

Doc No.49-06132025-236

NOTICE OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

County of Sonoma



2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
(707) 565-1900 Fax (707) 565-1103

Sonoma County proposes to carry out the following project. Pursuant to Section 23A of the Sonoma County Code, it has been determined that this project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

**Project Title: Creation of Zoning Administrator
& Hearing Updates, File No. ORD23-0005**

Public Agency: County of Sonoma

Project Applicant: County of Sonoma

Applicant Address: 2550 Ventura Ave, Santa
Rosa, CA 95403

Project Location: Countywide

Date of Approval: 6/5/2025

To:

County Clerk- Recorder Office

County of Sonoma

585 Fiscal Drive, Room 103

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Office of Planning and

Research

P.O. Box 3044, Room 113

Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT: Ordinance No. 6523 includes the following amendments to Chapters 2, 3, 13, 23A, 25 and 25C of the Sonoma County Code:

- Amendments to Article VI (Planning Agency) of Chapter 2 (Administration) of Sonoma County Code: The ordinance establishes the office of zoning administrator pursuant to Gov. Code § 65900; provides that the director of Permit Sonoma shall be the zoning administrator; authorizes the zoning administrator to designate one or more Permit Sonoma employees to act as, and carry out the duties of, the zoning administrator; specifies the duties and authority of the zoning administrator and acting zoning administrator; eliminates the Board of Zoning Adjustments; allocates hearing responsibilities between the zoning administrator for minor items and the Planning Commission for major items; provides thresholds for determining major items; and specifies the membership and service rotation of members of the Planning Commission.
- Amendments to Article II (Airport Approach Zoning Regulations) of Chapter 3 (Airports) of Sonoma County Code: The ordinance replaces the term "Board of Zoning Adjustments" with "Zoning Administrator"; adds a definition of "Zoning Administrator"; extends the period for the Board of Supervisors to decide an appeal under Article II from 60 days to 180 days; and makes minor editorial changes.
- Amendments to Sec. 13-23 of Article V (Fire Safe Standards) of Chapter 13 (Fire Safety Ordinance) of Sonoma County Code: The ordinance amends Section 13-23 to replace the term "Board of Zoning Adjustments" with "Zoning Administrator" throughout that section, and to delete references to the Project Review and Advisory Committee.
- Amendments to Chapter 23A (Environmental Quality Act of 1970 Implementation) of Sonoma County Code: the ordinance adds a definition of "Zoning Administrator"; deletes obsolete references; replaces references to "Board of Zoning Adjustments" and "Project Review and Advisory Committee" with "Zoning Administrator" throughout; makes similar amendments related to updating decision makers and hearing bodies; and makes other similar and minor amendments.
- Amendments to Chapter 25 (Subdivisions) of Sonoma County Code: the ordinance deletes Sec. 25-5, eliminating the Project Review and Advisory Committee; globally replaces references to the "Project Review and Advisory Committee" with "Zoning Administrator," "Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator," or "director of Permit Sonoma," as contextually appropriate, and makes similar updates to decision makers; clarifies appeal procedures and hearing bodies for appeals; updates obsolete references; and makes other similar updates and corrections.

- Amendments to Sec. 25C-7 (Decision-making body) of Chapter 25C (School Facilities Fee/Dedication Ordinance) of Sonoma County Code: the proposed ordinance amends Sec. 25C-7 to replace "Project Review and Advisory Committee" with "Zoning Administrator."
- Ordinance No. 6516 amends Sonoma County Code Chapter 26 to implement a Zoning Administrator hearing process; implement allocation of public hearing authority and duties between the Zoning Administrator (minor items) and the Planning Commission (major items); clarify appeal processes; eliminate a specific post-approval period to meet project conditions of approval, which is currently 2 years; codify a procedure to close out inactive planning applications; eliminate the hearing waiver procedure; and make related and similar changes to processes and procedures. Ordinance No. 6516 implements other amendments to Sonoma County Code made by Ordinance No. 6523 (adopted June 3, 2025), which creates an office of zoning administrator, eliminates the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Project Review and Advisory Committee, allocates hearing duties between the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission, and makes additional related changes to decision makers, hearing bodies and responsibilities. Ordinance No. 6516 does not change zoning or the permitted uses, density, intensity, or development standards for any parcel.
- Ordinance No. 6517 amends Sonoma County Code Chapter 26C, to implement a Zoning Administrator hearing process in the Coastal Zone; implement allocation of public hearing authority and duties between the Zoning Administrator (minor items) and the Planning Commission (major items); clarify appeal processes; extend the standard period to meet project conditions of approval in the Coastal Zone; and make limited similar changes to update procedures. Ordinance No. 6517 amends Sonoma County Code Chapter 26C consistent with Ordinance No. 6523 (adopted June 3, 2025), which creates an office of zoning administrator, eliminates the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Project Review and Advisory Committee, allocates hearing duties between the Zoning Administrator and Planning Commission, and makes additional related changes to decision makers, hearing bodies and responsibilities. Ordinance No. 6517 does not change zoning or the permitted uses, density, intensity, or development standards for any parcel.

The ordinance amending Chapter 26C (Coastal Zoning) requires certification by the California Coastal Commission before the amendments can be effective. No formal local review after Coastal Commission certification is required.

EXEMPT STATUS: 15378(b)(5) and 15061(b)(3)

REASON WHY THIS PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

Permit Sonoma determined that the proposed Code amendments, as a whole, are not a project per CEQA Guidelines § 15378(b)(5), and in the alternative that adoption of the amendments is exempt from CEQA per CEQA Guidelines § 15061(b)(3) (common sense). Adoption of the ordinance amending Chapter 26C is also exempt from CEQA requirements for preparing environmental impact reports, negative declarations, and initial studies, because the Coastal Commission's review and certification process is a certified CEQA functional equivalent.

This Notice of Exemption is filed pursuant to the provisions of Section 15062 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Lead Agency Contact Person:



Scott Orr, Assistant Director
Permit Sonoma
(707) 565-1754



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife
2025 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE
CASH RECEIPT
DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/25) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER:
49-06132025-236

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (If applicable)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| LEAD AGENCY COUNTY OF SONOMA | LEAD AGENCY EMAIL | DATE 06/13/2025 |
| COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING SONOMA | DOCUMENT NUMBER 25-0613-01 | |

PROJECT TITLE
CREATION OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR & HEARING UPDATES, FILE NO. ORD23-0005

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| PROJECT APPLICANT NAME COUNTY OF SONOMA | PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL | PHONE NUMBER (707) 565-1754 |
| PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS 2550 VENTURA AVE | CITY SANTA ROSA | STATE CA |
| | | ZIP CODE 95403 |

PROJECT APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)

☒ Local Public Agency ☐ School District ☐ Other Special District ☐ State Agency ☐ Private Entity

CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:

| | | |
|---|------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report (EIR) | \$4,123.50 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) | \$2,968.75 | \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW | \$1,401.75 | \$ _____ |

☒ Exempt from fee

☒ Notice of Exemption (attach)

☐ CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)

☐ Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

| | | |
|---|----------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) | \$850.00 | \$ _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County documentary handling fee | | \$ _____ \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | \$ _____ |

PAYMENT METHOD:

☐ Cash ☐ Credit ☐ Check ☒ Other

TOTAL RECEIVED \$ _____ \$50.00

SIGNATURE

X

AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

Carrie Anderson, Deputy County Clerk-Recorder