

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

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

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

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

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AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

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

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

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GOAL AR-4:

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

Objective AR-4.1:

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

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

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

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

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

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