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Recommended Findings

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – MARCH 18, 2026
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**HAGAFEN CELLARS WINERY
Application P19-00121-MOD
4160 Silverado Trail, Napa
Assessor's Parcel Number 039-130-002**

ENVIRONMENTAL:

The project is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et seq.*). The Planning Commission has received and reviewed the proposed Categorical Exemption Memorandum prepared pursuant to the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines and finds that:

1. The project is categorically exempt from the CEQA under sections Class 1 (“Existing Facilities”) and Class 4 (“Minor Alterations to Land”) which may be found in the guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act at 14 CCR §15301 and §15304.
2. 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.
3. The Secretary of the Planning Commission is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. The records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, California.

USE PERMIT:

The Planning Commission has reviewed the Use Permit Major Modification request in accordance with the requirements of Napa County Code and makes the following findings:

4. The Planning Commission has the power to issue the approval for the Use Permit Major Modification request under the Zoning Regulations in effect as applied to the property.

Analysis:

The project is consistent with the Agricultural Preserve (AP) zoning district regulations. A winery (as defined in the Napa County Code Section 18.08.640) and uses in connection with a winery are permitted in the AP District with an approved use permit (refer to Napa County Code Section 18.16.030). Modifications to use permits for wineries located in the AP zoning district require Planning Commission approval (Napa County Code Sections 18.16.030, 18.124.010 and 18.124.130). There is no companion action necessary for the requested Use Permit Major Modification that would require action by the Board of Supervisors.

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

Analysis: The application for a Major Modification to the Use Permit has been appropriately filed, and notice and public hearing requirements of County Code Sections 18.124.040.B and

18.136.040 have been met. On March 5, 2026, the notice of a public hearing was emailed to interested parties requesting such notice; was published in the Napa Valley Register; and mailed via first class mail to owners of property located within 1,000 feet of the property. The public comment period ran from March 5, 2026, through March 16, 2026.

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

Analysis: The requested modification of the use permit to recognize existing days of operation, existing days allowing retail sales, and levels of visitation, will not have an adverse effect on public health, safety or welfare. The continuation of existing levels of operation will not impact neighboring properties. The applicant has demonstrated through supporting reports and analyses prepared by qualified professionals that the existing wastewater infrastructure can accommodate the continued operations and no improvements are required. The project Water Availability Analysis (WAA), dated December 4, 2025, prepared by O'Connor Environmental Inc. estimated a groundwater demand of 5.4 acre-feet per year. Although this level of water use exceeds the estimated recharge rate, the project recognition of existing levels of operations maintains a no-net increase in water use, which complies with the criteria of the County's Water Availability Analysis Guidance Document (May 2015) and the Interim Napa County Well Permit Standards (January 2024). The Tier concludes that the continued use of the Project well at the existing levels is expected to preclude significant adverse effects on surface waters, per the criteria of the County's Water Availability Analysis Guidance Document of May 2015 (WAA Guidelines). The project would not negatively impact groundwater resources. The physical improvements are required to widen the existing driveway to meet current standards and are taking place on areas currently developed or disturbed by landscaping, vineyards and winery development. The improvements would not have an impact on the environment, as determined by the Categorical Exemptions Classes 1 and 4. Various County divisions and departments have also reviewed the project and commented regarding the wastewater treatment system, proper waste disposal, existing site access, and fire and life safety. Conditions are identified that will incorporate these comments, along with other project-specific and standard County conditions pertaining to noise, lighting, and water monitoring, into the project approval to assure the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. The removal of existing conditions related to annual reporting will be replaced by the County's current standard conditions of approval for the same operations. Current conditions require maintaining records for visitation and marketing activities, grape source data, and production quantities, with records to be provided to the department upon request. The removal/revision of the existing condition requiring noticing individuals prior to marketing events will not have a negative impact on the public, as the department has not previously received complaints regarding events that were not noticed. The modifications to existing conditions will not have an adverse effect on public health, safety or welfare.

7. The proposed Use Permit Major Modification complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan.

Analysis: Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance

The Winery Parcel is in the AP District, where wineries with accessory uses are conditionally permitted. The existing winery is compliant with minimum winery building setbacks, maximum winery lot coverage, and maximum accessory to production ratio requirements specified in Napa County Code. The project, as conditioned, complies with the Napa County Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) and all other requirements of the Zoning Code as applicable.

Analysis: Consistency with the General Plan

As proposed and as conditioned, the requested Use Permit Major Modification is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the General Plan (2008).

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.” The continued use of the property for fermenting and processing of 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...”). General Plan Policy AG/LU-2 recognizes wineries as agricultural uses of land, and includes in the definition of agriculture “related marketing, sales and other accessory uses.” Additional water demand generated by the winery’s modified operational characteristics will be in line with General Plan Goal CON-11, which supports prioritization of groundwater for agricultural purposes.

The General Plan land use designations for the parcel is Agricultural Resource (AR). The intent of this land use designation is to provide “areas in the fertile valley and foothill areas of the county in which agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land uses” (Policy AG/LU-21). The agricultural development currently on the property (vineyard and winery), and the recognition of the visitation levels and days of operation are consistent with the general uses identified in the General Plan as being compatible with the specific land use designation (Policies AG/LU-2 and AG/LU-21). The winery use on the parcel is consistent with the general plan designation.

By allowing the expansion of the existing agricultural use, the requested Use Permit Major Modification supports the economic viability of both the vineyard and agricultural product processing uses on the property, 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.

8. The proposed Use Permit Major Modification 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 County Code.

Analysis: The existing domestic water system is currently classified as a transient, non-community system. The system is operated under State ID Water System No. CA2800025 and is owned and operated by Hagafen Cellars, Inc., a private corporation. A new water system is not required. As noted above, the existing project well will continue to serve the winery. The WAA demonstrated that water use levels will remain the same and no increase in water use will occur. The Wastewater Feasibility Report, prepared by Stillwater Civil Design, dated March 5, 2019, demonstrates that the

existing standard leach field can accommodate the existing levels of winery operations proposed to be recognized.

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.

Policy AG/LU-2: “Agriculture” is defined as the raising of crops, trees, and livestock; the production and processing of agricultural products; and related marketing, sales and other accessory uses. Agriculture also includes farm management businesses and farm worker housing.

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.

Policy AG/LU-21: The following standards shall apply to lands designated as Agricultural Resource on the Land Use Map of this General Plan.

Intent: To identify areas in the fertile valley and foothill areas of the county in which agriculture is and should continue to be the predominant land use, where uses incompatible with agriculture should be precluded, and where the development of urban type uses would be detrimental to the continuance of agriculture and the maintenance of open space which are economic and aesthetic attributes and assets of the County of Napa.

General Uses: Agriculture, processing of agricultural products, single-family dwellings.

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-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 Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s (BAAQMD) 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 BAAQMD [Bay Area Air Quality Management District].

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.

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 emergency vehicles.
- 5) Site-specific build-in fire protection
- 6) Potential impacts to emergency services and fire department response