

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – JANUARY 21, 2015
EXHIBIT A - FINDINGS**

**LARKMEAD VINEYARDS
USE PERMIT MAJOR MODIFICATION #P14-00158-MOD
1100 LARKMEAD LANE, CALISTOGA, CALIFORNIA
APN 020-240-001**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The Planning Commission (Commission) has received and reviewed the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of 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 & Reporting Program prior to taking action on said Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program and the proposed project.
2. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program are based on independent judgment exercised by the Planning Commission.
3. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring & Reporting Program 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 as mitigated will have a significant effect on the environment.
5. The Secretary of the 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, and Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, California.

USE PERMIT MODIFICATION REQUIRED FINDINGS:

The Commission has reviewed the use permit request in accordance with the requirements of the Napa County Code Section 18.124.070 and makes the following findings. That:

6. The Commission has the power to issue a use permit under the zoning regulations in effect as applied to the property.

Analysis: The project is consistent with AP (Agricultural Preserve) zoning district regulations. A winery (as defined in Napa County Code Section 18.08.640) and uses in connection with a winery (see Napa County Code Section 18.16.030) are permitted in an AP zoned district with an approved use permit. The project complies with the requirements of the Winery Definition Ordinance (Ord. No. 947, 1990) and the remainder of the Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Title 18, Napa County Code) as applicable.

7. The procedural requirements for issuance of a use permit as set forth in Chapter 18.124 of the Napa County Code (Use Permits) have been met.

Analysis: The use permit modification application has been filed, notice and public hearing requirements have been met. The hearing notice was posted on December 31, 2014 and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1000 feet of the subject parcel and all other interested parties. The CEQA public comment period ran from December 31, 2014 to January 20, 2015.

8. The granting of the use permit, as conditioned, will not adversely affect the public health, safety or welfare of the County of Napa.

Analysis: Various County departments have reviewed the project and commented regarding water, waste water disposal, traffic and access, and fire protection. Conditions are recommended which will incorporate these comments into the project to assure the ongoing protection of the public health and safety.

9. 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.

Analysis: 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. The Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) was established to protect agriculture and open space and to regulate winery development and expansion in a manner that avoids potential negative environmental effects. The project complies with the requirements of the Winery Definition Ordinance (Ord. No. 947, 1990) and the applicable provisions of the Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Title 18, Napa County Code).

This proposal is consistent with the *Napa County General Plan 2008*. The subject parcel is located on land designated Agricultural Resource (AR) on the County's adopted General Plan Land Use Map. This project is comprised of an agricultural processing facility (winery), along with wine storage, bottling, and other WDO-compliant accessory uses as outlined in and limited by the approved project scope. (See Exhibit 'B', Conditions of Approval.) These uses fall within the County's definition of agriculture and thereby preserve the use of agriculturally designated land for current and future agricultural purposes.

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 Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Goal AG/LU-3 states 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."

As approved here, the use of the property for the "fermenting and processing of grape juice into wine" (NCC Section 18.08.640) supports the economic viability of agriculture within the county consistent with General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Policy AG/LU-4 ("The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including lands used for grazing and watershed/ open space..."). Policy AG/LU-8 also states, "The County's minimum agricultural parcel sizes shall ensure that agricultural areas can be maintained as economic units and General Plan Economic Development Policy E-1 (The County's economic development will focus on ensuring the continued viability of agriculture...). Approval of this project furthers these key goals.

The General Plan includes two complimentary policies requiring that new wineries, "...be designed to convey their permanence and attractiveness." (General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Policy AG/LU-10 and General Plan Community Character Policy CC-2). The winery, to the extent that it will be publicly visible, conveys permanence and attractiveness and the proposed parking area will be incorporated into the existing landscaping.

Agricultural Policy AG/LU-13 of the County General Plan recognizes wineries, and any use clearly accessory to a winery, as agriculture. The Land Use Standards of the General Plan Policy AG/LU-2 list the processing of agricultural products as one of the general uses recognized by the AR land use designations. The proposed project allows for the continuation of agriculture as a dominant land use within the county and is consistent with General Plan Agricultural Policy AG/LU-13.

The project is also consistent with General Plan Conservation Policy CON-53 and CON-55, which require that applicants, who are seeking discretionary land use approvals, prove the availability of adequate water supplies, which can be appropriated without significant negative impacts on shared groundwater resources. As analyzed below, the proposed winery will not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge based on the criteria established by Napa County Public Works Department.

Finally, 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. On balance, this project is consistent with the General Plan's overall policy framework and with the Plan's specific goals and policies.

10. The proposed use would not require a new water system or improvements 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 Napa County Code Section 13.15.070 or Section 13.15.080.

Analysis: The subject property is not located in a "groundwater deficient area" as identified in Section 13.15.010 of the Napa County Code. Minimum thresholds for water use have been established by the Napa County Department of Public Works, using reports by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). These reports are the result of water resources investigations performed by the USGS in cooperation with the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Any project which reduces water usage or any water usage at or below the established threshold is assumed not to have a significant effect on groundwater levels. The project is located on the valley floor in an area that has been established acceptable water use criteria of 1.0 acre foot per acre per year. The findings of the Napa Valley Groundwater Monitoring Plan confirmed that the 1.0 af/yr valley floor threshold has proven to be a sustainable limit for groundwater resources.

The Water Availability Analysis was prepared for the project by Always Engineering, Inc. (dated May 9, 2014). The threshold for this valley floor parcel is 17.85 af/yr, calculated by applying a rate of 1.0 af/yr, multiplied by the acreage of the site. The report indicates the

total water demand from the existing uses on the property as 7.55 af/yr (13.2 ac. Vineyards - 6.60 af/yr; employees-.13 af/yr; visitors/events-.13 af/yr; winery processing-.69 af/yr)

The report indicates the total water demand by the modification project on the parcel will be 8.54 af/year (winery processing (also landscaping) for 75,000 gallon winery-1.44 af/yr; employees (8 full-time; 3 part-time)-.16 af/yr; visitors (100 visitors)-.38 af/yr; events (25-300 persons)-.015 af/yr; and 13.1 acres vineyard (irrigation only)-6.55 af/yr.

Based upon the 8.54 af/yr total water demand, the project would be well below the established threshold for groundwater use on the property. The projected increase of .99 af/yr is slightly more than a single family residence.

The County is not aware of, nor has it received any reports of, groundwater shortages near the project area. The project will not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater level.