



Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration

Publication Date: May 2, 2025
Public Review Period: May 2, 2025 to
May 22, 2025

State Clearinghouse Number:
Permit Sonoma File Number: UPE19-0072
Prepared by: Adam Sharron
Phone: (707) 565-7389

Pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA Guidelines, this proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and the attached Initial Study, constitute the environmental review conducted by the County of Sonoma as lead agency for the proposed project described below:

Project Name: Azari Winery Tasting Room

Project Applicant/Operator: BC Engineering Group/Kamal Azari

Project Location/Address: 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma

APN: 020-050-026

General Plan Land Use Designation: Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA), 100-acre density

Zoning Designation: LEA (Land Extensive Agriculture) B6 100-acre density with RC50/50 (Riparian Corridor) Combining District Overlay

Decision Making Body: Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA).
Action by BZA is appealable within 10 calendar days.

Appeal Body: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Project Description: A request for a Use Permit to construct a new 2,809-square foot tasting room on a 16.6-acre parcel zoned LEA B6 100, RC50/50, at 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma (APN 020-050-026). A total of 4,973-square feet of patio/walkways are proposed along with a 2,000-square foot terrace; restrooms are proposed in a new 302-square foot building located 8-feet from the proposed tasting room. Tasting room hours of operation to be 11:00am to 5:00pm, Thursday-Sunday; no more than 20 wine tasting guests allowed per day. Seven (7) winery events (5 Agricultural Promotional and 2 Industry-Wide) per year are proposed for a total of seven (7) event days. Hours of operation for events to be 11:00am to 5:00pm. A maximum of 125 guests are allowed per event; staffing to range from two (2) staff for regular operations to up to nine (9) staff for events. An entrance driveway and an exit driveway are proposed off of Spring Hill Road, with a new parking lot (30 spaces, including 2 accessible) proposed

adjacent to the new tasting room building; in addition, an overflow parking area (29 spaces) is proposed for a total of fifty-nine (59) parking spaces provided.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

Environmental factors listed below were considered by evaluating the project. The Initial Study includes a discussion of the potential impacts and identifies mitigation measures to substantially reduce those impacts to a level of insignificance where feasible:

No Impact: The project would not have the impact described. The project may have a beneficial effect, but there is no potential for the project to create or add increment to the impact described.

Less Than Significant Impact: The project would have the impact described, but the impact would not be significant. Mitigation is not required, although the project applicant may choose to modify the project to avoid the impacts.

Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated: The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. One or more mitigation measures have been identified that will reduce the impact to a less than significant level.

Potentially Significant Impact: The project would have the impact described, and the impact could be significant. The impact cannot be reduced to less than significant by incorporating mitigation measures. An environmental impact report must be prepared for this project.

Table 1. Initial Study

Topic Area	Abbreviation	No Impact	Less than Significant Impact	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated	Potentially Significant or Significant Impact
Aesthetics	VIS			X	
Agricultural & Forest Resources	AG	X			
Air Quality	AIR		X		
Biological Resources	BIO			X	
Cultural Resources	CUL		X		
Energy	ENE		X		
Geology and Soils	GEO		X		
Greenhouse Gas Emission	GHG		X		
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	HAZ		X		
Hydrology and Water Quality	HYDRO		X		
Land Use and Planning	LU		X		
Mineral Resources	MIN	X			
Noise	NOISE			X	
Population and Housing	POP	X			
Public Services	PS		X		
Recreation	REC	X			
Transportation	TRAF		X		
Tribal Cultural Resources	TCR		X		
Utility and Service Systems	UTL		X		

Wildfire	WILD		X		
Mandatory Findings of Significance			X		

RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

There are no Responsible or Trustee Agencies

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:

Based on the evaluation in the attached Initial Study, I find that the project described above will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, provided that the mitigation measures identified in the Initial Study are included as conditions of approval for the project and a Mitigated Negative Declaration is proposed. The applicant has agreed in writing to incorporate identified mitigation measure into the project plans.



Prepared by: Adam Sharron, Project Planner

May 2, 2025

Date:



County of Sonoma
Permit & Resource Management Department

Initial Study

I. INTRODUCTION:

Permit Sonoma has prepared an Initial Study of an application to obtain a Use Permit to construct a new 2,809-square foot tasting room on a 16.6-acre parcel zoned LEA B6 100, RC50/50, at 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma (APN 020-050-026). A total of 4,973-square feet of patio/walkways are proposed along with a 2,000-square foot terrace; restrooms are proposed in a new 302-square foot building located 8-feet from the proposed tasting room. Tasting room hours of operation to be 11:00am to 5:00pm, Thursday-Sunday; no more than 20 wine tasting guests allowed per day. Seven (7) winery events (5 Agricultural Promotional and 2 Industry-Wide) per year are proposed for a total of seven (7) event days. Hours of operation for events to be 11:00am to 5:00pm. A maximum of 125 guests are allowed per event; staffing to range from two (2) staff for regular operations to up to nine (9) staff for events. An entrance driveway and an exit driveway are proposed off of Spring Hill Road, with a new parking lot (30 spaces, including 2 accessible) proposed adjacent to the new tasting room building; in addition, an overflow parking area (29 spaces) is proposed for a total of fifty-nine (59) parking spaces provided.

This report is the Initial Study required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The report was prepared by Adam Sharron, Project Planner – Permit Sonoma, Project Review Division. Information on the project was provided by Azari Winery and consultants. Technical studies were provided by qualified consultants to support the conclusions in this Expanded Initial Study. Technical studies, other reports, documents, and maps referred to in this document are available for review through the Project Planner, online, or the Permit Sonoma Records Division.

Please contact the Project Planner, Adam Sharron, at adam.sharron@sonoma-county.org or (707) 565-7389 for more information.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project is located at 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma in an unincorporated area of Sonoma County, approximately one-half mile west of Chileno Valley Road and west of Petaluma.

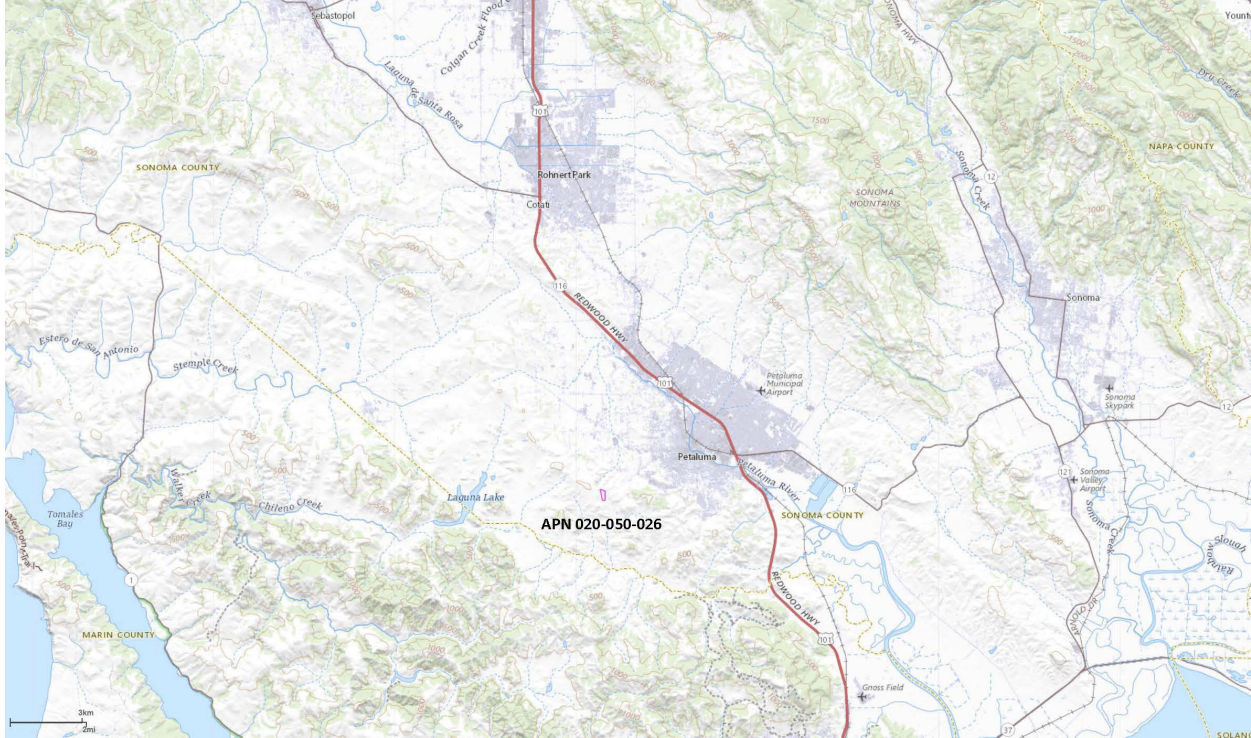


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

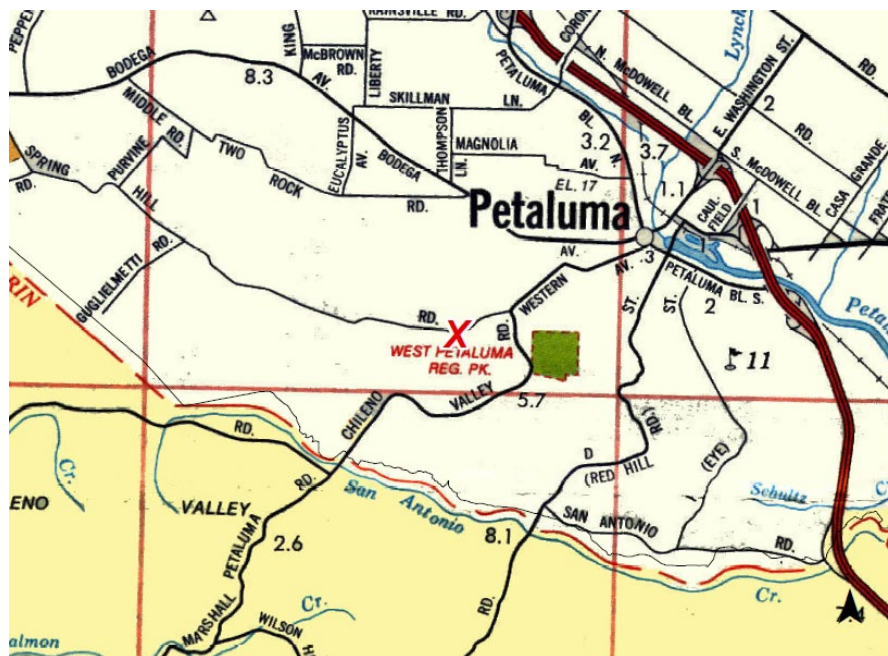


Figure 2: Project Site and Surrounding Area

The Azari Winery site is located on the adjacent westerly parcel at 1399 Spring Hill Road. The winery was approved with UPE06-0055 with a maximum annual production capacity of 8,000 cases with no tasting or special events. Approximately six acres of productive vineyards exist on the winery site.



Figure 3: Aerial of Front of Property and Location of Project



Figure 4: Aerial of Front of Property along Spring Hill Road

The subject 16.6-acre parcel, located at on the south side of Spring Hill Road is predominantly undeveloped and composed of ruderal and non-native annual grassland. There are two 5,000-gallon water storage tanks located within the northwest portion of the existing parcel. One water supply well currently exists in the northern portion of the site and will supply water for the project. The project site is located at the top of a grassy slope that falls eastward to a drainage way that drains to San Antonio Creek to the south. The unnamed intermittent drainage runs through the project site from the west to east and has a small streamside conservation area, per the Sonoma County Riparian Corridor Combining Zone, along the eastern property line.

Ground elevations across the project site range from approximately 320 to 440 feet above mean sea level (MSL). Per the Biological Assessment Report (Daniel Edelstein, Oct. 28, 2021), the project site slopes at approximately 10% from the northwest to the southeast. The soil profile consists of Steinbeck Loam (SnC) and Los Osos Clay Loam (LoD) per the USDA NRCS Custom Soil Resource Report. This soil profile is not considered to support wetland vegetation species. The soil composition in the profile of this area provides acceptable drainage percolation for any rising water levels that could potentially occur during the rainy season and/or high rain episodes.

Vegetation, Habitats, and Biological Resources:

The project site contains, upland, ruderal, highly disturbed habitat dominated by two different vegetation habitats: ruderal, frequently disturbed, upland, non-native grassland and sporadic Blue Gum Eucalyptus woodland consisting of four planted, non-native, even-aged 110-foot-tall Blue Gum Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) trees that grow on the extreme north side of the Site adjacent to Spring Hill Road.

Based on the biological surveys (Biological Assessment Report, prepared by Daniel Edelstein, October 28, 2021), the project site is devoid of native botanical species. The diversity of plant species was low during the surveys, with non-native plant species dominating the project site. Only common plant and wildlife species were seen during the surveys. No rare, special-status plant and wildlife species were detected.

An on-site drainage/watercourse exists south of the project site development area. The development area is located outside of the Riparian Corridor zone.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is a request for a Use Permit to construct a new 2,809 square foot tasting room building on a 16.6-acre parcel. The building will contain an approximately 2,409 square foot tasting area and an approximately 400 square foot food preparation area. The food preparation area is proposed to be utilized to warm prepared food catered for the proposed special events. The proposed building has a maximum height of 34 feet. Restrooms are proposed in a separate 302 square foot building located approximately 8 feet from the proposed tasting room building. An approximate total of 4,973 square feet of patio/walkways are proposed and an approximately 2,000 square foot patio/terrace is proposed to the west of the proposed tasting room.

A new parking lot is proposed adjacent to the new tasting room building and will contain 28 regular parking spaces and 2 handicap parking spaces, for a total of 30 parking spaces. An overflow parking area is proposed to the east with an additional 29 spaces for a combined total of 59 proposed parking spaces. An entrance driveway and an exit driveway with a one-way circulation pattern are proposed.

The tasting room is proposed to accommodate 2 employees and 20 wine tasters a day. Seven winery events (5 Agricultural Promotional Events and 2 Industry-Wide Events) per year are proposed at the tasting room with a maximum of 125 guests per event and up to 9 staff, which include the 2 tasting room employees. Portable toilets will be utilized for the winery events and the events will utilize outdoor areas

adjacent to the proposed tasting room. Winery events will utilize music and amplified sound.

Proposed Hours of Operation:

- Tasting room hours – 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, Thursday-Sunday
- Winery events hours – 11:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Tours of the vineyards for the general public are to be held during normal tasting room hours only.

Proposed Winery Events and Activities:

- Agricultural Promotional Events will include up to five (5) events from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm with a maximum of 125 guests. Food and wine pairings may be provided. Events will utilize music and amplified sound.
- Industry-Wide Event Days up to a total of two (2) per year with a total of 125 people over the course of the entire day. Industry-wide events shall be between 11:00am and 5:00pm. Events will utilize music and amplified sound which will meet the noise standards of the General Plan.

Proposed Food Service:

- Food and Wine Tasting Pairings (no meals) may be provided during permitted tasting hours as part of normal business activities. Food and wine pairing will be pre-prepared samples or tastes produced from food products from the local area. Food will be from a pre-fixed pairing menu and only during tasting room hours. There is no restaurant or deli service provided.
- Food on-site for events will be prepared in the food preparation area within the tasting room building. Food can be provided for occasional employee lunches and employee harvest party. Appetizers or meals featuring local foods and food products may be prepared for occasional marketing or promotional activities that are not open to drop-in guests. Food must be consumed on-site.

Proposed Employees:

- Tasting room (during normal business hours) - 2 full-time employees.
- Winery events – 9 employees, including the 2 tasting room employees.

Access and Parking:

The project as proposed would have two driveways on Spring Hill Road. The parking lot is proposed with a one-way circulation scheme that would include traffic entering at the westerly driveway and exiting at the easterly driveway.

The parking supply proposed for the site is adequate to accommodate both the anticipated daily parking demand and the demand during events. The proposed project would supply 59 parking spaces, including 30 spaces for the tasting room and 29 overflow parking spaces accessed by a single driveway off of Spring Hill Road. The applicant is proposing to provide 17 EV-capable parking spaces.

Per the Operating Standards for wineries and tasting rooms (Sec. 26-18-260(E)(6)(a)), parking requirements are as follows:

7 events with 125 guests (1 space per 2.5 guests required) = 50 required guest parking spaces
7 events with 9 staff (1 space per 1 staff required) = 9 required staff parking spaces

59 total parking spaces required

59 total (permanent and overflow) parking spaces proposed

There are no existing bicycle lanes along the project frontage on Spring Hill Road. However, per the Focused Traffic Study (W-Trans, July 22, 2021), in the updated project list 2019 of *Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA)*, a Class III bicycle route is planned on Spring Hill Road to be connected to the existing Class II bicycle lanes on Western Avenue on the east, and planned Class II bicycle lanes along Valley Ford Road-Bodega Avenue on the west. Since a Class III route consists of signing only, the existing physical facilities provide adequate bicycle access to the site and access for bicyclists would be enhanced with the completion of planned bike facilities. No bicycle parking spaces are proposed.

Water, Wastewater, and Waste Disposal:

The property's location in a Class 4 Groundwater Availability Zone. All water supply is from groundwater. There are two 5,000-gallon water storage tanks located within the northwest portion of the existing parcel. Their locations are shown on the Site Plan. One water supply well currently exists in the northern portion of the project site and will supply water for the project.

Per the Hydrogeologic Report (EBA Engineering, February 22, 2022), the total water use for the project site (0.21 AF/yr) equates to approximately one percent of the annual groundwater recharge during drought conditions. While the assumed drought scenario calculations do provide some context to evaluate recharge under periods of extremely limited rainfall, years exhibiting above average rainfall would provide an excess of water being available for recharge.

A septic system (SEP19-0690) is proposed for the tasting room and bathrooms in the location shown on the Site Plan. The septic system will be adequate to treat and dispose of all of the sanitary wastewater generated by the Azari tasting room.

Since the winery on the adjacent parcel is already developed, the solid waste disposal company that is currently servicing the winery will service the tasting room site.

Circulation:

Per the Focused Traffic Study (W-Trans, July 22, 2022), under Existing Conditions, Spring Hill Road operates acceptably at LOS A for both westbound and eastbound directions. With the addition of event-related traffic, Spring Hill Road would be expected to continue operating at the same service level. The project as proposed would have two driveways on Spring Hill Road associated with the permanent parking lot. Based on a review of field conditions, sight lines for the outbound project driveway on Spring Hill Road extend more than 200 feet in each direction, which is adequate for the measured approach speed. Access to the unimproved overflow parking area will be via one additional driveway on Spring Hill Road.

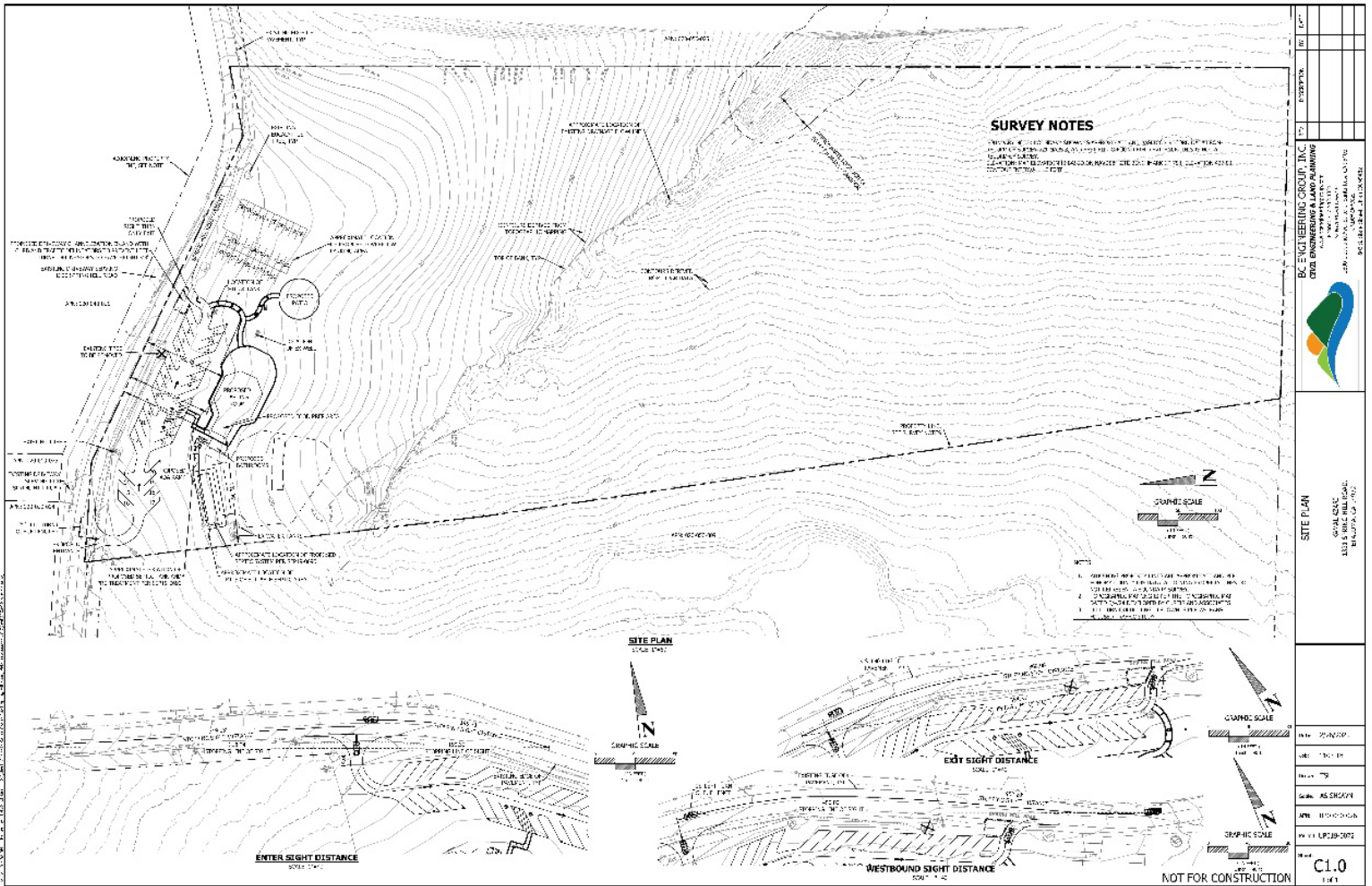


Figure 5: Overall Site Plan

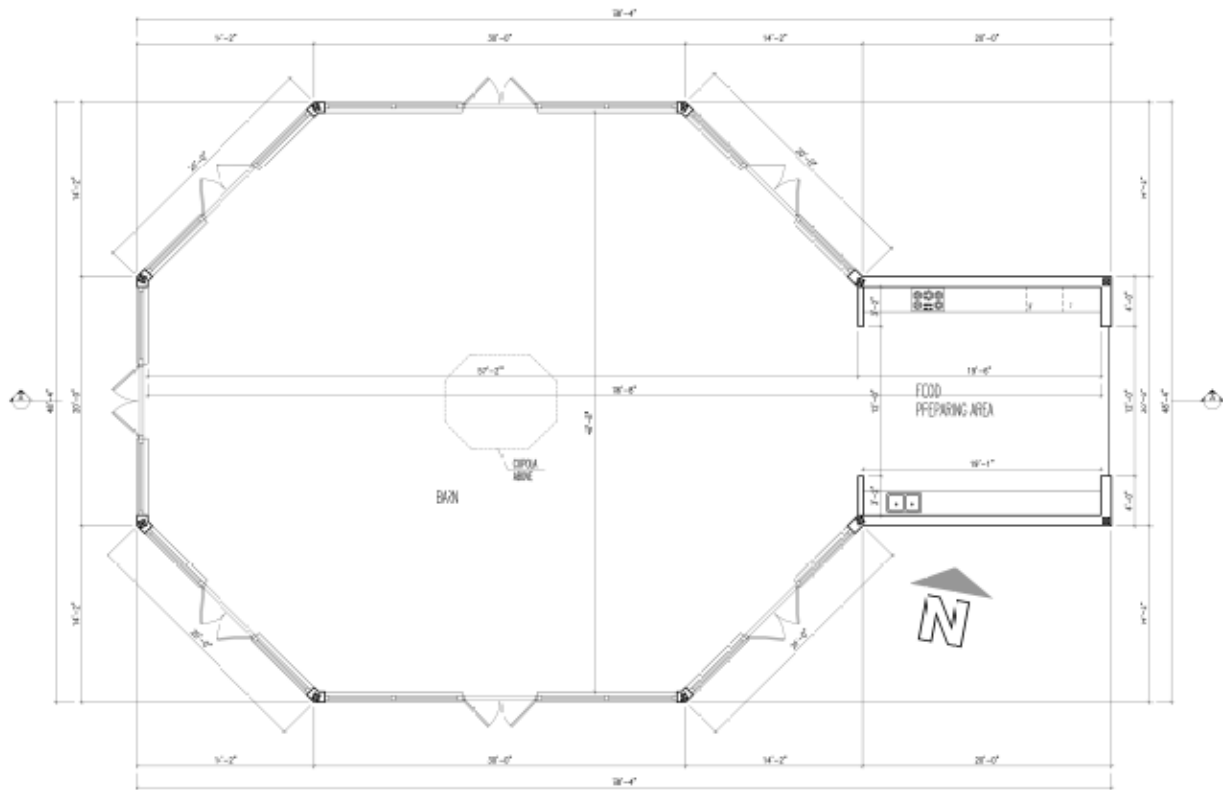
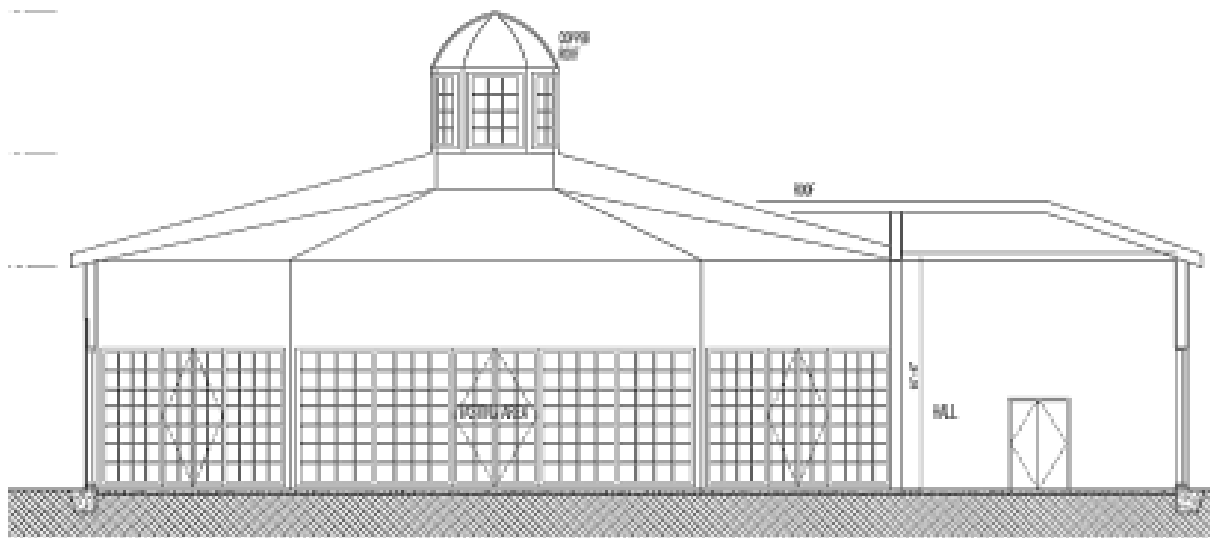
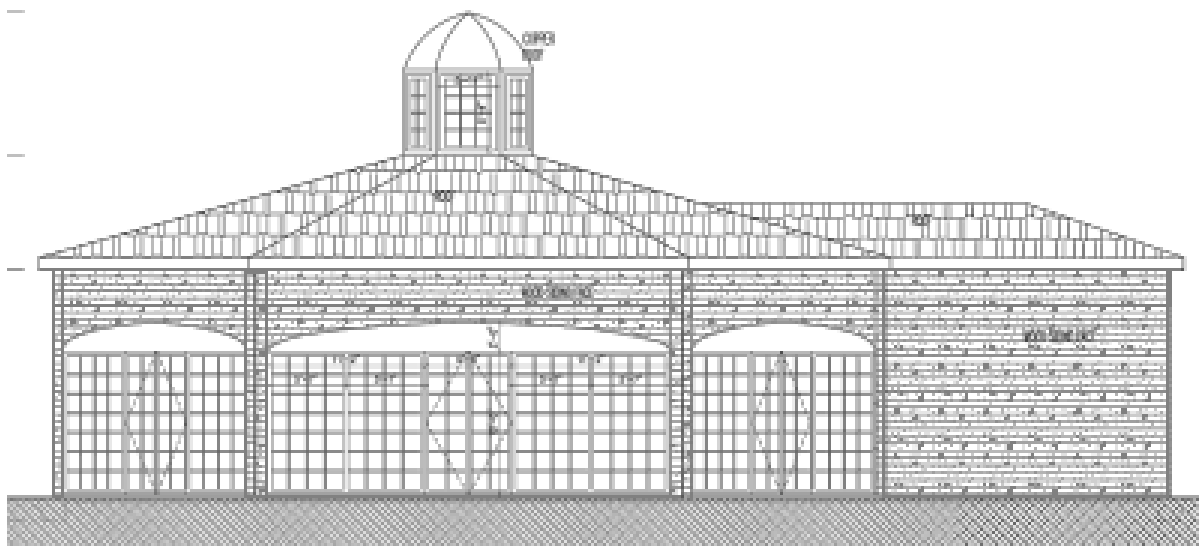


Figure 6: Tasting Room Floor Plan



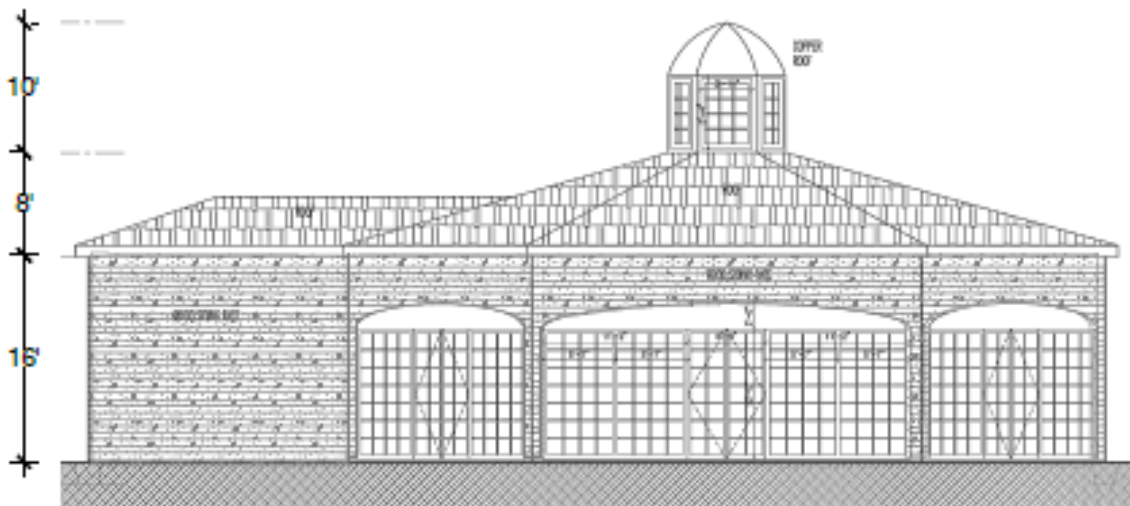
SECTION AA

Figure 7: Section AA



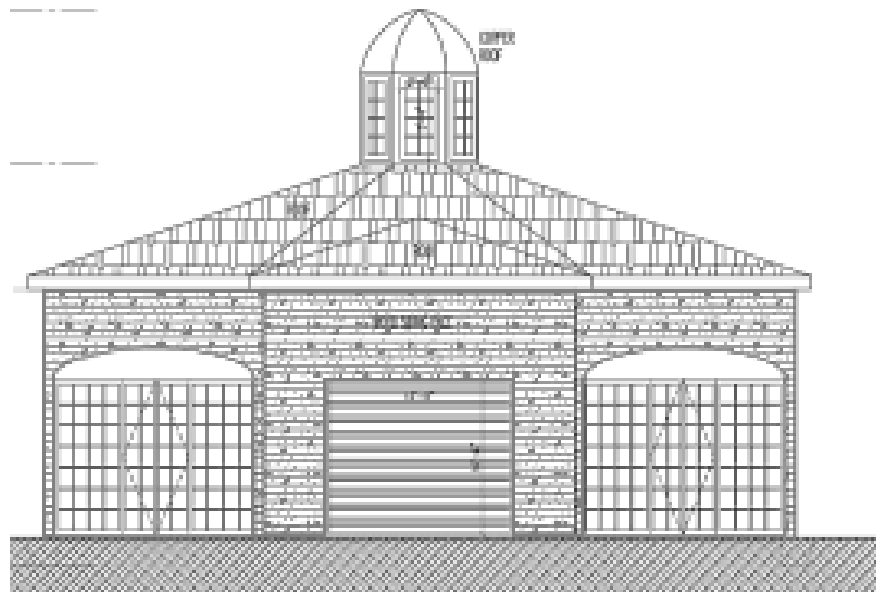
SOUTH ELEVATION

Figure 8: South Elevation



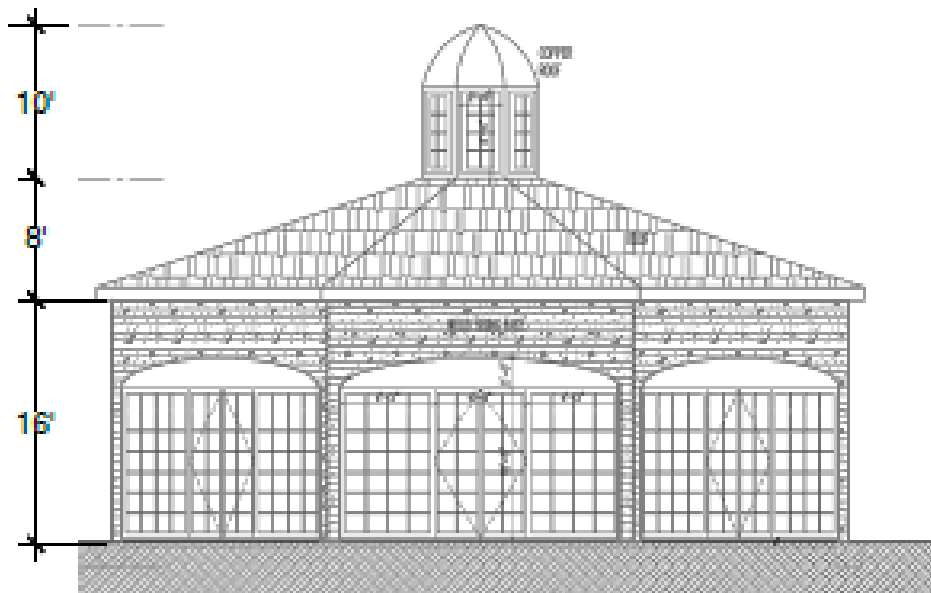
NORTH ELEVATION

Figure 9: North Elevation



WEST ELEVATION

Figure 10: Tasting Room West Elevation



EAST ELEVATION

Figure 11: Tasting Room East Elevation

IV. SETTING

The regional climate is characterized by a temperate climate with moderately warm summers, cool winters, and moderate precipitation levels. The microclimate in the Santa Rosa and Petaluma Valleys is characteristic of the transition zones between inland and coastal areas, with measurable precipitation 47 days per year, totaling 29 inches of rainfall on average.

The site vicinity is primarily dominated by similar-sized parcels that are, likewise, devoted to agricultural/vineyard/orchard activities along with dairy/chicken farming operations. No small or large parks, natural areas, or reserves exist within one mile of the site in all directions. More specifically, toward the north across from the project site, residences exist amid large upland parcels that also feature both landscaping and natural vegetation.

East and southeast of the project site, another residence occurs on a similar parcel consisting of upland, non-native grassland along with cultivated plantings. Immediately west and southwest of the project site, the owner cultivates a productive vineyard on the adjacent 1399 Spring Hill Road parcel where he resides. The owner's vineyard to the west extends into the project parcel, encompassing approximately 6-acres of productive vineyard on-site.

V. ISSUES RAISED BY THE PUBLIC OR AGENCIES

A referral packet was drafted and circulated on January 12, 2021, to inform and solicit comments from selected relevant local, state, and federal agencies, local Tribes, and to special interest groups that were anticipated to take interest in the revised project. Comments were received from Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Section, Permit Sonoma Natural Resources Section, Permit Sonoma Building Division, Permit Sonoma Project Review Health, Permit Sonoma Grading and Storm Water Section, State Water Resources Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwest Information Center, City of Petaluma Planning Department, Sonoma County Transit, and Sonoma County ACTTC-Central Collections. Their comments included recommended conditions of approval.

Assembly Bill 52 Project Notifications were sent to the Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Lytton Rancheria of California, Kashia Pomos Stewarts Point Rancheria and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

No issues were raised. Mitigation measures and standard County conditions of approval shall be incorporated into the project as presented in the Initial Study and will substantially reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant.

An Early Neighborhood Notification was posted on-site and mailed to parcel owners within a 300-foot radius buffer from the subject parcel on January 22, 2021, and no responses were received. In addition, a Hearing Notice for a March 28, 2024, Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments hearing was posted on-site and mailed to parcel owners within a 300-foot radius buffer from the subject parcel on March 18, 2024. Permit Sonoma received community member comments regarding traffic impacts, project compatibility with the neighborhood rural character, the number and intensity of visitor-serving activities and events, noise concerns, and the preservation of rural open agricultural space.

VI. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

This section analyzes the potential environmental impacts of this project based on the criteria set forth in the State CEQA Guidelines and the County's implementing ordinances and guidelines.

Each question was answered by evaluating the project as proposed without considering the effect of any added mitigation measures. The Initial Study includes a discussion of the potential impacts and identifies mitigation measures to substantially reduce those impacts to a level of less than significant where feasible. All references and sources used in this Initial Study are listed in the Reference section at the end of this report and are incorporated herein by reference.

The owner, Kamal Azari, Azari Winery, has agreed to accept all mitigation measures listed in this Initial Study as conditions of approval for the proposed project, and to obtain all necessary permits.

1. AESTHETICS:

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Scenic Corridors and Landscapes:

Pursuant to the County's *Visual Assessment Guidelines*, the project ranks "Moderate" in Site Sensitivity since the site does not meet the criteria below for low sensitivity, but the site has no land use or zoning designations protecting scenic resources. The Visual Dominance of the project is "Dominant" due to the prominence of the proposed tasting room at the top of the project site adjacent to Spring Hill Road. The Site Sensitivity and Visual Dominance Tables 9 and 10 from the County's Visual Assessment Guidelines are provided below for reference.

Table 9: Site Sensitivity Table from Sonoma County Visual Assessment Guidelines

Sensitivity	Characteristics
Low	The site is within an urban land use designation and has no land use or zoning designations protecting scenic resources. The project vicinity is characterized by urban development, or the site is surrounded by urban zoning designations and has no historic character and is not a gateway to a community. The project site terrain has visible slopes less than 20 percent and is not on a prominent ridgeline and has no significant natural vegetation of aesthetic value to the surrounding community.

Moderate	<p>The site or portion thereof is within a rural land use designation or an urban designation that does not meet the criteria above for low sensitivity, but the site has no land use or zoning designations protecting scenic resources. The project vicinity is characterized by rural or urban development but may include historic resources or be considered a gateway to a community. This category includes building or construction sites with visible slopes less than 30 percent or where there is significant natural features of aesthetic value that is visible from public roads or public use areas (i.e. parks, trails etc.).</p>
High	<p>The site or any portion thereof is within a land use or zoning designation protecting scenic or natural resources, such as General Plan designated scenic landscape units, coastal zone, community separators, or scenic corridors. The site vicinity is generally characterized by the natural setting and forms a scenic backdrop for the community or scenic corridor. This category includes building and construction areas within the SR designation located on prominent hilltops, visible slopes less than 40 percent or where there are significant natural features of aesthetic value that are visible from public roads or public use areas (i.e., parks, trails etc.). This category also includes building or construction sites on prominent ridgelines that may not be designated as scenic resources but are visible from a designated scenic corridor.</p>
Maximum	<p>The site or any portion thereof is within a land use or zoning designation protecting scenic resources, such as General Plan designated scenic landscape units, coastal zone, community separators, or scenic corridors. The site vicinity is generally characterized by the natural setting and forms a scenic backdrop for a designated scenic corridor. This category includes building or construction sites within the scenic resource designation on or near prominent ridgelines, visible slopes greater than 40 percent or where there are significant natural features of aesthetic value that are visible from a designated scenic corridor.</p>

Dominance	Characteristics
Dominant	Project elements are strong – they stand out against the setting and attract attention away from the surrounding landscape. Form, line, color, texture, and night lighting contrast with existing elements in the surrounding landscape.
Co-Dominant	Project elements are moderate – they can be prominent within the setting, but attract attention equally with other landscape features. Form, line, color, texture, and night lighting are compatible with their surroundings.
Subordinate	Project is minimally visible from public view. Element contrasts are weak – they can be seen but do not attract attention. Project generally repeats the form, line, color, texture, and night lighting of its surroundings.
Inevident	Project is generally not visible from public view because of intervening natural land forms or vegetation.

Table 10: Visual Dominance

Comment: The project site is not within a Scenic Resource designation. The proposed tasting room is located at the top of the property clearly visible from Spring Hill Road and the proposed parking lot is located adjacent to Spring Hill Road. The tasting room will have wood siding, the roof will be red composite shingles, and the roof of the cupola on top of the tasting room will be copper. The windows will be custom-built aluminum. Sashes will be a bronze coloration.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Comment: The project site is not on a State scenic highway. The project will not damage any historic buildings.

Significance Level: No Impact.

c) In non-urbanized areas substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Comment: The tasting room will have wood siding and be set back from Spring Hill Road. The parking lot will be adjacent to the road but will be partially screened by the existing eucalyptus trees. There is existing development across Spring Hill Road. The project will not cause a degradation to the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Comment: Exterior night lighting could create a new source of light and glare in the area. Exterior lighting shall be low-mounted, downward-casting, and fully shielded to prevent glare. Light fixtures shall not be located at the periphery of the property and shall not spill over onto adjacent properties or into the night sky. Flood lights are not permitted. Tasting and winery events will only occur during the day, 11am – 5pm. All parking lot lights shall be full cut-off fixtures and shall not exceed 4 feet in height. Lighting shall shut off automatically after closing and security lighting shall be motion-sensor activated.

Significance Level: Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated

Mitigation Measure VIS-1. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall provide an exterior lighting plan demonstrating that County standards will be met.

Mitigation Monitoring VIS-1. Staff will assess the lighting plan to ensure that the above requirements are met. Site lighting will be inspected after installation to verify compliance.

2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES:

Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

Comment: The project will not cause the removal of any vines and the zoning will remain as Land Extensive Agriculture; the parcel is considered a Farmland of Local Importance, Grazing Land, Other Land. As the project area is currently undeveloped and unused as grazing or vineyard, the project would not convert agricultural land to a non-agricultural use.

Significance Level: No Impact.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or Williamson Act Contract?

Comment: The project site is not under a Williamson Act contract. The property is designated Land Extensive Agriculture by the Sonoma County General Plan. The General Plan policy for Land Extensive Agricultural states that agricultural production, agricultural support uses, and visitor-serving uses, as provided in the Agricultural Resources Element of the General Plan, are allowed uses, provided a Use Permit is approved.

The proposed project must be found consistent with the General Plan's Agricultural Element Goals, Objectives and Policies, which include the following:

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.”*

The proposed tasting room will contain a 2,409 square foot tasting area for wine produced on-site (adjacent to the subject parcel, owned by same applicant) and an approximately 400 square foot food preparation area. The food preparation area is proposed to be utilized to warm prepared food catered for the proposed special events. Restrooms are proposed in a separate 302-square foot building located 8-feet from the proposed tasting room building. A total of 4,973-square feet of patio and walkways are proposed along with a 2,000-square foot terrace.

Twenty wine tasters a day are expected. Seven (7) winery events (5 Agricultural Promotional Events and 2 Industry-Wide Events) per year are proposed at the tasting room with 125 guests per event and 9 employees, which include the 2 tasting room employees. A new permanent parking lot with 30 spaces is proposed adjacent to the new tasting room building, along with an overflow parking area with 29 spaces proposed to the east adjacent to the permanent lot. Two new driveways are proposed to allow access and egress, respectively, to the parking lot from Spring Hill Road.

The proposed UPE19-0072 tasting room will serve wine and olive oil produced from vineyards and trees on-site and in a production facility on the 16.72-acre parcel (APN 020-050-009) adjacent to the west of the subject parcel, which is permitted (UPE06-0055) for a maximum annual production of 8,000 cases of wine produced from grapes primarily grown on-site. No tasting or special events were approved as part of UPE06-0055.

The LEA (Land Extensive Agriculture) zoning district of the Zoning Ordinance allows for tasting rooms per Sec. 26-18-210. Tasting rooms must be consistent with general plan policies AR 6-d and AR 6-f.

Policy AR-6d: *“Follow these guidelines for approval of visitor serving uses in agricultural areas:*

- (1) The use promotes and markets only agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.*
- (2) The use is compatible with and secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities in the area.*
- (3) The use will not require the extension of sewer and water.*
- (4) The use is compatible with existing uses in the area.*
- (5) Hotels, motels, resorts, and similar lodging are not allowed.*
- (6) Activities that promote and market agricultural products 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 are allowed.*
- (7) Special events on agricultural lands or agriculture related events on other lands in the Sonoma Valley Planning Area will be subject to a pilot event coordination program which includes tracking and monitoring of visitor serving activities and schedule management, as necessary, to reduce cumulative impacts.*

Winery events have been found consistent with the agricultural zoning districts, including the LEA zoning district, if the events can be found to promote agricultural products processed on the site. In addition, such events can be found compatible with surrounding agricultural activities if hours and the frequency of the events are limited and there are no substantial noise or traffic impacts as a result of the activities.

Winery events relate to promoting and selling an agricultural product that is produced on the site, such as wine and creating label recognition. The wine is produced on the parcel adjacent to where the winery is located. Winery events are a compatible use for agricultural land because they are a marketing tool to ensure the long-term viability of wine sales and they promote the long-term viability of agriculture within the County. The addition of events at this site will not exceed in the level of service capacity for roads in the project vicinity. The project would not require the extension of sewer or water.

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 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

The project site is not located within a local area of concentration of wineries.

Significance Level: No Impact.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526) or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?

Comment: The project site is not under the TP (Timberland Production) zoning district, nor will the project conflict with or cause a change to lands under TP zoning.

Significance Level: No Impact.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Comment: The project does not result in a loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The project site has been used for agriculture (a winery) since 1881.

Significance Level: No Impact.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

Comment: The project does not involve other changes in the environment that could result in conversion of farmland to non-agricultural use or forest land to non-forest use.

Significance Level: No Impact.

3. AIR QUALITY:

Where applicable, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.

Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Comment: The project is within the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which is currently designated as a nonattainment area for State and federal ozone standards, the State PM₁₀ standard, and State and federal PM_{2.5} standards. The District has adopted an Ozone Attainment Plan and a Clean Air Plan in compliance with federal and State Clean Air Acts. These plans include measures to achieve compliance with both ozone standards. The plans deal primarily with emissions of ozone precursors (nitrogen oxides [NO_x] and volatile organic compounds, also referred to as Reactive Organic Gases [ROG]). The project will not conflict with the District's air quality plans because the proposed project does not involve construction or development that would generate substantial emissions.

Significance Level: No Impact.

b) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Comment: State and Federal governments have established standards for six criteria air pollutants: ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and particulates with a diameter of less than 10 and 2.5 microns (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, respectively). In addition to criteria air pollutants, there are other, secondary pollutants that can lead to the formation of criteria air pollutants. For example, nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) react with sunlight and can lead to the formation of ground level ozone.

Since the geographic area is within the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) jurisdiction, their ACEQA thresholds apply to the project.

the BAAQMD is currently designated as a nonattainment area for State and federal ozone standards, the State PM₁₀ standard, and State and federal PM_{2.5} standards.

The project will not have a cumulative effect on ozone because it will not generate substantial traffic which would result in substantial emissions of ozone precursors (ROG and NO_x). See discussion in Section 17, Transportation Traffic, below.

The project will have no long-term effect on PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, because all surfaces will be paved, gravel, landscaped, or otherwise treated to stabilize bare soils, and dust generation will be insignificant. However, there could be a significant short-term emission of dust (which would include PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) during construction. These emissions could be significant at the project level and could also contribute to a cumulative impact.

Construction Emissions

Per the *Azari Vineyards Tasting Room Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis* (Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., July 7, 2021), construction of the project would emit 226 metric tons of CO_{2e}. Neither the County of Sonoma nor the BAAQMD have quantified thresholds for construction activities. However, the analysis concludes the emissions would be below the lowest threshold adopted by BAAQMD and could be considered less-than-significant. BAAQMD recommends quantifying emissions and disclosing that GHG emissions would occur during construction. BAAQMD also encourages the incorporation of best management practices to reduce GHG emissions during construction where feasible and applicable. Emissions of air pollutants or their precursors would be well below BAAQMD- thresholds. See GHG section below for further information on GHG emissions and climate change.

Operational Emissions

The *Sonoma County General Plan Resource Conservation Element* addresses pollutants from mobile sources (e.g., transportation sources). The project will create traffic; therefore, the following goal would

be relevant to the proposed project:

Goal RC-13: *Preserve and maintain good air quality and provide for an air quality standard that will protect human health and preclude crop, plant, and property damage in accordance with requirements of the federal and State CAA's (Clean Air Act).*

State and Federal standards have been established for the “criteria pollutants”: ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, and particulate (PM10 and PM2.5). To determine whether standards for any of these pollutants would be violated, the emissions from both stationary and mobile sources must be considered.

The project would not add any new equipment or processes that would have significant emissions or require permits from the air district.

Mobile emissions are criteria pollutants that would result from additional traffic generated by the project. The project would cause mobile emissions because it would add traffic, however, the increase over the existing traffic at the site would be very small. Mobile emissions from planned special events were calculated in a separate model run and were based on a scenario involving ten 200-person events annually. W-Trans predicts 22 daily trips and an average of 110 trips for each special event (*Focused Traffic Study for the Azari Tasting room Project*, July 22, 2021). This level of daily traffic, including periodic events is below the screening criteria for Vehicles Miles traveled due to the relatively low trip count. Annually, the project would potentially generate 8,030 trips (22 trips x 365 days) and the special events would generate 1,100 trips (110 trips x 10 events). On an annual basis, event trips would represent 14 percent of the typical mobile emissions. The CalEEMod predicted annual mobile emissions were increased by 14 percent to account for ten special events per year. Based on the scope of the project, the emissions analysis concludes emission of criteria pollutants would be less than significant. Similarly, GHG emissions would be insignificant and not result in significant climate impacts provided the project meets its fair share of reduction as discussed under the GHG section below.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

In conclusion, air quality impacts would be reduced to less than significant by including dust control measures as described in the following mitigation measure:

Mitigation Measure AIR-1: The following dust control measures shall be included in the project:

- a. Water or alternative dust control method shall be sprayed to control dust on construction areas, soil stockpiles, and staging areas during construction as directed by the County.
- b. Trucks hauling soil, sand, and other loose materials over public roads will cover the loads or will keep the loads at least two feet below the level of the sides of the container or will wet the load sufficiently to prevent dust emissions.
- c. Vehicle speeds on unpaved areas shall be limited to 15 miles per hour.
- d. Final surfacing (i.e., pavement or concrete, gravel, landscaping) shall be completed as soon as possible after earthwork is finished, unless seeding or soil binders are used.
- e. Idling time of diesel-powered construction equipment shall be limited to five minutes. Signs shall be posted reminding workers of this idling restriction at all access points and equipment staging areas during construction of the proposed project.
- f. All construction equipment shall be maintained and properly tuned in accordance with manufacturer's specifications and shall have a CARB-certified visible emissions evaluator check equipment prior to use at the site.

- g. Trackout shall not be allowed at any active exit from the project site onto an adjacent paved public roadway or shoulder of a paved public roadway that exceeds cumulative 25 linear feet and creates fugitive dust visible emissions without cleaning up such trackout within 4 hours of when the Construction Coordinator identifies such excessive trackout, and shall not allow more than 1 quart of trackout to remain on the adjacent paved public roadway or the paved shoulder of the paved public roadway at the end of any workday.
- h. Visible emissions of fugitive dust shall not be allowed during cleanup of any trackout that exceeds 20 percent opacity as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency in *Method 203B – Opacity Determination for Time-Exception Regulations (August 2017)*. Trackout is defined by BAAQMD in *Regulation 6, Rule 6: Prohibition of Trackout (August 2018)* as “any sand, soil, dirt, bulk materials or other solid particles from a site that adhere to or agglomerate on the exterior surfaces of vehicles (including tires), and subsequently fall or are dislodged onto a paved public roadway or the paved shoulder of a paved public roadway on the path that vehicles follow at any exist and extending 50-feet out onto the paved public roadway beyond the boundary of the site. Material that has collected on the roadway from erosion is not trackout.”

Monitoring: Permit Sonoma staff shall verify that the AIR-1 measures are included on all site alteration, grading, building, or improvement plans prior to issuance of grading or building permits.

c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Comment: Sensitive receptors are facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollutants. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors. Localized impacts to sensitive receptors generally occur when sources of air pollutants and sensitive receptors are located near one another. The surrounding area is a mix of agricultural and rural residential uses. The proposed project would not create an incompatible situation as the commercial use of the project site does not involve stationary or point sources of air pollutants which generate substantial pollutant concentrations.

Although there will be no substantial long-term increase in emissions, during construction there could be short term dust emissions that would affect nearby residents. Dust emissions can be reduced to less than significant by Mitigation Measure AIR-1.

Significance Level: Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated.

Mitigation
See AIR-1

d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Comment: The project is not an odor-generating use, nor located near an odor-generating source that may affect sensitive receptors. The use would have no significant odor impacts.

Construction equipment may generate odors during project construction. The impact would be less than significant due to the distant proximity of sensitive receptors and construction would be short-term that ceases upon completion of the project.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

- a) **Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Comment: According to the *Biological Assessment Report* (Daniel Edelstein Consulting Biologist and Certified Wildlife Biologist Asc., October 28, 2021), the proposed project will not have a substantial adverse effect. Surveys did not yield the presence of any rare, special-status animal and floristic species on the site. All of the botanical special-status species were assessed based on the results of a query at the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) and the CNPS web site for the Petaluma 7.5-minute United States Geological Service (USGS) quadrangle. There are no known special status species on the project site, and none listed on the State's Diversity Database. No significant impact to special-status animals or plants or critical habitat is expected by the project. However, the Biological Assessment Report recommends the following avoidance and minimization measures prior to the beginning of groundbreaking and construction at the project site.

Significance Level: Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: The following Mitigation Measure shall be printed on all grading and building permit sheets:

"If construction on the project site occurs between February 1 and August 31, an Avian Biologist must conduct surveys for nesting songbird and raptor species in accordance with established California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) survey protocols. Surveys should cover the Site and all suitable nesting habitat within 500 feet of its boundaries. If nesting songbird or raptor species are detected, the Avian Biologist must establish buffers around nests that are sufficient to ensure that breeding is not likely to be disrupted or adversely impacted by construction. Buffers around active songbird nests will be 75 feet and 500 feet for non-listed raptors, unless a qualified biologist determines that smaller buffers would be sufficient to avoid impacts to nesting raptors. Factors to be considered for determining buffer size will include: the presence of natural buffers provided by vegetation or topography; nest height; locations of foraging territory; and baseline levels of noise and human activity. Buffers will be maintained until the Avian Biologist has determined that young have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or parental care for survival."

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-1:

Prior to issuance of grading and building permits, the Project Planner will verify the note is printed on all grading and building permit plan sheets and verify surveys are conducted as noted.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2:

The following Mitigation Measure shall be printed on all grading and building permit sheets:

"Pre-construction survey for the American Badger should be conducted in development zones no fewer than 14 days and no more than 30 days prior to the beginning of ground disturbance and/or construction activities at the project site, or for any Project activity likely to impact the American Badger. If construction activities (including ground disturbing activities) are phased, then so shall the pre-construction surveys be phased.

- (a) *If dens are found within the construction area and require removal, they shall be monitored for badger presence using a tracking medium or a video probe. Tracking medium must be monitored for three consecutive days to provide evidence of vacancy. All dens and burrows within the construction area and which contain badger sign must be hand excavated by a trained Wildlife*

Biologist. If a den is found to be occupied by an American Badger, the den shall not be excavated until the badger is allowed to passively vacate the den.

- (b) If dens are located within 100 feet of construction areas, but not within construction areas, they shall not be removed. Instead, exclusion fencing should be added to ensure no encroachment of equipment. The exclusion fencing around each observed badger burrow shall consist of plastic construction fencing held in place by t-posts every 25 feet, or by a rope and flagging fence. The purpose of the fencing is to exclude construction activities occurring near the den (s).*
- (c) To ensure the above design prescription is executed successfully, an important design feature should occur: Gaps of three feet should be present every 25 feet in a fence to allow a badger to go in and out. Consequently, construction equipment will not be able to encroach within 100 feet of a burrow, but the gaps will allow a badger to get around a fence, if necessary. The fencing should be around the outside of any burrow, equidistant from it 100 feet in all directions to prevent construction equipment encroachment.*
- (d) Project-related vehicles shall observe a 20-mph speed limit while on the Site. This is particularly important at night (between sunset and sunrise) when American badgers are most active. Construction activities at night (sunset to sunrise) should be prohibited.*
- (e) To prevent inadvertent entrapment of American badgers or other animals during the construction phase of the project, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals by a qualified biologist or trained monitor.
 - i. In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape. If an entrapped animal is incapable of escaping or is otherwise trapped for an excess of 12 hours, the California Department of Fish and Game should be contacted for advice.*
 - ii. All construction pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater that are stored in an unfenced storage yard for one or more overnight periods should be thoroughly inspected the qualified Wildlife Biologist for American Badgers before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in anyway. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of a Wildlife Biologist, a pipe inhabited by a badger may be moved once to remove it from the path of construction activity, until the animal has escaped.”**

Mitigation Monitoring BIO-2:

Prior to issuance of grading and building permits, the Project Planner will verify the note is printed on all grading and building permit plan sheets and verify surveys are conducted as noted.

- b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

Comment: The project site is not designated with a BR (Biotic Resource) Combining District and there are no designated critical habitat areas within the project site. The project does have an RC (Riparian Corridor) with 50-foot setbacks. However, the drainage/watercourse existing south of the project site would not be impacted. The project does not include any direct disturbance along a riparian habitat or designated sensitive natural community.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

- c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?**

Comment: Per the *Biological Assessment Report* states no jurisdictional wetland habitat or waters of California habitat exists on the project site, plus no nexus or connectivity exists from the project site to the off-site watercourse. The project site does not involve any direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption of any federally protected wetlands.

Significance Level: No Impact.

- d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**

Comment: The project site is not zoned BH (Biotic Habitat) Combining Zone. There are no designated or critical habitat areas within the project site. The project will not interfere with the movement of migratory fish or wildlife species.

Significance Level: No Impact.

- e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?**

Comment: No trees would be removed with the project development. No biological resources would be impacted by the project.

Significance Level: No Impact.

- f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?**

Comment: Habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans are site-specific plans to address effects on sensitive species of plants and animals. The project site is not located in an area subject to a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

Significance Level: No Impact.

5. CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Assembly Bill 52 Project Notifications were sent to the Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Lytton Rancheria of California, Kashia Pomo Stewarts Point Rancheria and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. These Native American tribes were invited to consult on the project pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2.

Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Comment: A Cultural Resources Survey was prepared for the project. The site is undeveloped, therefore, no historical resources pursuant to §15064.5 are present.

Significance Level: No Impact.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

Comment: A Cultural Resources Survey was prepared for the project. No archaeological finds were recorded as a result of the survey. See section 18.a. below for standard condition of approval to ensure that cultural or archaeological resources are protected if unearthed during ground-disturbing activities.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Comment: There are no known archaeological resources on the site, but the project could uncover such materials during construction. In the event that human remains are unearthed during construction, state law requires that the County Coroner be contacted in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the State Health and Safety Code to investigate the nature and circumstances of the discovery. If the remains were determined to be Native American interment, the Coroner will follow the procedure outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065.5(e).

A standard condition of approval requires the following language be printed on the grading and building plans:

NOTES ON PLANS: “If human remains are encountered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the discovered remains and PRMD staff, County Coroner and a qualified archaeologist must be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American and prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted by the Coroner so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated.”

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

6. ENERGY

Would the project:

a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Comment: Illingworth & Rodkin (Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis) found the proposed project would have direct and indirect emissions that are below the former GHG operational threshold (1,100 metric tons of CO₂e per year) recommended by BAAQMD for new project. This analysis considers updated GHG thresholds adopted by the BAAQMD in 2022, which relies on prescriptive standards related to

Building Operations and Transportation and more of a qualitative analysis requiring that each project due its fair share to reduce climate change. As documented in the GHG analysis in Section 8. below the project would meet the current BAAQMD thresholds; therefore, the project’s GHG emissions would not significantly contribute to a cumulative impact on global climate change.

The project will not result in significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation. Short-term energy demand would result from construction activities including energy needed to power worker and vendor vehicle trips as well as construction equipment. Long-term energy demand would result from operation of the project, which would include activities such as lighting, heating, and cooling of structures. Consistent with BAAQMD, the facility would operate on electricity and no gas-powered appliances are permitted. In addition, the proposal includes use of solar panels to the maximum extent feasible to reduce demand on non-renewable energy resources.

Although implementation of the project would result in an increase in energy usage compared to current conditions due to the new structures on the project site, the increase in energy use would not be wasteful nor inefficient because of measures incorporated into project design, including energy-efficient building design meeting CALGreen requirements.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Comment: The project would be required to comply with Title 24, Part 6 of the California Code of Regulations, Building Energy Efficiency Standards. Additionally, the project is not located in an identified area designated for renewable energy productions nor would the project interfere with the installation of any renewable energy systems. Therefore, the project would not conflict with or obstruct with applicable State and local plans for promoting use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. The project owner has committed to utilizing rooftop solar on all south-facing roofs, has designed the project to be all-electric (no natural gas) and utilize LED lighting fixtures throughout the project, and is proposing to provide EV-capable parking spaces. Current CALGreen Tier II requirements for EVs (Sec. 5.106.5) would require 17 EV capable spaces; the project is proposing 17 EV-capable parking spots in compliance with requirements:

TABLE 5.106.5.3.1

TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTUAL PARKING SPACES	NUMBER OF REQUIRED EV CAPABLE SPACES	NUMBER OF EVCS (EV CAPABLE SPACES PROVIDED WITH EVSE) ²
0-9	0	0
10-25	4	0
26-50	8	2
51-75	13	3
76-100	17	4
101-150	25	6
151-200	35	9
201 and over	20 percent of total ¹	25 percent of EV capable spaces ¹

1. Calculation for spaces shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number.
2. The number of required EVCS (EV capable spaces provided with EVSE) in column 3 count toward the total number of required EV capable spaces shown in column 2.

CALGreen Tier 2 Electric Vehicle Requirements – Table 5.106.5.3.1

Significance Level: No Impact.

7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

- a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss,

injury, or death involving:

- i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.**

Comment: The site is not located in an Alquist-Priolo fault zone based on the Safety Maps in the Sonoma County General Plan. The project zoning does not include G (Geologic Hazard Area) Combining District per the Zoning Ordinance.

Significance Level: No Impact

- ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?**

Comment: All of Sonoma County is subject to seismic shaking that would result from earthquakes along the San Andreas, Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek, and other faults. Predicting seismic events is not possible at this time, nor is providing mitigation that can entirely reduce the potential for injury and damage that can occur during a seismic event. A building permit must be obtained to permit the tasting room. Seismic safety requirements will be mandated. The project would not likely result in a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from seismic ground failure.

Significance Level: No Impact

- iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?**

Comment: The project would not likely result in a significant risk of loss, injury, or death from seismic ground failure or liquefaction. The California Building Code and the codes and policies of Sonoma County have been developed to address seismic hazards to the most reasonable extent possible. The Project will have to show that the construction of the tasting room complies with the design and construction is in compliance with the seismic design requirements of the California Building Code (CBC).

Significance Level: No Impact

- iv. Landslides?**

Comment: The project site is not located in a landslide prone area per the California Landslides Inventory map at <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/maps-data>.

Significance Level: No Impact

- b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?**

Comment: The project will not result in a substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

- c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?**

Comment: The project site is subject to seismic shaking as described in item 7.a.ii. No further mitigation is required.

Significance Level: No Impact

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Comment: The project includes a tasting room. It will not create a substantial risk to life or property.

Significance Level: No Impact

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

Comment:

Tasting room domestic wastewater shall be disposed of in a non-standard type septic system to the west and southwest of the proposed tasting room, in the area of the pre-perc site inspection performed under SEV07-0960 and the percolation test performed under SEV07-1062. The septic system shall be designed in accordance with the current OWTS Manual and be sized to accommodate the domestic wastewater generated by the proposed use, including domestic wastewater generated by employees, wine tasters, and special event guests.

The applicant is working with the Permit Sonoma Well & Septic Section per the SEP19-0690 permit application for a new nonstandard at-grade mound septic system. The “limits of the suitable septic system” plus the locations of the tanks per SEP19-0690 are indicated on the Site Plan.

Any necessary system design and demonstration of reserve areas shall be done under permit and the current standards from the Permit Sonoma Well and Septic Section, and may require both soils analysis, groundwater and percolation testing. If a permit for a standard, innovative, or experimental sewage disposal system sized to meet all peak flows proves infeasible, then the applicant shall revise the project to a reduced size, not to exceed the on-site disposal capabilities of the project site and attendant easements. The Well and Septic Section shall not sign off on building permits until all required septic system testing and design elements have been met.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Comment: No unique geological features exist on the property to be impacted by the proposed project.

Significance Level: No Impact

8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS:

Regulatory Setting

Executive Order S-3-05

The Governor announced on June 1, 2005, through Executive Order S-3-05, the following GHG emission

reduction targets:

- By 2010, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 2000 levels;
- By 2020, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels; and
- By 2050, California shall reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels.

Executive Order B-30-15

On April 29, 2015, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-30-15. Therein, the Governor directed the following:

- Established a new interim statewide reduction target to reduce GHG emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.
- Ordered all state agencies with jurisdiction over sources of GHG emissions to implement measures to achieve reductions of GHG emissions to meet the 2030 and 2050 reduction targets.
- Directed CARB to update the Climate Change Scoping Plan to express the 2030 target in terms of million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32)

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted Assembly Bill (AB) 32 (codified in the California Health and Safety Code [HSC], Division 25.5 – California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006), which focuses on reducing GHG emissions in California to 1990 levels by 2020. HSC Division 25.5 defines GHGs as CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, HFCs, PFCs, and SF₆ and represents the first enforceable statewide program to limit emissions of these GHGs from all major industries with penalties for noncompliance. The law further requires that reduction measures be technologically feasible and cost effective. Under HSC Division 25.5, CARB has the primary responsibility for reducing GHG emissions. CARB is required to adopt rules and regulations directing state actions that would achieve GHG emissions reductions equivalent to 1990 statewide levels by 2020.

A specific requirement of AB 32 was to prepare a Climate Change Scoping Plan for achieving the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG emission reduction by 2020. CARB developed and approved the initial Scoping Plan in 2008, outlining the regulations, market-based approaches, voluntary measures, policies, and other emission reduction programs that would be needed to meet the 2020 statewide GHG emission limit and initiate the transformations needed to achieve the State's long-range climate objectives.

The First Update to the Scoping Plan was approved by CARB in May 2014 and built upon the initial Scoping Plan with new strategies and recommendations. In 2014, CARB revised the target using the GWP values from the IPCC AR4 and determined that the 1990 GHG emissions inventory and 2020 GHG emissions limit is 431 MMTCO₂e. CARB also updated the State's BAU 2020 emissions estimate to account for the effect of the 2007–2009 economic recession, new estimates for future fuel and energy demand, and the reductions required by regulation that were adopted for motor vehicles and renewable energy.

Senate Bill 97

SB 97, enacted in 2007, directed OPR to develop California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (*CEQA Guidelines*) "for the mitigation of GHG emissions or the effects of GHG emissions." In December 2009, OPR adopted amendments to the *CEQA Guidelines*, Appendix G Environmental Checklist, which created a new resource section for GHG emissions and indicated criteria that may be used to establish significance of GHG emissions. Appendix F of the *CEQA Guidelines* states that, in order to ensure that energy implications are considered in project decisions, the potential energy implications of a project shall be considered in an EIR, to the extent relevant and applicable to the project. Appendix F of the *CEQA Guidelines* further states that a project's energy consumption and proposed conservation measures may be addressed, as relevant and applicable, in the Project Description, Environmental Setting, and Impact Analysis portions of technical sections, as well as through mitigation measures and alternatives.

Senate Bill 32 and Assembly Bill 197

In 2016, Senate Bill (SB) 32 and its companion bill AB 197, amended HSC Division 25.5 and established a new climate pollution reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, while including provisions to ensure the benefits of state climate policies reach into disadvantaged communities.

2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update

In response to SB 32 and the 2030 GHG reduction target, CARB approved the 2017 Climate Change Scoping Plan Update (2017 Scoping Plan Update) in December 2017. The 2017 Scoping Plan Update outlines the proposed framework of action for achieving the 2030 GHG target of 40 percent reduction in GHG emissions relative to 1990 levels (CARB, 2017). CARB determined that the target Statewide 2030 emissions limit is 260 MMTCO_{2e}, and that further commitments will need to be made to achieve an additional reduction of 50 MMTCO_{2e} beyond current policies and programs. The cornerstone of the 2017 Scoping Plan Update is an expansion of the Cap-and-Trade program to meet the aggressive 2030 GHG emissions goal and ensure achievement of the 2030 limit set forth by Executive Order B-30-15.

In the Update, CARB recommends statewide targets of no more than six metric tons CO_{2e} per capita by 2030 and no more than two metric tons CO_{2e} per capita by 2050. CARB acknowledges that since the statewide per capita targets are based on the statewide GHG emissions inventory that includes all emissions sectors in the State, it is appropriate for local jurisdictions to derive evidence-based local per-capita goals based on local emissions sectors and growth projections. To demonstrate how a local jurisdiction can achieve their long-term GHG goals at the community plan level, CARB recommends developing a geographically-specific GHG reduction plan (i.e., climate action plan) consistent with the requirements of CEQA Section 15183.5(b). A so-called “CEQA-qualified” GHG reduction plan, once adopted, can provide local governments with a streamlining tool for project-level environmental review of GHG emissions, provided there are adequate performance metrics for determining project consistency with the plan.

Sonoma County Regional Climate Action Plan

Climate Action 2020 and Beyond (CA2020) was the regional climate action plan for Sonoma County, adopted by the Sonoma County Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) on July 11, 2016. CA2020 was not adopted as a qualified GHG reduction plan due to legal challenges and subsequent court decision. However, the underlying GHG emissions analysis and GHG inventory provides the basis for deriving a GHG threshold of significance.

California CEQA Guidelines

State CEQA Guidelines section 15064.4 specifically addresses the significance of GHG emissions, requiring a lead agency to make a “good-faith effort” to “describe, calculate or estimate” GHG emissions in CEQA environmental documents. Section 15064.4 further states that the analysis of GHG impacts should include consideration of (1) the extent to which the project may increase or reduce GHG emissions, (2) whether the project emissions would exceed a locally applicable threshold of significance, and (3) the extent to which the project would comply with “regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.”

The CEQA Guidelines do not require or recommend a specific analytical methodology or provide quantitative criteria for determining the significance of GHG emissions, nor do they set a numerical threshold of significance for GHG emissions. The 2009 amendments also include a new Subdivision 15064.7(c) which clarifies that in developing thresholds of significance, a lead agency may appropriately review thresholds developed by other public agencies, or recommended by other experts, provided the decision of the lead agency to adopt such thresholds is supported by substantial evidence.

The California Natural Resources Agency has also clarified that the amended CEQA Guidelines focus on the effects of GHG emissions as cumulative impacts, and that they should be analyzed in the context of CEQA’s requirements for cumulative impact analysis (see Section 15064(h)(3)).

CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4(c) includes the following direction on measures to mitigate GHG emissions, when such emissions are found to be significant:

Consistent with Section 15126.4(a), lead agencies shall consider feasible means, supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring or reporting, of mitigating the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions. Measures to mitigate the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions may include, among others:

- (1) Measures in an existing plan or mitigation program for the reduction of emissions that are required as part of the lead agency's decision;
- (2) Reductions in emissions resulting from a project through implementation of project features, project design, or other measures;
- (3) Off-site measures, including offsets that are not otherwise required, to mitigate a project's emissions;
- (4) Measures that sequester greenhouse gases;

Bay Area Air Quality Management District 2022 Thresholds for Land-Use Projects

Projects must include, at a minimum, the following project design elements:

1. Buildings
 - a. The project will not include natural gas appliances or natural gas plumbing (in both residential and nonresidential development).
 - b. The project will not result in any wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary energy usage as determined by the analysis required under CEQA Section 21100(b)(3) and Section 15126.2(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines.
2. Transportation
 - a. Achieve a reduction in project-generated vehicle miles traveled (VMT) below the regional average consistent with the current version of the California Climate Change Scoping Plan (currently 15 percent) or meet a locally adopted Senate Bill 743 VMT target, reflecting the recommendations provided in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research's Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA:
 - a. Residential projects: 15 percent below the existing VMT per capita
 - b. Office projects: 15 percent below the existing VMT per employee
 - c. Retail projects: no net increase in existing VMT
 - d. Achieve compliance with off-street electric vehicle requirements in the most recently adopted version of CALGreen Tier 2.

Would the project:

- a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?**

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Senate Bill (SB) 743 established a change in the metric to be applied for determining transportation impacts associated with development projects. Rather than using a Level of Service (LOS) analysis that uses delay-based criteria, the increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a result of a project is now the basis for determining California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) impacts with respect to transportation and traffic. The County of Sonoma has not yet established thresholds of significance related to VMT. Therefore, the project related VMT impacts were assessed based on guidance provided by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory, 2018.

The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used by jurisdictions to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a VMT impact and can be "screened" from further VMT analysis. A screening criterion that pertains to small projects is one that OPR identifies as generating fewer than 110 new vehicle trips per day. Per the Focused Traffic Study for the Azari Tasting Room Project (W-Trans, November 29, 2022), the tasting room would be expected to generate an average of 22

trips per day on a typical weekday. Further, the proposed ten event days per year with an average of 110 daily trips translates to an average of 21 daily trips for the 52 Saturdays in a year. Altogether, the project would generate an annual average of 43 daily trips which falls well below the OPR threshold. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the project can be presumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions

As stated previously, the California Emissions Estimator Model, Version 2020.4.0 (CalEEMod) was used to estimate construction and operational emissions. CalEEMod was also used to estimate full build-out operational GHG emissions.

The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis (Illingworth & Rodkin, July 7, 2021) states that CalEEMod defaults for energy use were used, which include the 2019 Title 24 Building Standards. Indirect emissions from electricity were computed in CalEEMod. The model has a default rate of 203.98 pounds of CO₂ per megawatt of electricity produced, which is based on PG&E's 2019 emissions rate. The project is anticipated to use 294,640 gallons of water per year for domestic uses and 238,336 gallons for irrigation. The wastewater from domestic use would be treated would be disposed of in a non-standard type septic system. Default model assumptions for emissions associated with solid waste generation use were applied to the project.

The project was initially reviewed under the 2010 BAAQMD Air Quality CEQA Guidelines which included an emissions threshold of 1,100 metric tons (MT) of CO₂e or an emission efficiency metric of 4.6 MT of CO₂e per year per service population (future residences and full-time workers) if the threshold is exceeded.

The GHG analysis concludes the proposed project would have direct and indirect emissions of 55 metric tons of GHG emissions a year, that are substantially below the former GHG operational thresholds.

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the BAAQMD CEQA thresholds for GHG adopted in 2022 and is in compliance by ensuring that no natural gas will be used for appliances or heating, LED light fixtures will be used throughout, rooftop solar will be installed, and the applicant is meeting the CALGreen Tier 2 mandatory electric-vehicle regulations.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Comment: The County's adopted goals and policies include GP Policy OSRC-14.4 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2015. Sonoma County emissions in 2015 were 9% below 1990 levels, while the countywide population grew 4%. In May 2018, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution of Intent to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions that included adoption of the Regional Climate Protection Agency's goal to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, consistent with SB32 and AB197 climate pollution reduction targets. The Resolution of Intent included specific measures that can further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

All new development is required to evaluate all reasonably feasible measures to reduce GHG emissions and enhance carbon sequestration. The following greenhouse gas emission reduction measures are incorporated into the project by the applicant and are included as a condition of approval:

- Solar panels will cover all south-facing parts of the tasting room building roof.
- The project will comply with CALGreen Tier 2 standards for providing electric vehicle charging and is proposing 17 EV-capable parking spots.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS:

Would the project:

- a) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**

Comment: Constructing a tasting room and allowing events at the tasting room would not create a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Significance Level: No Impact

- b) **Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

Comment: Constructing a tasting room and allowing events at the tasting room would not create a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Significance Level: No Impact

- c) **Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?**

Comment: The subject property is not within a one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. Constructing a tasting room and allowing events would not result in hazardous materials emission.

Significance Level: No Impact

- d) **Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

Comment: The site is not identified as a hazardous materials sites under Government Code Section 65962.5.

Significance Level: No Impact

- e) **For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?**

Comment: The site is not within the referral area boundary of Sonoma County (STS) Airport.

Significance Level: No Impact

f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Comment: The project would not impair implementation of, or physically interfere with the County's adopted emergency operations plan. There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. In any case, the project would not change existing circulation patterns, access and egress would continue to be from Springhill Road, a County maintained roadway.

Significance Level: No Impact

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Comment: The project site is not located in a high wildland fire hazard. Events will take place indoors or outdoors on improved areas and not in high grass or remote areas on the site.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY:

Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Comment: The project proposes a non-standard at-grade mound septic system through permit application SEP19-0690. Tasting room domestic wastewater shall be disposed of in a non-standard type septic system to the west and southwest of the proposed tasting room, in the area of the pre-perc site inspection performed under SEV07-0960 and the percolation test performed under SEV07-1062. The septic system shall be designed in accordance with the current OWTS Manual and be sized to accommodate the domestic wastewater generated by the proposed use, including domestic wastewater generated by employees, wine tasters, and special event guests. Project conditions require the septic system to be evaluated to ensure the septic system is functioning properly prior to initiation of the use so water quality will not be impacted.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact

b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Comment:
Hydrogeologic Report for General Plan Policy WR-2E (EBA Engineering, February 22, 2022) was prepared as required by Permit Sonoma for the project due to the property's location in a Class 4 Groundwater Availability Zone to comply with requirements set forth in Policy WR-2e of the Sonoma County General Plan. The purpose of Policy WR-2e is to determine whether there are adequate existing and future groundwater supplies to accommodate the proposed development demands and to estimate the effects of drawdown, if any, within the designated cumulative impact area (CIA). Existing and future site development characteristics and zoning designations for surrounding properties were considered, coupled with the site hydrogeology and the nature of the proposed development, to estimate the CIA for the project. The overall size of the CIA is approximately 60 AC and encompasses 10 properties (including the project site).

Currently, there is no water usage from the on-site well (WELL-1321) at the project site. As an update to the September 28, 2021, hydrogeologic report, EBA reevaluated the projected annual groundwater use (domestic and irrigation) for the proposed project. BC Engineering Group's projected annual irrigation water use estimate of 238,336 gallons per year (GPY) was reduced to 9,360 GPY by water conservation measures estimated by Louise Leff (landscape architect). An 80-percent septic return flow offset was applied to BC Engineering Group's projected annual domestic water use estimate (294,640 GPY), creating a reduction in overall projected groundwater balance to 0.21-acre feet or 68,428 GPY.

A water budget analysis was performed by comparing groundwater recharge characteristics to the projected on-site groundwater use over a given calendar year. The water budget calculations were also performed simulating drought conditions. In addition, Policy WR-2e requires that the scope of the groundwater assessment encompass potential impacts to surface waters and aquatic habitats. The Hydrologic Report concludes that based on the proposed water use and the estimates presented in the report, it appears that the proposed project will not have a significant impact on current and future groundwater availability at the project site, nor within the CIA under existing or foreseeable future use conditions. Therefore, the proposed project will not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which

i. would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Comment: The project does not include any alteration of a stream or river, and with minimal site changes, would not result in substantial erosion or siltation. Therefore, potential impacts are considered less than significant.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;

Comment: The project will not significantly alter drainage patterns on-site or in the general area, nor will it result in on- or off-site flooding. The project does not include any work or alteration of a course of a stream or river.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

iii. create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

Comment: The project would not substantially alter drainage patterns or capacities of the project site or result in substantial additional sources of polluted runoff.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

iv. impede or redirect flood flows?

Comment: The project site is not classified as being within a 100-year flood plain. The project site is not located in either the F1 (Floodway) or F2 (Floodplain) overlay zoning designations.

Significance Level: No impact.

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Comment: The project site is located more than 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean and not susceptible to tsunami, mudflow, or seiche.

Significance Level: No Impact.

e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Comment: The project is not located in a priority basin for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. A condition of approval requires that the project shall comply with all applicable regulations, monitoring, and fees associated with the Groundwater Sustainability Agency as applicable to the project site.

Significance Level: No Impact.

11. LAND USE AND PLANNING:

Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

Comment: The project is located within an established rural, agricultural area. The project would not reconfigure existing parcels or roadways. The project would not physically divide an established community.

Significance Level: No impact.

b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Comment: The General Plan land use and Zoning designation of the property is Land Extensive Agriculture (LEA). This designation allows wineries, tasting rooms, marketing accommodation units, and special events as conditional uses.

General Plan

The project proposal must be found consistent with the General Plan's Agricultural Element Goals, Objectives, and Policies which includes the following policies:

Policy AR-6d: Follow these guidelines for approval of visitor-serving uses in agricultural areas:

- 1. The use promotes and markets only agricultural products grown or processed in the local area.*

2. *The use is compatible with and secondary and incidental to agricultural production activities in the area.*
3. *The use will not require the extension of sewer and water.*
4. *The use is compatible with existing uses in the area.*
5. *Hotels, motels, resorts, and similar lodging are not allowed.*
6. *Activities that promote and market agricultural products 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 are allowed.*
7. *Special events on agricultural lands or agriculture-related events on other lands in the Sonoma Valley Planning area will be subject to a pilot event coordination program which includes tracking and monitoring of visitor-serving activities and schedule management, as necessary, to reduce cumulative impacts.*

Tasting rooms and winery events generally can be found compatible with surrounding agricultural activities and land uses if operating hours and the frequency and size of events are limited and there are no substantial noise or traffic impacts as a result of the activities.

Tasting rooms and winery events relate to promoting and selling an agricultural product that is produced on the site and to create winery label recognition, which subsequently helps to ensure the long-term viability of wine sales and to promote the long-term viability of grape-growing as an agricultural production use within the County. The addition of events at this site will not exceed in the level of service capacity for roads in the project vicinity as described and evidenced in the Focused Traffic Study (W-Trans; 2/26/25). Project-generated traffic impacts are further discussed below in the Environmental Analysis section.

Policy AR-6d further requires that the use will not require the extension of sewer or water services and that the project is primarily surrounded by agricultural lands; the project is consistent with the requirements of Policy AR-6d.

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 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.*

Land Extensive Agriculture zoning (LEA – Sec. 26-06-010)

The LEA zoning district enhances and protects lands best suited for permanent agriculture use and capable of relatively low production per acre of land, and implements the LEA category of the General Plan and the policies of the Agricultural Resources Element.

The LEA zoning district of the Zoning Ordinance allows for tasting rooms per Sec. 26-18-210. Tasting rooms must be consistent with General Plan policies AR-6d and AR-6f.

The project site is not located within a local area of concentration of wineries. Pursuant to Sonoma County Code Section 26-06-030 – Agriculture & Resource Zones Allowed Land Uses, the winery, tasting rooms and related agricultural promotional events and industry wide events are allowed in the LEA zone, subject to obtaining a use permit.

The proposal is consistent with Winery Events ordinance definitions and operating standards, Zoning Code Section 26-18-260. Section 26-18-260(E)(3) of the Zoning Code allows for events that have been evaluated for 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. The proposed events related to the UPE19-0072 were evaluated as a part of the CEQA analysis and found to not result in cumulative negative effects with the implementation of Mitigation Measures as required.

Section 26-18-260(E)(4) restricts hours of operations related to Tasting Rooms and Events. The proposed hours of operations for the proposed tasting room and events meet these standards. Section 26-18-260(E)(6) of the Zoning Code outline parking requirements for wineries and tasting rooms.

Per the guidelines of Sec. 26-86-010 – *Required Parking*, the parking supply proposed for the site is adequate to accommodate both the anticipated daily parking demand and the demand during events. The proposed project would supply 59 parking spaces on-site, including 30 spaces for the tasting room and 29 overflow parking spaces. Per the 2022 CALGreen Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11, Section 5.106.5.3.1 – *EV capable spaces*, for projects with 76-100 actual parking spaces, 17 EV capable spaces are required; the applicant is proposing to provide 17 EV-capable parking spaces.

To accommodate the daily parking demand during typical tasting room operations, there would be at least one space provided for every employee on-site as well as one space per 2.5 tasting room guests. Two tasting room employees and a maximum of 20 tasting room visitors translate to ten parking spaces, including two for employees and eight for tasting room visitors. The proposed 30 permanent parking spaces near the tasting room would be more than adequate to accommodate the parking demand during a typical operation with a surplus of 20 parking spaces.

The maximum number of parking spaces needed on-site during a 125-person event, for which there would be up to nine staff, including the two tasting room employees, would be 59 spaces. This assumes one vehicle per employee and 2.5 guests per vehicle. The maximum of 59 parking spaces needed during an event is equal to the total parking supply including the permanent (30 tasting room spaces) and overflow parking (53 spaces). The proposed 59 parking spaces (30 permanent parking spaces; 29 overflow) would be adequate to accommodate the anticipated parking demand.

The subject parcel includes a small portion of the top of the watershed of a designated riparian corridor (Respini Creek) that runs from the subject parcel to the southeast. The Riparian Corridor Combining District (Sec. 26-65-005) imposes (RC50/50) a 50-foot streamside conservation area and 50-foot development setback from the creek. The proposed development is sited approximately 550-feet northwest from and will not impact the function of the designated Respini Creek riparian corridor.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

12. MINERAL RESOURCES:

Would the project:

- a) **Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?**

Comment: There is no known mineral resource of value to the region and the residents of the state located on the property. The site is not zoned MR (Mineral Resources). The project will not result in the loss of a known mineral resource.

Significance Level: No Impact.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

Comment: The site is not designated in an MR (Mineral Resource) zoning district. The Sonoma County General Plan does not designate the project site as within a known mineral resource deposit area.

Significance Level: No impact.

13. NOISE:

Would the project:

a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Comment: The Noise Element of the Sonoma County General Plan establishes goals, objectives and policies including performance standards to regulate noise affecting residential and other sensitive receptors. The General Plan sets separate standards for transportation noise and for noise from non-transportation land uses.

The proposed tasting room structure and associated improvements are located on the portion of the property fronting on Spring Hill Road. Per the *Environmental Noise Assessment* (Illingworth & Rodkin, June 29, 2021), noise levels measured at this site primarily resulted from afternoon and evening wind on the leaves of area Eucalyptus trees, distant sound from passing vehicles on the Spring Hill Road, with sounds from the use of the adjacent residence and the existing vineyard activities also contributing to background sound levels during low winds or periods without vehicles passing on the roadway. Per the noise assessment, there are several operations associated with tasting room use and events at the proposed tasting room building that will produce noise. These include:

1. Parking and On-site Visitor Traffic
 - a. The noise assessment concludes that noise levels associated with automobiles and light vehicles in the tasting room parking areas would not exceed the daytime NE-2 noise standards at the property lines of the closest adjacent residences.
2. Tasting room activities
 - a. The noise assessment concludes that noise levels associated with wine tasting activities would not result in noise levels which exceed the daytime NE-2 noise standards at the property lines of the closest adjacent residences.
3. Promotional Event and Activity Noise

- a. The noise assessment concludes that noise associated with music performances or amplified speech at outdoor events would exceed the County NE-2 standards at the property lines of all adjacent residences. Additionally, outdoor gatherings of more than 20 guests during events have the potential to exceed the County NE-2 standards at the property lines of the adjacent residences.

The noise assessment also evaluated potential noise from project construction activities and states the nearest residential property line would be located over 60 feet and the nearest residential structure would be located over 200 feet from areas of the site that would undergo major construction activities. Construction noise levels may exceed 87 dBA Leq at 60 feet and 77 dBA at 200 feet during busy construction periods and would drop off at a rate of about 6 dBA per doubling of distance between the noise source and the receptor. Construction noise levels would range from 63 to 74 dBA Leq at 100 feet. The noise assessment states standard best management practices would be implemented to limit construction hours to daytime periods only, reduce construction noise levels emanating from the site, and minimize disruption and annoyance at adjacent noise sensitive uses.

Based on the above, the noise assessment recommends that winery events should not include outdoor music performances or amplified speech, that events be planned so as to take place largely within the proposed tasting room building, and that outdoor gatherings during events be limited to 20 guests or less to meet County NE-2 standards and limit the potential for noise disturbances at the property lines of adjacent residential uses.

The findings of this noise assessment show that noise associated with outdoor gatherings of greater than 20 guests, outdoor music performances or amplified speech could exceed County NE-2 standards at the property lines of nearby residences. To meet the County noise standards met, the noise assessment recommends the following noise mitigation measures:

Mitigation Measure Noise-1:

Winery events shall not include outdoor amplified or acoustic music performances or amplified speech.

Mitigation Measure Noise-2:

Large events shall occur within the winery tasting room building and outdoor gatherings during events shall be limited to 20 guests or less in the outdoor patios adjacent to the tasting room building or at the outdoor viewing patio east of the tasting room.

Mitigation Measure Noise-3:

Music performances or amplified speech during winery events shall occur within the Tasting Room building with windows and doors closed.

Mitigation Monitoring Noise-1, 2, 3:

If noise complaints are received from nearby residents, and they appear to be valid complaints in Permit Sonoma's opinion, then Permit Sonoma staff shall determine if the operation is complying with mitigation measures/NE-2 standards and if not, the owner/operator shall implement additional Measures needed to meet the NE-2 noise standards.

Construction Noise

Each construction phase would include a different mix of equipment operating. The highest noise levels are typically generated when impact tools are used (e.g., jackhammers, hoe rams). Site grading and excavation activities would also generate high noise levels as these phases often require the simultaneous use of multiple pieces of heavy equipment, such as dozers, excavators, scrapers, and loaders. Lower noise levels result from construction activities when less heavy equipment is required to complete the tasks. Pile driving is not anticipated for project construction.

The noise assessment states typical construction noise levels at a distance of 50 feet are shown in Tables 17 and 18. Table 17 illustrates the average noise level range by typical construction phase type and Table 16 shows the maximum noise level range for different construction equipment.

	Domestic Housing		Office Building, Hotel, Hospital, School, Public Works		Parking Garage, Religious Amusement & Recreations, Store, Service Station		Public Works Roads & Highways, Sewers, and Trenches	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
Ground Clearing	83	83	84	84	84	83	84	84
Excavation	88	75	89	79	89	71	88	78
Foundations	81	81	78	78	77	77	88	88
Erection	81	65	87	75	84	72	79	78
Finishing	88	72	89	75	89	74	84	84

I - All pertinent equipment present at site.

II - Minimum required equipment present at site.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency, 1973, Legal Compilation on Noise, Vol. 1, p. 2-104.

Table 17: Typical Ranges of Noise Levels at 50 Feet from Construction Sites (dBA Leq)

Equipment Category	L _{max} Level (dBA) ^{1,2}	Impact/Continuous
Arc Welder	73	Continuous
Auger Drill Rig	85	Continuous
Backhoe	80	Continuous
Bar Bender	80	Continuous
Boring Jack Power Unit	80	Continuous
Chain Saw	85	Continuous
Compressor ³	70	Continuous

Table 18: Construction Equipment 50-foot Noise Emission Limits

The noise assessment states the nearest residential property line would be located over 60 feet and the nearest residential structure would be located over 200 feet from areas of the site that would undergo major construction activities. Construction noise levels may exceed 87 dBA Leq at 60 feet and 77 dBA at 200 feet during busy construction periods and would drop off at a rate of about 6 dBA per doubling of distance between the noise source and the receptor. Construction noise levels would range from 63 to 74 dBA Leq at 100 feet.

The noise assessment states standard best management practices would be implemented to limit construction hours to daytime periods only, reduce construction noise levels emanating from the site, and minimize disruption and annoyance at adjacent noise sensitive uses.

Mitigation Measure Noise-4:

The following standard best management practices shall be included on all construction plans and implemented during construction:

- Limit construction to between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Limit work to non-motorized equipment on Sundays and holidays.
- Locate construction staging areas as far as practical from nearby sensitive receptors.

- Locate stationary noise-generating equipment, such as air compressors or portable power generators, as far as practical from nearby sensitive receptors.
- Equip all internal combustion engine-driven equipment with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment. Air compressors and pneumatic equipment should be equipped with mufflers, and impact tools should be equipped with shrouds or shields.
- Prohibit all unnecessary idling of internal combustion engines.

Mitigation Monitoring Noise-4:

If noise complaints are received from nearby residents, and they appear to be valid complaints in Permit Sonoma's opinion, then Permit Sonoma staff will verify that conditions are met.

Cumulative Noise Environment

The noise assessment analyzed the cumulative effect if the few other wineries in the project vicinity held outdoor events on the same day and time as the project winery, a worst-case condition. There are few other wineries in the project vicinity, the closest of these wineries being over 3,000 feet from the project site. The result of this analysis indicated that cumulative noise levels at the identified residential receivers adjacent to the project site would increase by less than 1 dBA. As a result, the noise assessment finds that cumulative noise impacts would be identical to the project impacts described above.

Significance Level: Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated as noted in Mitigation Measures 1-3 above.

b) Generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels?

Comment: There are no applicable Federal, state, or local quantitatively defined regulations relating to vibration resulting from construction activities. Construction noise is temporary and analyzed in the Illingworth and Rodkin Assessment. Ongoing project operations of the tasting room will not include excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise. The noise assessment states based on the thresholds provided by Caltrans, a vibration limit of 0.3 in/sec PPV would minimize damage at buildings of normal conventional construction. A significant impact would occur if buildings adjacent to the proposed construction site were exposed to vibration levels in excess of 0.3 in/sec PPV.

Table 19 presents typical vibration levels that could be expected from construction equipment at a distance of 200 feet which is representative of the nearest residential building to the project site. The dropping of heavy equipment (e.g., clam-shovel drop) and vibratory rollers produce vibration levels 0.009 in/sec PPV at 200 feet. Jackhammers would generate vibration levels of 0.0001 in/sec PPV and drilling would generate vibration levels of 0.004 in/sec PPV at this distance. Vibration levels would vary depending on soil conditions, construction methods, and equipment used. Considering the above, the noise assessment finds that vibration levels due to construction activities would be well below the 0.3 in/sec PPV threshold for construction activities at the nearest residential building to the project site.

Equipment	PPV at 200 ft. (in/sec)
Clam shovel drop	0.009
Vibratory Roller	0.009
Hoe Ram	0.004
Large bulldozer	0.004
Caisson drilling	0.004
Loaded trucks	0.003
Jackhammer	0.002
Small bulldozer	0.0001

Source: Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual, Federal Transit Administration, Office of Planning and Environment, U.S. Department of Transportation, September 2018, as modified by Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., June 2021.

Table 19: Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment

Significance Level: No Impact.

- c) **For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?**

Comment: The site is not within an airport land use plan as designated by Sonoma County or within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.

Significance Level: No Impact.

14. POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Would the project:

- a) **Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

Comment: The project would not include construction of a substantial amount of homes, businesses or infrastructure and therefore would not induce substantial population growth.

Significance Level: No Impact.

- b) **Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

Comment: The project does not include the displacement of any existing housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere in the County.

Significance Level: No Impact.

15. PUBLIC SERVICES:

Would the project:

- a) **Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: fire protection, police, schools, parks, other public facilities?**

Comment: The project will not increase residents or employees such that governmental services and/or facilities will have to be expanded. Development impact fees are required to address workforce housing and potential impacts to schools and traffic.

Specifically:

1. Fire Protection: The County Fire Marshal requires that the Project comply with Fire Safe Standards, including fire protection methods such as sprinklers in buildings, alarm systems, extinguishers, vegetation management, hazardous materials management, and management of flammable or combustible liquids and gases.
2. Police: The Sonoma County Sheriff provides police protection services.
3. Schools, parks, or other public facilities: The project will not generate additional students; nor will it significantly increase demand for parks or other public facilities.
4. Other public facilities: No other public facilities would be adversely impacted by this project.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

16. RECREATION:

Would the project:

- a) **Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

Comment: The proposed project would not involve activities that would cause or accelerate substantial physical deterioration of parks or recreational facilities.

Significance Level: No Impact

- b) **Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

Comment: The project does not include a recreational facility and is of a project-type that does not require the construction or expansion of a recreational facility.

Significance Level: No Impact

17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

- a) **Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadways, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?**

Comment: Three transportation-related plans have been adopted in Sonoma County: the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Circulation Element, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2009), and the Sonoma County Bikeways Plan. The project will not conflict with any of these plans.

The Focused Traffic Study for the Azari Tasting Room Project (W-Trans, November 29, 2021) states that there are no existing bicycle lanes along the project frontage on Spring Hill Road. However, as contained in the updated project list 2019 of Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), a Class III bicycle route is planned on Spring Hill Road to be connected to the existing Class II bicycle lanes on Western Avenue on the east and planned Class II bicycle lanes along Valley Ford Road-Bodega Avenue on the west. As a Class III route consists of signing only, the existing physical facilities provide adequate bicycle access to the site, though the planned future signing would provide additional notification to drivers of the potential for encountering bicycle traffic.

The traffic study includes the following conclusions:

- The proposed tasting room would be expected to generate 22 daily trips on average, including four trips each during the weekday evening peak hour and weekend midday peak hours. The proposed 125-person events would all be on Saturdays and would be expected to generate an average of 118 trip ends at the driveway, including 80 trips during the weekend midday peak hour.
- The lack of existing dedicated facilities for pedestrians in the project vicinity is consistent with the rural setting and adequate given that no pedestrian or transit trips are anticipated.
- Bicycle facilities are absent in the project vicinity, but the existing facilities provide adequate access for bicyclists and would be enhanced with the completion of planned bike facilities outlined in the Countywide Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.
- The project is anticipated to result in a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT based on the OPR Guidelines.
- Under Existing conditions, Spring Hill Road is operating acceptably at LOS A and would be expected to continue doing so upon adding trips associated with proposed events.
- Adequate sight distances for the advisory speed are available for trips to and from the proposed project driveways.
- The parking lot should be designed to meet Sonoma County Design criteria to achieve adequate access and circulation for emergency response vehicles.
- A left-turn lane is not warranted at the proposed project driveway based on existing plus event volumes.
- The proposed vehicle parking supply is adequate to meet the anticipated parking demand during typical operations and winery events.

A referral describing the project was sent to Sonoma Public Infrastructure (formerly Department of Transportation and Public Works), which requested additional information on sight lines, driveway placement, queuing distances, and potential traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhood; SPI provided draft conditions of approval for the project as follows:

Right of Way Requirements:

1. The Applicant shall offer right-of-way to the County of Sonoma, free of encumbrances, and of sufficient width:
 - a. As necessary to create public right-of-way a total of 25 feet wide on the Applicant's side of the road, as measured from the existing pavement centerline, for the full length of the property's frontage on Spring Hill Rd. This condition shall be void if the existing right-of-way meets or exceeds the minimum requirement(s) described above.
 - b. To contain all public drainage facilities.
3. The Applicant shall dedicate right-of-way as roadway easement. The Applicant shall have prepared an easement deed, together with the required descriptions and shall submit them to the County Surveyor for review and approval. A copy of the recorded deed shall be submitted to the Land Development Section of Permit Sonoma (PRMD) prior to clearance of these conditions.

Intersections of Roads and Driveways:

3. The Applicant shall construct driveway entrances such that they conform to Board of Forestry Fire Safety Regulations §1270 et seq. and County standards and meet the following criteria to allow for concurrent emergency ingress and egress as well as the smooth and safe movement of passenger vehicles entering and exiting the public road (Spring Hill Road) that provides access to the property. This condition shall be void if the existing entrances meet these requirements. A signed and stamped statement from a Registered Civil Engineer, licensed in the State of California, will be required to prove the driveways (project's entries to Spring Hill Road) meet these requirements.
 - a. A minimum paved throat width of twenty (20) feet.
 - b. Entrance curves having a minimum pavement radius of 25 feet; the entrance curves shall begin on a line that is a minimum of 12 feet distant from, and parallel with, the physical centerline of Spring Hill Road. A 1:10 pavement taper shall be constructed on both sides of the entrance if required per County of Sonoma Department of Transportation and Public Works Construction Standard Drawing 815. Entrance curve radii may be reduced with the approval of the Fire Prevention of Permit Sonoma (PRMD).
 - c. The minimum sight distance for vehicles entering and exiting the driveway shall be in accordance with current County requirements for the speed traveled on Spring Hill Road. Any monuments and/or signs that result from this proposal shall be located outside of the necessary sight distance triangles to achieve the minimum County required sight distance at each driveway. Refer to County of Sonoma Department of Transportation and Public Works Construction Standard Drawing 812, latest revision, for rural County road driveway and private road intersections.
 - d. The entry shall be surfaced with asphalt concrete a minimum distance of 25 feet from the existing edge of pavement.
 - e. The entry shall intersect the public road as close to perpendicular as possible, but in no case shall the entry intersect the public road at more than 20 degrees from perpendicular.

- f. Refer to County of Sonoma Department of Transportation and Public Works Construction Standard Drawing 815, latest revision, for private road and driveway intersection details.
4. Driveway cross-drains within the County right-of-way shall be upgraded to a minimum 18-inch culvert under the driveways.
5. The Applicant shall maintain all existing and proposed vegetation fronting the site as well as within the public right-of-way to preserve the sight distance triangles necessary to achieve the minimum County required sight distance at any project driveway where it intersects a public roadway.

Traffic Safety Gate Setback:

6. The Applicant shall locate driveway gates a minimum distance of 30 feet from the edge of the pavement, in accordance with Standard Detail 242.

Fees:

7. The Applicant shall pay Traffic Mitigation fees to the County of Sonoma, as required by Chapter 26, Article 98 of the Sonoma County Code, prior to issuance of a building permit for any new building or prior to any new use of an existing building. Evidence of payment shall be submitted to the Land Development Section of Permit Sonoma (PRMD) prior to clearance of these conditions. Credit is granted for existing, legal uses.

Processing:

8. The Applicant shall obtain an Encroachment Permit issued by Permit Sonoma (PRMD) prior to constructing any improvements within County-road right-of-way.

Traffic Study:

9. Left turns from the project onto Spring Hill Rd shall be prohibited as presented in the Traffic Study.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) (evaluation of transportation impacts of land use projects using vehicle miles traveled)?

Comment: In the traffic study, the project related vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts were assessed based on guidance provided by the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory, 2018. The OPR Technical Advisory identifies several criteria that may be used by jurisdictions to identify certain types of projects that are unlikely to have a VMT impact and can be "screened" from further VMT analysis. One of these screening criteria pertains to small projects, which OPR identifies as generating fewer than 110 new vehicle trips per day.

As described in the Revised Focused Traffic Study (February 26, 2025), the tasting room would be expected to generate an average of 22 trips per day on a typical weekday. Further, the proposed seven event days per year with an average of 118 daily trips translates to an average of 25 daily trips for the 52 Saturdays in a year. Altogether, the project would generate an annual average of 22 daily trips which falls well below the OPR threshold. Therefore, the traffic study states that it is reasonable to conclude that the project can be presumed to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

c) Substantially increase hazards due to geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Comment: There are no substantially hazardous design features. The project has been conditioned on driveway improvements and required parking attendants during events to direct traffic to the parking areas on the site.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

d) Result in inadequate emergency access?

Comment: The parking lot will be designed to meet Sonoma County design criteria, including the width of the drive aisle and the radii of the curves at the entry and exit. Subject to current standards emergency access would be adequate.

Significance Level: No impact.

f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?

Comment:

The traffic study analyzed the project to determine if the parking supply proposed for the site is adequate to accommodate both the anticipated daily parking demand and the demand during events. The proposed project would supply 59 parking spaces around the site, including 30 spaces for the tasting room and 29 overflow parking spaces.

To accommodate the daily parking demand during typical tasting room operations, there should be at least one space provided for every employee on-site as well as about one space per 2.5 tasting room guests. Two tasting room employees and a maximum of 20 tasting room visitors translate to ten parking spaces, including two for employees and eight for tasting room visitors. Therefore, the proposed 30 permanent parking spaces near the tasting room would be adequate to accommodate the parking demand during a typical operation.

The maximum number of parking spaces needed on-site during a 125-person event, for which there would be up to nine staff, including the two tasting room employees, would be 59 spaces. This assumes one vehicle per employee and 2.5 guests per vehicle. The maximum of 59 parking spaces needed during an event is equal to the total parking supply including the permanent (30 tasting room spaces) and overflow parking (53 spaces). The proposed 59 parking spaces (30 permanent parking spaces; 29 overflow) would be adequate to accommodate the anticipated parking demand.

Significance Level: No Impact.

18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES:

- a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California native American tribe, and that is i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5030.1(k), or ii) A resource determined by the lead agency. In its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Comment: Assembly Bill 52 Project Notifications were sent to the Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, Mishewal Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, Middletown Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Lytton Rancheria of California, Kashia Pomos Stewarts Point Rancheria, and Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. These Native American tribes were invited to consult on the project pursuant to Public Resources Code sections 21080.3.1 and 21080.3.2 but did not request consultation.

There are no known tribal cultural resources on the site, but the project could uncover such resources during construction. In order to ensure that no tribal cultural or archaeological resources are unearthed during ground disturbing activities, a standard condition is required for the project as follows:

The following language shall be printed on building or grading plans for ground disturbing activities:

NOTE ON PLANS: *“During construction activities, if archaeological remains are uncovered, work at the place of discovery should be halted immediately until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the finds pursuant to Government Code Section 15064.5. If archaeological materials such as pottery, arrowheads or midden are found, all work shall cease and Permit Sonoma staff shall be notified so that the find can be evaluated by a qualified archaeologist (i.e., an archaeologist registered with the Society of Professional Archaeologists). Artifacts associated with prehistoric sites include humanly modified stone, shell, bone or other cultural materials such as charcoal, ash and burned rock indicative of food procurement or processing activities. Prehistoric domestic features include hearths, fire pits, or house floor depressions whereas typical mortuary features are represented by human skeletal remains. Historic artifacts potentially include all by-products of human land use greater than 50 years of age including trash pits older than fifty years of age. The developer shall designate a Project Manager with authority to implement the mitigation prior to issuance of a building/grading permit. When contacted, a member of Permit Sonoma Project Review staff and the archaeologist shall visit the site to determine the extent of the resources and to develop proper procedures required for the discovery. No work shall commence until a protection plan is completed and implemented subject to the review and approval of the archaeologist and Project Review staff. Mitigation may include avoidance, removal, preservation and/or recordation in accordance with accepted professional archaeological practice.”*

In the event that human remains are unearthed during construction, state law requires that the County Coroner be contacted in accordance with Section 7050.5 of the State Health and Safety Code to investigate the nature and circumstances of the discovery. If the remains were determined to be Native American interment, the Coroner will follow the procedure outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15065.5(e).

A standard condition of approval requires the following language be printed on the grading and building plans:

NOTES ON PLANS: *“If human remains are encountered, all work must stop in the immediate vicinity of the discovered remains and Permit Sonoma staff, County Coroner and a qualified archaeologist must be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the remains are deemed to be Native American and prehistoric, the Native American Heritage Commission must be contacted by the Coroner so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated.”*

The above standard conditions of approval will ensure that a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource will not occur.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS:

Would the project:

- a) **Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

Comment:

As stated in Section 10(b) above, all water supply will be from groundwater. There is an existing well (WELL-1321) on the project site that will be utilized for water supply for the proposed development. The *Hydrogeologic Report for General Plan Policy WR-2E* (EBA Engineering, February 22, 2022) was prepared to determine whether there are adequate existing and future groundwater supplies to accommodate the proposed development demands and to estimate the effects of drawdown, if any, within the designated cumulative impact area (CIA). The hydrologic report found based on the proposed water use and the estimates presented in the report, the report concludes that the proposed project will not have a significant impact on current and future groundwater availability at the project site, nor within the CIA under existing or foreseeable future use conditions.

As stated above, tasting room domestic wastewater shall be disposed of in a non-standard type septic system to the west and southwest of the proposed tasting room, in the area of the pre-perc site inspection performed under SEV07-0960 and the percolation test performed under SEV07-1062. The septic system shall be designed in accordance with the current OWTS Manual and be sized to accommodate the domestic wastewater generated by the proposed use, including domestic wastewater generated by employees, wine tasters, and special event guests. The applicant is working with the Permit Sonoma Well & Septic Section per the SEP19-0690 permit application for a new nonstandard at-grade mound septic system. The “limits of the suitable septic system” plus the locations of the tanks per SEP19-0690 are indicated on the Site Plan (Figure 5 above).

Permit Sonoma Grading & Storm Water Section submitted conditions of approval for drainage improvements. The conditions state drainage improvements shall maintain off-site natural drainage patterns, limit post-development storm water quantities and pollutant discharges in compliance with Permit and Resource Management Department’s (Permit Sonoma’s) best management practices guide, and shall abide by all applicable standards and provisions of the Sonoma County Code and all other relevant laws and regulations. Existing drainage patterns shall be maintained, to the maximum extent practicable, to not adversely impact adjacent properties or drainage systems. Proposed drainage improvements shall not adversely impact adjacent properties or drainage systems.

The proposed project does not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Comment:

As stated above in 10.b above, *Hydrogeologic Report for General Plan Policy WR-2E* (EBA Engineering, February 22, 2022) was prepared as required by Permit Sonoma for the project due to the property's location in a Class 4 Groundwater Availability Zone to comply with requirements set forth in Policy WR-2e of the Sonoma County General Plan. The purpose of Policy WR-2e is to determine whether there are adequate existing and future groundwater supplies to accommodate the proposed development demands and to estimate the effects of drawdown, if any, within the designated cumulative impact area (CIA).

The hydrogeologic report concludes that based on the proposed water use and the estimates presented in the report, the proposed project will not have a significant impact on current and future groundwater availability at the project site, nor within the CIA under existing or foreseeable future use conditions. Therefore, the proposed project has sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Comment: The project is not served by a wastewater treatment provider. See 9.a above.

Significance Level: No Impact.

d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Comment: The solid waste disposal needs at the existing winery facility will continue to be met. Sonoma County has a solid waste management program in place that provides solid waste collection and disposal services for the entire County. The program can accommodate the permitted collection and disposal of the waste that will result from the proposed project.

Significance Level: No impact.

e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Comment: There is no evidence that the existing adjacent winery facility is not complying with all regulations to solid waste. The tasting room project associated with the adjacent winery will also comply with applicable solid waste management and reduction requirements.

Significance Level: No Impact.

20. WILDFIRE

- a) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

Comment:

According to the Wildland Fire Hazard Areas map in the Public Safety Element of the Sonoma County General Plan, the project site is not located in a High or Very High wildland fire hazard area. The project site is located within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Protection Responsibility Area.

There is no separate emergency evacuation plan for the County. Furthermore, the project would not cause an interference with emergency evacuations.

Significance Level: Less Than significant.

- b) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?**

Comment:

The project is located within a Moderate FRAP Fire Hazard Severity Zone per the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 Wildland Fire Hazard Areas Map (General Plan Safety Element Update, Figure PS-1g).

Significance Level: Less Than significant.

- c) **If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk of that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?**

Comment:

The project site is not located within a high or very high fire severity zone. The nearest high fire hazard severity zone is approximately 2 miles from the project site. The construction of a new structure in accordance with current building standards should decrease the risk to structures on the project parcel. The County Fire Prevention fire safe requirements require the following:

- i. Access roads: minimum emergency access is required to provide safe access for emergency fire equipment and civilian evacuation concurrently, and to allow unobstructed traffic circulation during a wildfire or other emergency.
 - i. Residential and Commercial Roads 20 feet in width required.
 - ii. Driveways must have minimum 12 feet in width required.
- ii. Premises Identification and Road Naming: Approved road names & signs, address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible from the street or road shall be provided.
- iii. Gates: Where gates or similar barriers are installed across access roads, an approved lock shall be installed as required by the fire code official.
- iv. Water Supply: An approved water supply capable of supplying the required fire flow for fire protection shall be provided to premises.
- v. Building Features: Fire sprinklers and fire alarm system may be required based on existing and new use.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant.

- d) If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire severity zones, would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?**

Comment:

The following project conditions of approval include:

1. A drainage report for the proposed project shall be prepared by a civil engineer, currently registered in the State of California, be submitted with the grading and/or building permit application and be subject to review and approval by the Grading & Storm Water Section of Permit Sonoma. The drainage report shall include, at a minimum, a project narrative, on- and off-site hydrology maps, hydrologic calculations, hydraulic calculations, pre- and post-development analysis for all relevant existing and proposed drainage facilities. The drainage report shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the Drainage Report Required Contents (DRN-006) handout.
2. Drainage improvements shall be designed by a civil engineer, currently registered in the State of California, and in accordance with the Sonoma County Water Agency Flood Management Design Manual. Drainage improvements shall be shown on the grading/site plans and be submitted to the Grading & Storm Water Section of the Permit and Resource Management Department (Permit Sonoma) for review and approval. Drainage improvements shall maintain off-site natural drainage patterns, limit post-development storm water quantities and pollutant discharges in compliance with Permit and Resource Management Department's best management practices guide, and shall abide by all applicable standards and provisions of the Sonoma County Code and all other relevant laws and regulations. Existing drainage patterns shall be maintained, to the maximum extent practicable, to not adversely impact adjacent properties or drainage systems. Proposed drainage improvements shall not adversely impact adjacent properties or drainage systems.
3. As part of the grading plans, the applicant shall include an erosion prevention/sediment control plan which clearly shows best management practices to be implemented, limits of disturbed areas/total work, vegetated areas to be preserved, pertinent details, notes, and specifications to prevent damages or minimize adverse impacts to the surrounding properties and the environment. Tracking of soil or construction debris into the public right-of-way shall be prohibited. Runoff containing concrete waste or by-products shall not be allowed to drain to the storm drain system, waterway(s), or adjacent lands. The erosion prevention/sediment control plan shall abide by and contain all applicable items in the Grading Permit Required Application Contents (GRD-004) handout.

Significance Level: Less Than Significant Impact.

21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?**

Comment: Per the *Biological Assessment Report* for the site (Updated 10-28-2021 from the original July 2021 report, prepared by Daniel Edelstein, Consulting Biologist & certified Wildlife Biologist Asc.), there is an absence of rare, special-status plant species on the project site which is not surprising, given periodic, ongoing disturbance at the project site. More specifically, its soil bed is consistently subject annually to trampling and compaction by domestic animals and machines. The *Biological Assessment Report* concludes that the proposed project will not result in significant negative impacts upon the site's biological resources, including any special-status plant and animal species.

The *Biological Assessment Report* also concludes that the Project will not result in negative impacts upon movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species. The Site does not occur within or next to any established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors and, in addition, the Project will not impede any common or rare, special-status species to utilize wildlife nursery sites. No wetland/riparian setback violation will occur as a result of the Project upon the drainage/watercourse existing south of the Site's southern-most boundary.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

- b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?**

Comment: Cumulative projects are limited in the area and include existing, proposed, and probable future project development. No significant effects associated with cumulative development have been identified to which the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution. As noted in this initial study, this project will not result in significant adverse impacts related to traffic congestion or safety. The project will not make a considerable contribution to any other significant cumulative impacts.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

- c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?**

Comment: The project would not result in any significant changes to the existing environment. The proposed project will have a less than significant impact on vehicle miles traveled. Aesthetic and Noise mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce effects to surrounding neighbors in terms of exterior lighting and amplified sound. Based on the discussion and information provided in this initial study, the project environmental effects will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly.

Significance Level: Less than Significant Impact.

References

1. Sonoma County Important Farmland Map 1996. California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.
2. Assessor's Parcel Maps, County of Sonoma
3. BAAQMD CEQA Guidelines; Bay Area Air Quality Management District; April 1999; California Air Resources Board (CARB) <http://www.arb.ca.gov/>
4. California Natural Diversity Database, California Department of Fish & Game, <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Maps-and-Data>
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Technical Reports (Attached)

- Att 1. Illingworth & Rodkin, *Environmental Noise Assessment, Azari Vineyard Tasting Room, 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma, Sonoma County*, June 29, 2021.
- Att 2. Illingworth & Rodkin, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Analysis, Azari Vineyards Tasting Room at 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma, Sonoma County, California*, July 7, 2021.
- Att 3. Daniel Edelstein, Consulting Biologist & Certified Wildlife Biologist Asc. *Biological Assessment Report*; July, 2021; Updated October 28, 2021; Addendum December 13, 2023.
- Att 4. Daniel Edelstein, Consulting Biologist & Certified Wildlife Biologist Asc. *Addendum – Biological Assessment Report*; December 13, 2023.
- Att 5. W-Trans, *Focused Traffic Study for the Azari Tasting Room Project*, November 29, 2021.
- Att 6. EBA Engineering Group, *Hydrogeologic Report for General Plan Policy WR-2E, 1321 Spring Hill Road, Petaluma, California, Sonoma County APN 020-050-026*, June 28 2021, Updated February 22, 2022.
- Att. 7. Mitigation Acceptance Letter, December 13, 2023.
- Att. 8. W-Trans, *Revised Final Focused Traffic Study for the Azari Tasting Room Project*, February 26, 2025.