to revisit [the draft winery events ordinance](#) at a virtual meeting Feb. 17. The county and industry advocates have been going back and forth on the matter for six years, with long delays after the wildfires and during the pandemic.

One of the key changes that has coming in the most recent draft of the ordinance is defining “business activities” separately from “events,” according to Michael Haney, executive director of trade group Sonoma County Vintners.

“This is not about big parties,” Haney said. “We tell people that vineyards they see when driving around are not landscaping. That’s how we feed our families. Our wine community says what we need is a clear set of definitions.”

One of the key arguments the trade group has made is that hosting wholesaler and retailer representatives at the winery for a lunch or dinner and having consumers come to the property to pick up wine is notably different for the resilience of agribusiness from holding weddings, concerts and related events.

“Across the nation with wholesalers there is a massive constriction, so many smaller wineries if they want a distributor in another state they can’t get them,” Haney said.

“That’s why marketing directly to the consumer is so vital. If you want to hold a charity event or political fundraiser at the winery, that is another matter.”

However, some aren’t sold on this change in definitions. Preserve Rural Sonoma County is reiterating what it told the Planning Commission when the draft ordinance was last year, in June 2021.

“We want to clarify what has been the county position for the past 15 years, that parties are events,” said Marc Bommersbach, a group member, wine grape grower and part of the Westside Community Association. “Trade meetings are fine, but if they are after hours and serving foods, it is the same impact, regardless if it’s the trade or the public. A trade meeting during day with winetasting is fine, but when it turns into an event, it needs to be addressed.”

The group views wine club pick-ups, harvest parties and similar activities as events.

“Creating carve-outs for certain types of events that are not subject to the limitations in use permits, particularly when there is little if any practical difference in impacts between such types of events, will create a compliance nightmare,” the group wrote to the Planning Commission last year.

The organization also wants the county to specify where wineries can be located, perhaps tailored to the concentration of vintners in a given area: 20-acre minimum parcel size, 18-foot minimum access road width, no outdoor amplified sound and a density standard of no more than two facilities in a half-mile.

**Public
Comments
2-17-22 to 5-12-22
for PC Hearing
5-19-22**

From: [Nick Frey](#)
To: [PlanningAgency](#)
Subject: RE: Comments on noise attenuation setbacks
Date: Thursday, February 17, 2022 3:56:10 PM

EXTERNAL

I want to add feedback on the Commissioners' discussions:

- How do you regulate food truck activities if they are permitted. We have food trucks selling lunch to construction workers in our neighborhood. Does the construction company need a use permit. Why would it be different for a winery?
- You are getting into too many what ifs that may not relate at all to the wine business, regardless of size
- If you produce 1000 or more cases of wine, selling it DTC is very challenging compared to large wineries with 500,000 cases pl

From: Nick Frey
Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2022 10:11 AM
To: PlanningAgency@sonoma-county.org
Subject: Comments on noise attenuation setbacks

The proposed setbacks seem arbitrary. What data were used to arrive at the proposed setbacks. Depending on the topography, the amount of vegetation, etc, noise levels will vary by site. Rather than an arbitrary setback, you merely need to set a noise level at the lot line in decibels. They can be easily measured with a cell phone app.

Also amplified music should not matter if the noise level at the lot line is below the decibel limit. Use some science and common sense when setting standards rather than some arbitrary distance.



NICK FREY

PR & Brand Ambassador

Nick@ballettovineyards.com

cell: 707.291.2857

5700 Occidental Rd. | Santa Rosa, CA 95401

ballettovineyards.com



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From: frick winery <frick@frickwinery.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 3:01 PM

To: William Frick

Subject: Sonoma County is Wonderful Wine Country. Don't damage this.

EXTERNAL

Dear Commissioner, Please no more regulations on winery events/business activities.

After hearing about the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I am worried. The wine community cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and that handicaps our freedom to be hospitable to our consumers. Wineries are already highly regulated on all fronts. Now with fires, floods, pandemic, consolidation of distributors and drought wineries are having a tough enough time surviving without more unneeded regulations to deal with. This is particularly true of small family owned wineries in the county who don't have resources beyond the County of Sonoma.

Sonoma County is Wine Country. Please! Let's keep it that way.

Sonoma County wineries are a major employer and a big contributor to the Sonoma County economy. Wineries are an asset to Sonoma County, preserving rural land and the rural experience that make it a desirable place to be.

Legal restrictions on capacity, hours, accessibility, traffic, parking, noise, sanitation and more are ALREADY in place. We do not need more!

There is no need for change. Except, maybe I suppose, to appease a radical extreme group.

Wineries make our county a great place to visit, live and work. I and they deserve your support.

Thank you.

Bill Frick

7.77 acres and a man

Frick Winery

Since 1976

frickwinery.com

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From: Damy Tamburrino <damy@foppiano.com>

Sent: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 11:22 AM

To: Greg Carr; Caitlin Cornwall; Larry Reed; Pat Gilardi; Gina Belforte; Jacquelynne Ocana; Kevin Deas; Shaun McCaffery; Eric Koenigshofer; Belén Grady; Susan Gorin; David Rabbitt; Chris Coursey; district4; Lynda Hopkins

Cc: Beth Costa

Subject: Winery Events

EXTERNAL

Greetings Supervisor/Commissioner:

In response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning

Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities.

Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and

amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is

not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

Our Sonoma County wine community is a major employer and crucial contributor to the Sonoma County

economy. Wineries also support significant philanthropic activities, including hundreds of local nonprofit charitable organizations throughout the county.

Over the past five years, national representation for our wineries has greatly diminished because of wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, making it even more difficult for local wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country. Wineries are required to market and fulfill wine sales directly

to consumers in order to survive. It is critical to our wine community's future that business activities like

wine pickup days, winemaker lunches/dinners, trade business visits, and similar activities, be allowed and not arbitrarily limited. Also, wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation and noise.

These legal parameters ALREADY guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

I strongly support the following positions:

1. Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states:

Policy AR-4a: The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.

Policy AR-4d: Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.

Policy AR-8b: Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.

2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters

already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit.

Use Permit conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to

direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADAcompliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.

While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few

years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our

beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery

community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to

live, work and thrive.

Thank you,

Damy

Damy Tamburrino

DTC/Hospitality Manager

707.433.7272 x240 O | 707.481.6439 M | 707.433.0565 F

damy@foppiano.com



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From: Tessa Gorsuch <tessa@martinelliwinery.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2022 9:26 AM

To: Tessa Gorsuch

Subject: Please Consider

EXTERNAL

Good Morning,

In response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities. Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers. Our Sonoma County wine community is a major employer and crucial contributor to the Sonoma County economy. Wineries also support significant philanthropic activities, including hundreds of local nonprofit charitable organizations throughout the county. Over the past five years, national representation for our wineries has greatly diminished because of wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, making it even more difficult for local wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country. Wineries are required to market and fulfill wine sales directly to consumers in order to survive. It is critical to our wine community's future that business activities like wine pickup days, winemaker lunches/dinners, trade business visits, and similar activities, be allowed and not arbitrarily limited. Also, wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation and noise. These legal parameters ALREADY guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities. I strongly support the following positions:

1. Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states: Policy AR-4a: The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals. Policy AR-4d: Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories. Policy AR-8b: Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.
2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.
3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Use Permit conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADA compliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication. While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Thank you for your time,

Tessa Gorsuch
Marketing Manager
Martinelli Winery and Vineyards
707-525-1017 Ext. 306
www.martinelliwinery.com



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From: [Chelsea Holup](#)
To: [Georgia McDaniel](#); [Hannah Spencer](#)
Subject: FW: February 17 Planning Commission Meeting (Public comment winery events)
Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 3:39:46 PM

EXTERNAL

April 6, 2022

Good Afternoon Commissioner Ocana:

First thank you for your time and support for Sonoma County.

We send this letter in response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities. We wish to express our observations and concerns regarding the Planning Commission's comments and actions during the meeting. These include the following:

1. Sonoma County General Plan

We believe that during the meeting Commissioner Carr misrepresented the policies of the Sonoma County General Plan.

The policy is outlined below and it is clear that visitor-serving uses **are** included in the General Plan and are not excluded as Commissioner Carr led the Commission and the public to believe.

Policy AR-4a: *The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.*

Policy AR-4d: *Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.*

Policy AR-8b: Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.

2. Draft Definitions and Guidelines

We are concerned that County staff chose to supply the Commission with only three documents that describe winery events/activities definitions and guidelines. There is only one set of guidelines that have been vetted and hold standing in the permitting process and that is the Dry Creek Guidelines created by the Dry Creek Valley Citizens Advisory Council. The other two documents supplied by County staff include those prepared by the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Council Ad Hoc and the one prepared by County staff. Staff however, continue to ignore, nor do they explain the omission of the draft from the Sonoma Valley Stakeholders, or the one from Sonoma County Vintners, which have been presented to staff numerous times. There also may be more drafts from the public, but they are not being considered.

3. Planning Tools

During the February 17 meeting the Commission discussed the nuance between a “Commercial Kitchen” versus a “Catering Kitchen”. This discussion is actually the micro-management of an allowable business. When considering a Use Permit, The Commission, has the ability to set hours of operation, noise levels and maximum persons allowed based on floor area, parking, septic and access. As long as a “visitor serving use” is supported by General Plan policy, the particular activity is irrelevant.

4. Identifying Problem Scope

We have requested that County staff report the extent of any problems with the operations of winery use permits related to winery events/activities. According to the County’s Code Enforcement office, there are **very few** complaints received and those that have occurred are usually resolved with communications and good neighbor policies.

Our Sonoma County Wine Community

The Sonoma County wine community is a major employer and crucial contributor to the Sonoma

County economy, while also supporting significant philanthropic activities that include hundreds of the county's non-profit charitable organizations.

Over the past five years, national representation for our wineries has greatly diminished because of wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, making it even more difficult for local wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country. Wineries are required to market and fulfill wine sales directly to consumers to survive. It is critical to our wine community's future that business activities like wine pickup days, winemaker lunches/dinners, trade business visits, and similar activities, be allowed and not arbitrarily limited.

Our wine community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years. It has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and county ambassador. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, Sonoma County's wine community has survived wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism as well as many catastrophic pandemic impacts; however, it cannot survive more unwarranted regulation that cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

Sincerely,

Mike Martini
Taft Street Winery
Chair, SCV Government Relations Committee

Michael Haney
Executive Director
Sonoma County Vintners
Sonoma County Vintners Foundation

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From: [Peter Warner](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: your worldview isn't mine!
Date: Friday, April 29, 2022 1:14:14 PM

EXTERNAL

PRMD and the political powers in Sonoma County claim that the wine industry is important to business and tourism.

That encapsulates precisely why many of us will forever be opposed to the status quo defenders of capitalism perspective on business, ecological exploitation, and the idiotic denial of physics and chemistry. You are all damned fools and charlatans for disregarding basic laws of universal function.

Your stance of capitulating to the fundamentally destructive nature of capitalism is exactly why global climate and ecosystems are failing, and why humanity continues its march to extinction -- unfortunately taking the myriad miracles of life along with us. How long do you think we can keep this up, morons???

Yet you apologists for business as usual keep up with your justifying drivel, as species disappear, as life-sustaining water is polluted and stolen for profit, and as corporations, politicians, and their lackeys in government continue us all in the spiral towards ultimate destruction. The lack of ecological consciousness is consistent with your profiteering insanity.

You are responsible, and we shall not forget or forgive your collaboration with death and destruction.

Peter Warner

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From: [Brian Ball](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Events Request
Date: Tuesday, May 03, 2022 12:23:04 PM
Attachments: [Skipstone-logo-Art-optimized-1.4.png](#)

EXTERNAL

Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's indication of their intentions to proceed with harmful restrictions on winery activities, in light of the February 17th, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting.

Skipstone is a small, family owned winery here in Alexander Valley. Over the past decade, the wine industry has seen unprecedented consolidation in the wholesale market, making market penetration and promotion all but impossible outside of the growing Direct to Consumer channel. We, like so many of our fellow vintners in Sonoma County, must rely on the DtC channel for almost 100% of our business, and the proposed restrictions by the Planning Commission would be crippling, at a time of immense challenges already heaped onto our industry by challenging market conditions, wildfires, a worldwide pandemic, and competition from other wine regions. The evolution of consumer's preferences towards direct engagement with the businesses they choose to support necessitates a regulatory environment that supports a modern business engaging with their customers in person. Sonoma County's existing process of issuing Use Permits that outline permitted and non-permitted activities is already sufficient for covering what the county has deemed appropriate for winery business, and the proposed structure of the Winery Events Ordinance feels like an arbitrary limitation of activities that support local business, fulfills consumers' desires, and falls within existing permitted activities through the Use Permit process and other existing regulations.

I strongly support the following positions:

1. Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states: Policy AR-4a: The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals. **Policy AR-4d:** Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories. **Policy AR-8b:** Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.

2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Use Permit conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADAcompliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not

made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication. While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

I hope you please take our industry's plea for consideration of the significant impacts the proposed restrictions will have on the flourishing local community, and actively work with the Sonoma County wine community to incorporate our requests into the proposed regulations. What we are requesting is not carte blanche to "do whatever we want with our business." We simply ask that the Planning Commission engage with our business and others to have a real discussion to address potential concerns of others that might be driving this push for regulation while providing the flexibility to act responsibly to cater towards a changing set of demands of the modern consumer.

I would sincerely welcome an opportunity to connect, discuss our viewpoint, and provide an inside view into the realities of a small winery business and how devastating moving forward with these regulations would be to the small business community, our employees, and customers.

Sincerely,

Brian Ball

General Manager - Skipstone

Cell: 703.505.7722 | Direct: 707.857.2558 | Skipstone Office: 707.433.9124

2505 Geysers Rd. Geyserville, CA 95441

www.skipstonewines.com

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From: [Laura Jones](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Support for winery events and business activities
Date: Tuesday, May 03, 2022 3:30:28 PM
Attachments: [clip_image001.png](#)

EXTERNAL

Good afternoon,

In response to the February 17, 2022, Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events and business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events and business activities.

Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility, and amazing effort, our wine community has survived. However, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

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activities.

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4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication. While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands, and ambassador for our beautiful county.

I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Thank you,

Laura Jones

Winemaker - Skipstone

Cell: 310.985.4406 | Direct: 707.584.6654

2505 Geysers Rd. Geyserville, CA 95441

www.skipstonewines.com

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From: [Hilary Cline](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Support for Winery Events
Date: Thursday, May 05, 2022 12:04:49 PM

EXTERNAL

Greetings,

In response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities. Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

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I strongly support the following positions:

1. **Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states:**
 - a. **Policy AR-4a:** The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.
 - b. **Policy AR-4d:** Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.
 - c. **Policy AR-8b:** Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.
2. **Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the**

mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

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4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.

While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Thank you.

Hilary Cline

Operations | [Cline Cellars](#), [Jacuzzi Family Vineyards](#), & [Gust Wines](#)

24737 Arnold Drive, Sonoma, CA 95476

Phone 707.721.8681 | email: hcline@clinecellars.com

THIS EMAIL ORIGINATED OUTSIDE OF THE SONOMA COUNTY EMAIL SYSTEM.

Warning: If you don't know this email sender or the email is unexpected, **do not** click any web links, attachments, and **never** give out your user ID or password.

From: Marc Bommersbach <mbommersbach@att.net>
Sent: Sunday, May 8, 2022 5:43 PM
To: Brian Oh <Brian.Oh@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Winery Event Definitions

EXTERNAL

Biran,

I would like to offer the following suggestions regarding the Staff's assignment from the Planning Commission regarding the Event definitions.

I feel this might simplify the ordinance based on the comments of the Commissioners.

I realize the Commissioners took a straw vote on the general definition of a winery event, but I think it does make sense to add the other criteria the County uses such as after tasting room hours and serving a meal. I added entertainment as a suggestion.

I will be traveling, but available to talk or e-mail. I realize this is a tough assignment, so hope this helps.

Regards,

Marc
415-860-2116

General Plan Standard: Winery visitor serving uses in agricultural categories are limited to promotion of agricultural production in the County, including tasting rooms, sales and promotion of products grown or processed in the County, educational activities and tours, incidental sales of items related to local area agricultural products, and promotional events that support and are secondary and incidental to local agricultural production. **Policy AR-6a**

These uses can be broken into two categories – **Winery Events** and **Other Winery Visitor Serving Uses**

Winery Event - A gathering of people 1) at a pre-scheduled date and time, **or** 2) held outside tasting room hours, **or** 3) where food is served, excluding small bites in connection with wine pairing, **or** 4) where entertainment is provided, whether or not a fee is required to attend.

Some events last for two or three days. In these cases, each day is counted as a separate event. There are two types of **Winery Events** – **Agricultural Promotion** and **Industry Wide Events**

Agricultural Promotional Event – A Winery Event directly related to the education and development of consumers where the primary focus of the event and the reason for attendance is the sampling and direct marketing of wine produced on the premises.

Industry Wide Event – (Same as Staff) Promotional activities sponsored by a recognized wine industry association that may involve multiple wineries and/or tasting rooms. Industry-wide events are held within a specified geographic area, during regular tasting room hours, and may last up to 3 consecutive days.

Other Winery Visitor Serving Uses - Wine tasting, tours, seminars and other similar hospitality related activities that support the promotion of wine sales produced at the winery, excluding Winery Events.

Consistent with the County's practice, events such as private parties, charitable and political events that do not meet the requirements of an Agricultural Promotional Event are handled as "cultural" or "special" events through a zoning or cultural event permit process and not defined as a subset of Winery Events. Such events would not be included in use permits that create entitlements that run with the land.

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Warning: If you don't know this email sender or the email is unexpected,
do not click any web links, attachments, and **never** give out your user ID or password.

From: ray.johnson@sonoma.edu
To: [David Rabbitt](#); [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Upcoming Planning Commission Meeting
Date: Saturday, May 07, 2022 8:10:27 PM

EXTERNAL

Greetings Supervisor Rabbitt and the Team at Permit Sonoma,

I'm addressing my concerns to the team in general and to Supervisor Rabbitt specifically as we live in Hessel and are represented by David. I also have a view based on the many alumni of our programs who work and thrive in wine and viticultural careers.

In response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities. Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

Our Sonoma County wine community is a major employer and crucial contributor to the Sonoma County economy. Wineries also support significant philanthropic activities, including hundreds of local nonprofit charitable organizations throughout the county.

Over the past five years, national representation for our wineries has greatly diminished because of wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, making it even more difficult for local wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country. Wineries are required to market and fulfill wine sales directly to consumers in order to survive. It is critical to our wine community's future that business activities like wine pickup days, winemaker lunches/dinners, trade business visits, and similar activities, be allowed and not arbitrarily limited. Also, wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation and noise. These legal parameters ALREADY guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

I strongly support the following positions:

1. Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states:

Policy AR-4a: *The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, **and visitor serving uses**. Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.* **Policy AR-4d:** *Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.*

Policy AR-8b: Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.

2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Use Permit conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADAcompliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.

While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Thank you most sincerely,

Ray

Ray Johnson

Executive Director

wbi25.sonoma.edu

707.280.8188 - mobile

Sonoma State University

School of Business and Economics

1801 East Cotati Avenue

Rohnert Park, CA 94928

ray.johnson@sonoma.edu

From: Brian Ball <brian@skipstonewines.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 3, 2022 12:23 PM
To: Greg Carr <Greg.Carr@sonoma-county.org>
Subject: Winery Activities Request

Hello Commissioner Carr,

I am writing to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's indication of their intentions to proceed with harmful restrictions on winery activities, in light of the February 17th, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting.

Skipstone is a small, family owned winery here in Alexander Valley. Over the past decade, the wine industry has seen unprecedented consolidation in the wholesale market, making market penetration and promotion all but impossible outside of the growing Direct to Consumer channel. We, like so many of our fellow vintners in Sonoma County, must rely on the DtC channel for almost 100% of our business, and the proposed restrictions by the Planning Commission would be crippling, at a time of immense challenges already heaped onto our industry by challenging market conditions, wildfires, a worldwide pandemic, and competition from other wine regions. The evolution of consumer's preferences towards direct engagement with the businesses they choose to support necessitates a regulatory environment that supports a modern business engaging with their customers in person. Sonoma County's existing process of issuing Use Permits that outline permitted and non-permitted activities is already sufficient for covering what the county has deemed appropriate for winery business, and the proposed structure of the Winery Events Ordinance feels like an arbitrary limitation of activities that support local business, fulfills consumers' desires, and falls within existing permitted activities through the Use Permit process and other existing regulations.

I strongly support the following positions:

1. Support of the Current Sonoma County General Plan that states: Policy AR-4a: The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses. Residential uses

in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals. Policy AR-4d: Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories. Policy AR-8b: Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County.

2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts. Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. THESE parameters already guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

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4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication. While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

I hope you please take our industry's plea for consideration of the significant impacts the proposed restrictions will have on the flourishing local community, and actively work with the Sonoma County wine community to incorporate our requests into the proposed regulations. What we are requesting is not carte blanche to "do whatever we want with our business." We simply ask that the Planning Commission engage with our business and others to have a real discussion to address potential concerns of others that might be driving this push for regulation while providing the flexibility to act responsibly to cater towards a changing set of demands of the modern consumer.

I would sincerely welcome an opportunity to connect, discuss our viewpoint, and provide an inside view into the realities of a small winery business and how devastating moving forward with these regulations would be to the small business community, our employees, and customers.

Sincerely,

Brian Ball

General Manager - Skipstone

Cell: 703.505.7722 | Direct: 707.857.2558 | Skipstone Office: 707.433.9124

2505 Geysers Rd. Geyserville, CA 95441

www.skipstonewines.com

S K I P S T O N E



Dear Commissioner Carr

In response to the February 17, 2022 Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities. Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.

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I strongly support the following positions:

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4. **Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.**

While our winery community is resilient and has worked hard to manage the challenges of the past few years, it has also worked hard to be an excellent neighbor, steward of our lands and ambassador for our beautiful county. I appreciate you taking a moment to consider my thoughts and assist our vital winery community and multigenerational wine families as they work to make our county a wonderful place to live, work and thrive.

Thank you.

Sincerely

Adam Sbragia

Sbragia Family Vineyards

Dear Commissioner Carr:

May 8, 2022

In response to the February 17, 2022, Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities.

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Karen Maley, General Manager

Robert Young Estate Winery, Geyserville, CA.

**Public
Comments
after 5-12-22 distribution
for PC Hearing
5-19-22**

May 13, 2022



Dear Commissioner Carr:

In response to the February 17, 2022, Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities.

Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; **however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.**

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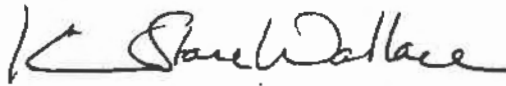
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kim Stare Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "K".

Kim Stare Wallace
President



May 12, 2022

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive
Room 100 A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
bos@sonoma-county.org

Sonoma County Planning Commission
2550 Ventura Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
planningagency@sonoma-county.org

RE: Sonoma County Winery Events and Business Activities

Dear Sonoma County:

Landmark Vineyards is concerned with the recent Sonoma County Planning Commission proposal to restrict permitting for certain events and business activities, and respectfully requests that the County continue to use the existing County General Plan and permitting rules pertaining to wineries.

Landmark Vineyards has been a staple of the community since 1974. We are dedicated to creating rich, balanced, handcrafted, wine that tells the robust history of this particular wine region. We pride ourselves in offering unparalleled experiences for our guests and bringing unique opportunities for the public to learn and engage in the Sonoma County wine industry. One way we do this is through offering a diverse range of programming at our vineyard location, including wine pick up days, winemaker lunches, trade business visits, and offering facilities for local non-profit events. Considering the multitude of challenges facing the Sonoma County wine community these days – from wildfires to impacts from the pandemic – the future of the industry hinges on our ability to bring awareness to the region. As such, it is critically important that these events continue to be allowed.

Landmark Vineyards supports the continued use of the current Sonoma County General Plan provisions regulating events (e.g., Policy AR-4a, Policy AR-4d, and Policy AR-8b), and urges the County to focus on compliance with the existing planning and land use rules that already provide a sufficient structure for the safe and respectful hosting of events in the region.

Sincerely,

Tom LeClair
Associate Vice President, Hospitality

May 13, 2022



Dear Commissioner McCaffery:

In response to the February 17, 2022, Sonoma County Planning Commission's meeting on winery events/business activities, I wanted to reach out to you directly to express my concerns for the Planning Commission's actions and support for my outlined positions related to winery events/business activities.

Our wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; **however, we cannot survive more regulation that is not warranted and cripples our ability to engage with consumers.**

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ESTABLISHED 1972
DRY CREEK VALLEY
SONOMA COUNTY

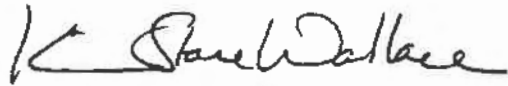
POST OFFICE BOX T
3770 LAMBERT BRIDGE RD
HEALDSBURG, CA 95448

TELEPHONE 707-433-1000
FACSIMILE 707-433-5329
WWW.DRYCREEKVINEYARD.COM

3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit. Use Permit conditions are required to address the impacts of that operation. The conditions are not to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADA compliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform, or the number of services offered.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Stare Wallace". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "S".

Kim Stare Wallace
President

From: Christina Meyer <cmeyer1106@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 10:31 PM

To: Greg Carr <Greg.Carr@sonoma-county.org>; Pat Gilardi <Pat.Gilardi@sonoma-county.org>; Jacquelynne Ocana <Jacquelynne.Ocana@sonoma-county.org>

Cc: Shaun McCaffery <Shaun.McCaffery@sonoma-county.org>; ErickKoenigshofer@sonoma-county.org <ErickKoenigshofer@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Wine Event Ordinance

Thank you for all the work you have done on the Winery Event Ordinance.

When you meet on May 19 to review the current draft of the Winery Event Ordinance, please continue to tighten existing loopholes and ambiguities to strengthen the Ordinance: in these areas:

- **Please** clarify that Agricultural Promotional Events do not include private parties, weddings or political, charitable or other non-ag related events
- Please add **IMPORTANT** siting criteria as follows:
 - a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
 - b. 20-foot minimum access roads
 - c. No outdoor amplified sound
 - d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile
 - e. Include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

THANK YOU SO MUCH. Christina Meyer

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Warning: If you don't know this email sender or the email is unexpected, **do not** click any web links, attachments, and **never** give out your user ID or password.

From: Laura Morgan <thesquig@yahoo.com>

Sent: Monday, May 16, 2022 10:51 AM

To: Greg Carr <Greg.Carr@sonoma-county.org>; Pat Gilardi <Pat.Gilardi@sonoma-county.org>; Shaun.McAfer@sonoma-county.edu <Shaun.McAfer@sonoma-county.edu>; Jacquelynne Ocana <Jacquelynne.Ocana@sonoma-county.org>; Eric Koenigshofer <Eric.Koenigshofer@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Winery Event Ordinance Hearing this Thursday

EXTERNAL

Dear Esteemed Planning Commissioners,

When you meet on May 19 to review the current draft of the Winery Event Ordinance, we ask that you please consider tightening existing loopholes and ambiguities to strengthen the Ordinance:

- **Please** Clarify that Agricultural Promotional Events do not include private parties, weddings or political, charitable or other non-ag related events
- Please add **IMPORTANT** siting criteria as follows:
 - a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
 - b. 20-foot minimum access roads
 - c. No outdoor amplified sound
 - d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile
 - e. Include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Thank you,

Laura Morgan and Jim Seward
2821 Dyer Ave
Sebastopol

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Warning: If you don't know this email sender or the email is unexpected, do not click any web links, attachments, and never give out your user ID or password.

From: [Anna Ransome](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Monday, May 16, 2022 8:05:47 PM



Thank you for your work on the Winery Event Ordinance. Missing from the current draft however, is siting criteria. The Board of Supervisors directed the Staff to develop these standards, not the wine industry or concerned neighbors. The October 2016 Board resolution stated:

“The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines (emphasis added).”

Please add siting criteria to the Winery Event Ordinance, including criteria for areas of concentration as directed by the Board. We support the PRSC recommendations, previously suggested:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 20-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

The ordinance should also include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Thank you,
Anna Ransome

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From: [Padi Selwyn](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Pat Gilardi](#); [Jacquelynnne Ocana](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#); [Greg Carr](#)
Subject: Comments regarding the Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Monday, May 16, 2022 12:32:50 PM

Dear Staff and Planning Commissioners:

As you put the finishing touches on the Winery Event Ordinance, we are respectfully requesting that you consider the following elements be added. We have been advocating for these two critical categories for the past six years after much study and participation in the Winery Working Group as well as numerous study groups.

1. Clarify that Agricultural Promotional Events do not include private parties, weddings or political, charitable or other non-ag related events

Agricultural Promotional Events should be directly related to the education of consumers where the primary focus of the event is the direct marketing and tasting of wine produced on the premises. Absent this clarification, non-agricultural, commercial uses might be included, simply because wine from the winery is served.

Consistent with the County's current practice, events such as private parties, charitable and political events that do not meet the requirements of an Agricultural Promotional Event should be handled as "cultural" or "special" event through a zoning permit process and not defined as a subset of Winery Events. Such events would not be included in use permits, that create entitlements that run with the land.

2. Include siting criteria, in addition to criteria for areas of concentration as directed by the Board

In October 2016, the Board directed staff to develop siting criteria for areas of concentration. The resolution by the Board in October 2016 states:

"The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines (emphasis added)."

The Commission should include siting criteria for Areas of Concentration and for the County as a whole in the creation of the Winery Event Ordinance.

As previously requested, PRSC requests the County include the following criteria:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 20-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

Please include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Respectfully submitted,

Padi Selwyn, Co-chair

(707) 569-6876

PRESERVE RURAL SONOMA COUNTY

Visit our website at - <http://www.preserveruralsonomacounty.org>

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From: [Dee Swanhuysen](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Greg Carr](#); [Pat Gilardi](#); [Jacquelynn Ocana](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#)
Subject: Draft Winery Events Ordinance Comments from Dee Swanhuysen
Date: Monday, May 16, 2022 11:33:50 AM

Please consider the comments below in your deliberations on Thursday May 19th.
Thank you, Dee Swanhuysen - 1800 Jonive Rd, Sebastopol, CA 95472 — phone 707-823-3236

Comment #1 and #2 refer to: Attachment 2: “Winery Events Policy – Standards Comparison” spreadsheet below:

Local Focus/Source of Wine Grapes	None.		
	<i>June 2021 Staff Comment: Zoning Code requires 1) agricultural processing to consist of agricultural products grown or produced primarily on- site or in the local area; and 2) tasting rooms to serve agricultural products grown or processed in the county — pursuant to Sec. 26-18-030 (Agricultural Processing) and Sec. 26-18-210 (Tasting Rooms) of the Zoning Code.</i>		

1. Local Focus/Source of Wine Grapes — what % of ag products must be grown on-site or locally grown to comply with this ordinance? What is definition of “locally grown?”
2. How are the following allowed food services, which are mandated to be “local,” to be enforced or monitored?

"Prepared meals featuring **local foods and food products** is allowed in conjunction with wine events."

"Food and Wine Pairing means providing samples or tastes of **site-grown or locally-grown food products** that are showcased with different wines."

Below comment refers to 26-18-260 – Winery Standards D6:

Recommend adding "during regular tasting room hours" after the word "time" in the first sentence below:

Winery Events means a gathering of people at a pre-scheduled date and time. Some events last for two or three days. In these cases, each day is counted as a separate event.

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From: [Marc Bommersbach](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Pat Gilardi](#); [Greg Carr](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#); [Jacquelynne Ocana](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Brian Oh](#); [Georgia McDaniel](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance May 19 hearing
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 2:30:50 AM

Commissioners,

Ag Promotion

I appreciate the concern expressed by several Commissioners that Ag promotion should only allow visitor uses in ag zones where the primary focus and the reason for attendance is the sampling and direct marketing of wine produced on the premises. There are already examples where, if the only requirement to be considered an ag promotion event is the serving of a glass of wine, we have seen yoga classes and regular movie showings held at wineries. Such uses are not allowed in Ag zones and belong in commercially zoned areas.

Private parties, charitable and political events clearly do not meet the requirements of an Agricultural Promotional Event, and should not be defined as a subset of Winery Events, and not be included in use permits that create entitlements that run with the land. As been the County's practice, such uses should be handled as a "cultural" or "special" event through a zoning permit process.

Siting Criteria

It is time for Staff to develop siting criteria for Areas of Concentration as directed by the Board of Supervisors in their October 2016 resolution.

"The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines (emphasis added)."

Community groups have spent considerable time and effort working with stakeholder groups and made numerous proposals to Staff for definitive siting criteria for areas of concentration and for areas of the County that are not yet concentrated. While it is important for Staff to get input from community groups and the wine industry, at the end of the day, it is the County's responsibility to draft and secure approval for such standards.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters.

Marc Bommersbach

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www.winewaterwatch.org

May 17, 2022

RE: Winery Event Ordinance

Wine and Water Watch is a local organization of over 250 citizens concerned with the overdevelopment of the wine tourism industry and promotes ethical land and water use. We oppose the industrialization of agricultural lands not growing food, medicine fiber or silage.

We appreciate the effort to create balance of impacts from winery events in Sonoma County, however a few details overlooked will have huge impacts in the community. Agricultural events are not weddings or parties and need to be clearly defined as not part of agricultural promotion at our wineries.

There is clearly an over concentration of winery events that have caused traffic and safety concerns. Parameters should be clearly addressed for not only residents but winery owners who need to know before time and money are spent to seek approval. Access and parcel size should be used for that evaluation. We suggest 20 acre minimum and no conflicting events within a minimum of 1/2 mile.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Janus Holt Matthes for

Wine & Water Watch Board

From: [Mercy Sidbury](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Re: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 11:45:22 PM



To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for your work on the Winery Event Ordinance. Missing from the current draft however, is siting criteria. The Board of Supervisors directed the Staff to develop these standards, not the wine industry or concerned neighbors. The October 2016 Board resolution stated:

“The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines (emphasis added).”

Please add siting criteria to the Winery Event Ordinance, including criteria for areas of concentration as directed by the Board. We support the PRSC recommendations, previously suggested:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 20-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

The ordinance should also include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Thank you,

Mercy Sidbury
District 5

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From: Jill Rayna Lippitt <jennerjill@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 1:13 AM

To: Greg Carr <Greg.Carr@sonoma-county.org>; Pat Gilardi <Pat.Gilardi@sonoma-county.org>; Jacquelynne Ocana <Jacquelynne.Ocana@sonoma-county.org>; Shaun McCaffery <Shaun.McCaffery@sonoma-county.org>; Eric Koenigshofer <Eric.Koenigshofer@sonoma-county.org>

Subject: Winery Event Ordinance

When you meet on May 19 to review the current draft of the Winery Event Ordinance, please consider tightening existing loopholes and ambiguities to strengthen the Ordinance:

- **Please** clarify that Agricultural Promotional Events do not include private parties, weddings or political, charitable or other non-ag related events
- Please add **IMPORTANT** siting criteria as follows:
 - a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
 - b. 20-foot minimum access roads
 - c. No outdoor amplified sound
 - d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile
 - e. Include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Thank you,

Jill Lippitt
Jenner, CA

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From: [Deb Preston](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Greg Carr](#); [Pat Gilardi](#); [Jacquelynn Ocana](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#)
Subject: Re: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 7:36:01 AM

Thank you for your work on the Winery Event Ordinance.

The current draft would be greatly improved with the clarification that an Agricultural Promotional Event should be directly related to the education and development of consumers where the primary focus of the event and the reason for attendance is the sampling and direct marketing of wine produced on the premises. Without such clarification, non-agricultural, commercial uses might be included, simply because wine from the winery is served. Please clarify that Agricultural Promotional Events do not include private parties, weddings or political, charitable or other non-ag related events.

In addition, siting criteria is missing from the current draft.

The Board of Supervisors directed the Staff to develop these standards, not the wine industry or concerned neighbors. The October 2016 Board resolution stated:

"The Board of Supervisors further directs staff to develop standards and siting criteria for events in areas of local concentration, for adoption either as part of the Zoning Code or as separate guidelines (emphasis added)."

Please add siting criteria to the Winery Event Ordinance, including criteria for areas of concentration as directed by the Board. I support the PRSC recommendations, previously suggested:

- a. 20-acre minimum parcel size
- b. 20-foot minimum access roads
- c. No outdoor amplified sound
- d. Density standard of no more than 2 facilities in 1/2 mile

The ordinance should also include other criteria for limiting the size and number of events in such concentrated areas.

Thank you.
Deborah Preston
5391 Lone Pine Rd
Sebastopol

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**Public
Comments
after 5-18-22 11am distribution
for PC Hearing
5-19-22**

From: laura@auteurwines.com
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: FEEDBACK
Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 3:42:13 PM
Sensitivity: Confidential

We strongly oppose more regulation within our industry. The wine industry is that is the primary economic drivers of our region. In addition to the California wine industry contribution of over 100 billion dollars to the state of California.

As a small business and winery owner, we have seen our compliance and legal expenses nearly double in the last years with the bombardment of regulations that keep coming down on small businesses. Wine is the heartbeat of the town filling hotels and restaurants that keep us thriving. More regulation will close doors, which is a loss to the community as a whole.

During the pandemic, we finally felt appreciated when we continued to bring in tax dollars to our community while many business had to close. The community rallied around the wineries and restaurants to keep us alive. We truly do NOT understand the hostility against the wineries that is advocated by our own leaders.

We must change our mindset for we are all facing an extremely uphill battle. If you take the time, you will see our winery leaders are respectful and appreciate of our amazing community. We are working together to on sustainability, climate change, wildfire alliances, diversity and inclusions. Let's stop the fight.

We hope for leaders to build bridges not further division, on local and national level.

Thank you for your time,

Laura and Kenneth Juhasz

Chief of Operations, Founders

Auteur Wines

Call or Text (707) 696-8949

Top 25 Wineries to Visit | San Francisco Chronicle

Consistently Exceptional | Robert Parker Jr

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From: [Mia Mascarin-Oven](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: In support of the winery events ordinance.
Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 10:40:31 PM

EXTERNAL

As a principal and owner of Mascarin family states, doing business as 32 Winds, I would like to write to you in support of the winery events ordinance being heard on May 19 in a public hearing.

We are a Small family owned winery and our survival as a member of the community depends on brand awareness as well as income by providing our visitors wonderful experiences and a deeper understanding of farming and winemaking in this beautiful Sonoma countryside. Having wine centric events at our property provide a critical opportunity to reach out to our current and potential customer base. It is also an opportunity for people to explore what this great Sonoma county has to offer.

Please seriously consider this proposal As it provides an important aspect of our ability to thrive and survive in this difficult and competitive environment.

Thank you.

Mia Mascarin Oven
32 Winds Wine
Mia@32windswine.com

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Jacob Pickett](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#)
Subject: Fwd: Sonoma County Planning Commission Winery Events Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 10:10:53 AM



Hi,

Like many Sonoma County businesses, the wine community has faced the challenges of wildfires, smoke exposure, floods, power shutoffs, diminished tourism and many catastrophic pandemic impacts. With ingenuity, creativity, flexibility and amazing effort, our wine community has survived; however, we cannot survive more regulation that is neither warranted nor necessary. While any one regulation when viewed by itself may seem reasonable, the tremendous quantity of regulations that have been created to appease every single enthusiast group has created a burden that would be viewed as unreasonable by any reasonable person. Our wine community plays a crucial role by being engaged with and supporting significant philanthropic activity, including hundreds of non-profit charitable organizations throughout Sonoma County. Over the past five years, national representation for our wineries has greatly diminished because of wine wholesale and distribution consolidation, making it even more difficult for local wineries to gain wholesale distribution across the country. Wineries are required to market and fulfill wine sales directly to consumers to survive

1. I support the current Sonoma County General Plan, which states:

- **Policy AR-4a:** *The primary use of any parcel within the three agricultural land use categories shall be agricultural production and related processing, support services, and visitor serving uses.*
- *Residential uses in these areas shall recognize that the primary use of the land may create traffic and agricultural nuisance situations, such as flies, noise, odors, and spraying of chemicals.*
- **Policy AR-4d:** *Apply the provisions of the Right to Farm Ordinance to all lands designated within agricultural land use categories.*
- **Policy AR-8b:** *Encourage programs for promotion and marketing of agricultural products grown in the County*

2. Planning and permitting should focus on compliance with planning documents and the mitigation of impacts.

- Wineries are subject to the general plan and the zoning code, which clearly identify the facility capacity to address hours of operation, traffic, parking, sanitation, and noise. These parameters **ALREADY** guide wineries as it relates to events/business activities.

3. The operation of a winery in any agricultural Land Use Designation requires a Use Permit.

- Permit conditions are required to address the **impacts** of that operation. The conditions **are not** to direct how the applicant operates the business. For example, a church needs to provide parking, ADA compliant access and restrooms, however, limitations are not made on the number of weddings they may perform or the number of services offered.

4. Sonoma County Code Enforcement reports extremely minimal complaints related to winery events/business activities and those few have been easily resolved with communication.

Jake

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From: [Kathy Pons](#)
To: [PRMD-WineryEvents](#); [Greg Carr](#); [Pat Gilardi](#); [Jacquelynn Ocana](#); [Shaun McCaffery](#); [Eric Koenigshofer](#)
Subject: Winery Event Ordinance
Date: Wednesday, May 18, 2022 5:13:47 PM

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Please include within the definition of Agricultural Promotional Events clarification that private parties are not considered a promotional event just because you are pouring your winery's wine. If you are pouring wine for a private party, like a wedding or fundraiser, the focus is the party, not the wine. These events would not be related to public education, sales and promotion of the agricultural product.

Also will the Winery Event Ordinance have any siting criteria standards as to where these events can happen to reduce impacts? This would be helpful in determining the potential impacts of new winery applications.

I appreciate all your hard work in sorting this issue.

Thank you,

Kathy Pons

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