

Proposed Amendments to Zoning Ordinance to allow Microbreweries and Microbrewery Related Uses

Over the past year, there has been an increased interest to promote agri-tourism by allowing additional uses such as microbreweries in agricultural areas. Currently, the Zoning Ordinance allows wineries and olive oil mills but there is no permissible language for microbreweries in the A (Agricultural) District. In order for microbreweries to be allowed in agricultural areas, changes would have to be made to the Zoning Ordinance. Staff recommends enhancing the County's existing agri-tourism policy by allowing additional visitor-serving commercial facilities that promote the County's treasured agricultural region.

Proposed Amendments

Staff recommends the following amendments to allow microbrewery uses that are permitted by right within the district (new text underlined):

A Districts-17.06.030 Permitted uses

Microbreweries

1. Microbreweries may include accessory uses such as administrative offices, visitor centers, on-site tasting rooms, production and maintenance facilities, and marketing activities that are consistent with General Plan policies and any other use permit limitations.
2. The microbrewery visitor center may include an on-site tasting room or day-use facility which may include facility tours and tasting, retail sales of beer, or related items; display of historical or educational items related to the agriculture of the region; or art
 - a. The visitor center shall not exceed thirty (30) percent of the indoor floor area of the microbrewery facility.
3. Permanent kitchen facilities are not allowed.
4. One (1) food truck may be permitted. The food truck must adhere to County Environmental Health requirements. An Administrative Conditional Use Permit (ACUP) may be requested if additional food trucks are desired and appropriate.
5. The sale of food, complementary food service, or provision of picnic facilities is limited to cold foods prepared off-site, such as but not limited to bread, cheese, crackers, sandwiches or salads, in conjunction with wine, beer, or olive oil tasting and sales, provided such food service remains incidental and subordinate to the tasting and sales.

In addition, the Zoning Ordinance would need to be amended in order to allow related uses for microbreweries within Section 17.06.040 of the A (Agricultural) District. Staff recommends the following amendments to allow microbrewery related uses that are permitted as conditional uses within the district (new text underlined):

A Districts-17.06.040 Conditional uses-Board of zoning adjustments.

Q. Winery, microbrewery or olive oil mill related uses.

In addition to the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments, new definitions are required to classify terms within the Zoning Ordinance. The following proposed definitions would also be added to the Zoning Ordinance (new text underlined):

17.04.010 Definitions

“Agri-tourism” refers to visitor-serving commercial uses that are compatible with agricultural land uses to preserve and enhance the agriculture district by bringing in tourist dollars to supplement sources of income for farmers and ranchers and by increasing the demand for locally produced products.

“Microbrewery” means a commercial, bonded facility for manufacture, blending, fermentation, processing, and packaging of malt liquor that produces less than ten thousand (10,000) barrels (310,000 US gallons) of beer annually. At all times, microbreweries must have a current and applicable California Alcohol Beverage Control License.

“Microbrewery related uses” means various uses accessory to a microbrewery which must be clearly incidental and subordinate to the primary microbrewery use. The term includes various temporary, cultural and social events (catered banquets, receptions, concerts, food and beer festivals, races, etc.) that would not compromise the primary agricultural operation or appearance of the property. The term includes beer marketing activities that are otherwise disallowed by the definition of microbrewery.

“Tasting room, on-site” means an establishment where wine, beer, or olive oil produced on the premises are served to the public for on-site consumption; also may include off-sales of beer, wine or olive oil produced on the premises.