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## Recommended Findings

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – AUGUST 20, 2025  
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**Piazza Del Dotto Major Modification  
Application No. P18-00143  
7466 State Highway 29/St. Helena Highway  
APN 031-120-040**

**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 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Use Permit Major Modification, pursuant to the provisions of CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines and Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and finds that:

1. The Planning Commission has read and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) prior to taking action on said Mitigated Negative Declaration and the proposed project.
2. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and MMRP are based on independent judgment exercised by the Planning Commission.
3. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the CEQA.
4. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole, that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment provided that measures to mitigate potentially significant impacts to biological resources are incorporated into the project approval, and when the project is made subject to compliance with standard conditions of development approval.
5. 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 compatibility plan.
6. 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.
7. 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.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING ANALYSIS:**

### **USE PERMIT:**

The Commission has reviewed the use permit major modification request in accordance with the requirements of the Napa County Code §18.124.070 and makes the following findings:

8. 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 (refer to Napa County Code Section 18.16.020) are permitted in the AP District with an approved use permit. 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.

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 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 May 15, 2025, the notice of public hearing was emailed to interested parties requesting such notice; was published in the Napa Valley Register; and mailed via first class mail to the applicant and the applicant's project team, as well as, to owners of property located within 1,000 feet of the property. The CEQA public comment period ran from May 15, 2025, to June 16, 2025.

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: The requested modification of the use permit, as proposed and conditioned, will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of the County. Affected County divisions and departments have also reviewed the project and commented regarding the wastewater treatment system, food service, proper waste disposal, existing site access, and fire and life safety. Conditions of Approval are recommended which 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.

11. The proposed 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 Winery Parcel is located in the AP District, where wineries with accessory uses are conditionally permitted. The proposed project is currently compliant with maximum winery lot coverage and maximum accessory to production ratio. In compliance with County Code Section 18.104.200, which establishes a maximum allowable building area for accessory

uses at 40 percent of the area used for winemaking, the increased accessory use square footage associated with the requested permit modification is approximately 26 percent of the areas dedicated to wine production. The existing hospitality building is located 520 feet from the centerline of the highway, meeting the reduced setback approved under Variance P09-00492-VAR. The proposed winery building meets the 600-foot setback from State Highway 29 and the 300-foot setback from Yount Mill Road, complying with Section 18.104.230. 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 designation for the subject 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 expansion of the winery’s existing production, tours and tastings and marketing programs and increase in employees, 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.

12. That the proposed use would not require a new water system or improvement causing significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on the 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 project does not require a new water system. The existing domestic water system is classified as a transient, non-community system. The system is owned and operated by Yountville Vineyards LLC., a private corporation, and is comprised of an onsite supply well, supply line, three 85,000 water tanks located on the parcel to the east, and 8" and 3" supply lines. No improvements to the system are required.

The project 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 July 9, 2025, Addendum to the Water Availability Analysis (WAA) prepared by O'Connor Environmental Inc. (OEI), (original WAA dated February 20, 2025), estimates the proposed water use of 9.5 ac-ft per year, which is less than the estimated groundwater recharge rate of 9.84 ac-ft per year. The proposed water use is a reduction from the existing water use, calculated at 11.02 ac-ft per year. Based on the data and interpretation of the hydrogeology of the project area, the project hydrologist opines that the water use associated with the proposed project will not have a significant impact on seasonal flows in Lincoln Creek, the nearest designated Significant Stream. The requested Use Permit Modification is consistent with General Plan Goals CON-10 and CON-11, as well as the policies mentioned above that support reservation and sustainable use of groundwater for agricultural and related purposes.

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-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.
- 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 hydrogeologic 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-54: The County shall maintain or enhance infiltration and recharge of groundwater aquifers by requiring all projects in designated groundwater deficient areas as identified in the County’s groundwater ordinance (County Code Chapter 13.15) be designed (at minimum) to maintain a site’s predevelopment groundwater recharge potential, to the extent feasible, by minimizing impervious surfaces and promoting recharge (e.g., via the use of water retention/detention structures, use of permeable paving materials, bio-swales, water gardens, cisterns, and other best management practices).
- Policy CON-55: The County shall consider existing water uses during the review of new water uses associated with discretionary projects, and where hydrogeologic studies have shown that the new water uses will cause significant adverse well interference or substantial reductions in groundwater discharge to surface waters that would 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-60.5 All aspects of landscaping from the selection of plants to soil preparation and the installation of irrigation systems should be designed to reduce water demand, retain runoff, decrease flooding, and recharge groundwater.

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 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.

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