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Recommended Findings

Zoning Administrator Hearing – July 22, 2026

Recommended Findings

Ontrail Vineyards Micro-Winery

Use Permit P25-00139

3252 Silverado Trail, Napa

APN 039-610-003

Environmental:

The Zoning Administrator has received and reviewed the Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and makes the following findings:

That:

1. The Zoning Administrator has read and considered the Negative Declaration prior to taking action on said Negative Declaration and the proposed project.
2. The Negative Declaration is based on independent judgement exercised by the Zoning Administrator.
3. The Negative Declaration was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
4. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole, that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
5. There is no evidence, in considering the record as a whole that the proposed project will have a potential adverse effect on wildlife resources or habitat upon which the wildlife depends.
6. The site of this proposed project is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5 and is not within the boundaries of any airport land use plan.
7. The Clerk of the Zoning Administrator is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. Records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Service Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Suite 210, Napa, California.

Use Permit:

The Zoning Administrator (ZA) has reviewed the use permit request in accordance with the requirements of the Napa County Code §18.124.070 and makes the following findings:

8. The Zoning Administrator has the power to issue a Use Permit under the Zoning Regulations in effect as applied to property.

Analysis: The project is consistent with the Agricultural Watershed (AW) zoning district regulations. A Micro-Winery (as defined in the Napa County Code Section 18.08.377) and uses in connection with a winery (refer to Napa County Code Section 18.20.030) are permitted in the AW District with an approved use permit. The project, as conditioned, complies with the Napa County Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) and all other requirements of the Zoning Code as applicable.

9. The procedural requirements for a Use Permit set forth in Chapter 18.124 of the Napa County Code (zoning regulations) have been met.

Analysis: The Use Permit application has been appropriately filed and noticed and public hearing requirements have been met. The public hearing notice and intent to adopt a Negative Declaration was posted and published in the Napa Valley Register on June 18, 2026, and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1,000 feet of the property, as well as other interested parties. The public comment period ran from June 21, 2026, to July 21, 2026.

10. The grant of the Use Permit, as conditioned, will not adversely affect the public health, safety or welfare of the County of Napa.

Analysis: Granting of approval of the Use Permit for the project as proposed and conditioned will not affect the public health, safety or welfare of the County. Various County divisions and departments and responsible agencies have reviewed the project and commented regarding water, waste disposal, fire protection, building construction, access improvements and traffic. Conditions are recommended that will incorporate these comments into the project to assure the ongoing protection of the public health, safety and welfare of the County.

11. The proposed winery use complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan and any applicable specific plan.

Analysis: Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance

The project is consistent with the AW zoning district regulations. A micro-winery (as defined in Napa County Code Section 18.03.377) is permitted within the AW Zoning District with the approval of a use permit. The proposed project includes the establishment of a 5,000 gallon per year winery and will be constructed in three phases. Phase 1 will include converting the existing 1,951 sq. ft. barn to production space and converting the existing 529 sq. ft. farm labor office to winery tasting and accessory use. Wine production would consist of fermentation only in barrels and bottles. Visitation shall not exceed 10 visitors per day and 70 visitors per week. No marketing events are proposed. The winery proposes to have one full-time and one part-time employee. Phase 2 will include converting the 1,951 sq. ft. barn to a non-winery use and constructing a new 4,103 sq. ft. winery building. Phase 3 will include the construction of a 730 sq. ft. covered crush pad and installation of either a production wastewater system or a hold and haul wastewater system. The project, as conditioned, complies with the Napa County

Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) and all other requirements of the Zoning Code as applicable.

Analysis: Compliance with the General Plan

As proposed and conditioned, the requested Use Permit is consistent with the overall goals and policies of the 2008 Napa County General Plan. The General Plan land use designation for the subject parcel is Agricultural Resource (AR)/Agriculture, Watershed and Open Space (AWOS). General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Goal AG/LU-1 guides the County to “preserve existing agricultural land uses and plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land uses in Napa County.” General Plan Goal AG/LU-3 states that the County should “support the economic viability of agriculture, including grape growing, winemaking, other types of agriculture, and supporting industries to ensure the preservation of agricultural lands.” Goal AG/LU-3 and Policy AG/LU-2 recognize wineries as agricultural uses.

The use of the property for fermenting and processing grape juice into wine supports the economic viability of agriculture within the County, consistent with Goal AG/LU-3 and Policy AG/LU-4 (“The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including land used for grazing and watershed/open space...”). By allowing the proposed agricultural use, the requested Use Permit supports the economic viability of the existing vineyards and agricultural product processing, consistent with Economic Development Goal E-1 and Policy E-1.

The “Right to Farm” is recognized throughout the General Plan and is specifically called out in Policy AG/LU-15 and in the County Code. “Right to Farm” provisions ensure that agriculture remains the primary land use in Napa County and is not threatened by potentially competing uses or neighbor complaints. Napa County’s adopted General Plan reinforces the County’s long-standing commitment to agricultural preservation, urban centered growth, and resource conservation.

Applicable Napa County General Plan goals and policies:

Goal AG/LU-1: Preserve existing agricultural land uses and plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land uses in Napa County.

Goal AG/LU-3: Support the economic viability of agriculture, including grape growing, winemaking, other types of agriculture, and supporting industries to ensure the preservation of agricultural lands.

Policy AG/LU-4: The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including lands used for grazing and watershed/open space, except for those lands which are shown on the Land Use Map as planned for urban development.

Policy AG/LU-8: The County’s minimum agricultural parcel sizes shall ensure that agricultural areas can be maintained as economic units.

Policy AG/LU-15: The County affirms and shall protect the right of agricultural operators in designated agricultural areas to commence and continue their agricultural practices (a “right to farm”), even though established urban uses in the general area may foster complaints

against those agricultural practices. The “right to farm” shall encompass the processing of agricultural products and other activities inherent in the definition of agriculture provided in Policy AG/LU- 2.

Goal CON-10: Conserve, enhance and manage water resources on a sustainable basis to attempt to ensure that sufficient amounts of water will be available for the uses allowed by this General Plan, for the natural environment, and for future generations.

Goal CON-11: Prioritize the use of available groundwater for agricultural and rural residential uses rather than for urbanized areas and ensure that land use decisions recognize the long-term availability and value of water resources in Napa County.

Policy CON-53: The County shall ensure that the intensity and timing of new development are consistent with the capacity of water supplies and protect groundwater and other water supplies by requiring all applicants for discretionary projects to demonstrate the availability of an adequate water supply prior to approval. Depending on the site location and the specific circumstances, adequate demonstration of availability may include evidence or calculation of groundwater availability via an appropriate hydrogeological analysis or may be satisfied by compliance with County Code “fair-share” provisions or applicable State law. In some areas, evidence may be provided through coordination with applicable municipalities and public and private water purveyors to verify water supply sufficiency.

Policy CON-55: The County shall consider existing water uses during the review of new water uses associated with discretionary projects, and where hydrogeological studies have shown that the new water uses will cause significant adverse well interference or substantial reductions in groundwater discharge to surface waters that will alter critical flows to sustain riparian habitat and fisheries or exacerbate conditions of overdraft, the County shall curtail those new or expanded water uses.

Policy CON-72: The County shall seek to reduce the energy impacts from new buildings by applying Title 24 energy standards as required by law and providing information to the public and builders on available energy conservation techniques, products, and methods available to exceed those standards by 15 percent or more.

Policy CON-77: All new discretionary projects shall be evaluated to determine potential significant project-specific air quality impacts and shall be required to incorporate appropriate design, construction, and operational features to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants regulated by the state and federal governments below the applicable significance standard(s) or implement alternate and equally effective mitigation strategies consistent with BAAD’s (Bay Area Air District) air quality improvement programs to reduce emissions. In addition to these policies, the County’s land use policies discourage scattered development which contributes to continued dependence on the private automobile as the only means of convenient transportation. The County’s land use policies also contribute to efforts to reduce air pollution.

Policy CON-81: The County shall require dust control measures to be applied to construction projects consistent with measures recommended for use by the BAAD. Goal E-1: Maintain and

enhance the economic viability of agriculture. Policy E-1: The County's economic development will focus on ensuring the continued viability of agriculture in Napa County.

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Policy SAF-20: All new development shall comply with established fire safety standards. Design plans shall be referred to the appropriate fire agency for comment as to:

- 1) Adequacy of water supply.
- 2) Site design for fire department access in and around structures.
- 3) Ability for a safe and efficient fire department response.
- 4) Traffic flow and ingress/egress for residents and emergency vehicles.
- 5) Site-specific built-in fire protection
- 6) Potential impacts to emergency services and fire department response.

12. The proposed use would not require a new water system or improvement causing significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on an affected groundwater basin in Napa County, unless that use would satisfy any of the other criteria specified for approval or waiver of a groundwater permit under Sections 13.15.070 or 13.15.080 of the Napa County Code.

The subject property is not located in a "groundwater deficient area" as identified in Section 13.15.010 of the Napa County Code, and is consistent with General Plan Conservation Policies CON-53 and CON-55 which require that applicants, who are seeking discretionary land use approvals, prove that adequate water supplies are available to serve the proposed use without causing significant negative impacts to shared groundwater resources.

The project is proposing a reduction of 0.88 af/yr in overall groundwater use through revamping the existing vineyards irrigation system and scheduling methodology, removal of vineyard and conversion of a farm office to winery accessory use. Regulated Deficit Irrigation (RDI) practices will be implemented on the site. RDI will be achieved through careful monitoring of soil moisture conditions, evapotranspiration rates and distribution uniformity. The physical improvements expected to be installed onsite to facilitate RDI will be as follows: installation of an onsite weather station, installation of onsite soil moisture sensors, installation of water meters on irrigation supply mains, and, installation of pressure compensating emitters. Within a given year and at the maximum expected flow rate of the project well, it is expected that the wells total proposed pump time will be decreased by 1,195 minutes compared to current conditions.

A Water Availability Analysis (WAA), including a site-specific groundwater recharge analysis, was prepared by CMP Civil Engineering & Land Surveying Inc., dated October 8, 2025, to demonstrate that the proposed water use is not impacting groundwater in the area.

The project site and all three wells are within the GSA boundary and the Northeast Napa Management Area. Napa County's WAA guidelines allocate 0.3 af/yr of water per acre of land within the GSA; therefore, the 13.33 acres of project parcel within the GSA has an estimated groundwater

allocation of 3.99 af/yr. Where existing groundwater use exceeds 0.3 af/yr, no net increase in groundwater use is required. Based on the WAA, proposed groundwater use would be reduced from 6.87 af/yr to 5.99 af/yr, a reduction of 0.88 af/yr. Conditions of approval require well metering and monitoring to ensure that winery water use does not exceed 5.99 af/yr.

Because the projected water demand for the project will not be increased, the requested Use Permit is consistent with General Plan Goals CON-10, CON-11, and CON-12 as well as the policies mentioned above that support preservation and sustainable use of groundwater for agricultural and related purposes. The project will not require a new water system or other improvements and will not have a negative impact on local groundwater.