

The Potential for Events Facilities on Agricultural Land in the Sonoma Valley

August 2004

Choices for the future

Executive Summary.

This report contains the results of a yearlong study. It examines the potential, under present zoning, for a growing number of visitor-serving and events facilities on agricultural lands in the Sonoma Valley. It also identifies some of the choices that need to be made toward a course for the future that protects and reinforces the rural character and quality of life of the area in which we live.

"Events facilities" and "visitor-serving facilities", for the purpose of this study, include the ancillary buildings and/or outdoor facilities associated with agricultural activities that are used on a regular basis for gatherings, celebrations, tastings, weddings, concerts and other such activities.

Concerns

This study was undertaken in response to the rising concern voiced by many residents of the Sonoma Valley about:

- The growing number of events related facilities that are now in place, or are likely to be built in the future, in association with agricultural operations on agricultural land in the Sonoma Valley,
- The potential concentrations of such facilities along the highways and country roads of the Sonoma Valley,
- The continuing erosion of the rural character of the Sonoma Valley by large scale development,
- Traffic & Safety issues associated with increased use of the Valley's road infrastructure
- Cumulative effects of large facilities on ground water and on its availability to other residents who depend on it in the Sonoma Valley,
- The potential cumulative effects of in-the-ground and package sanitation services likely to be built to serve events facilities on the quality of the ground water in the Valley
- Cumulative effects of noise (sometimes amplified) from events facilities on the peaceful enjoyment by neighbors of their properties in the Valley
- Cumulative effects of lights from events facilities on the night sky of the Sonoma Valley
- Cumulative negative effects of event facility development on hillsides and viewsheds, especially noticeable with night lighting,
- The continuing lack of official coordination and monitoring of the frequency and size of events throughout the Valley., including the seeming lack of follow-up investigation of on-going abuses of the permitted frequency and size of events at existing events facilities.

Summary of Findings

The Study Area for this report includes a total of 33,125 acres in the Sonoma Valley. The study focuses particularly on 792 parcels in the Study Area, all of which lie in the large "agricultural" zones (DA, LIA, LEA and RRD) under present Sonoma County zoning. Together the 792 parcels contain a total of 26,587 acres. On site evaluation of these 792 parcels by two-person teams leads to the following observations about the future of those parcels:

- Under the present "minimum lot size" regulations of present zoning, the 792 agricultural parcels that now exist in the study Area could be subdivided to produce a total of 974 legal parcels, any of which could be developed independently at some time in the future,

- 38 parcels already contain events facilities located on agricultural land in the Sonoma Valley. Other events- and visitor-serving- facilities (hotels, restaurants, special event facilities, etc.) also exist on commercially zoned land that is not covered by this study.
- 362 of the potential 972 parcels in the Valley have been evaluated to possess a "high" to "very high" potential for future use as visitor serving and/or events facilities associated with agricultural operations and have been designated as potential "future" event sites.
- If all of those "future" parcels were to be developed to their full potential under existing zoning, i.e. subdivision of parcels based on the existing minimum lot size currently established for the parcel, the resulting total build-out would represent a more than 2500% (Two thousand five hundred percent) increase over the present day number of events facilities in the Valley. Even if only a 20% of the "future" sites were build out 75 events facilities would be added to the Valley, for a total of 113 events facilities Sonoma Valley wide.
- The potential concentrations of events facilities (see Figure M) under three possible scenarios are summarized on the chart below.

Under Scenario C (the least dense alternative, which assumes 20% build-out with the text proposed for GP2020 in force), the density of events facilities over the 24 miles of the Sonoma Valley would be 3.5 per mile. In some areas of concentration densities may exceed 4 per mile, however.

By comparison, the present density of the Oakville-to-St. Helena stretch of Highway 29 in the Napa Valley is 4 facilities per mile while the overall density from Yountville to Calistoga is 3.2 per mile. Traffic congestion in the St Helena section is acute both on weekdays and on weekends, even though the Napa Valley has a parallel road to serve as an alternate route for traffic, which the Sonoma Valley does not.

Scenario B (20% build-out) would result in an average of 4 facilities per mile in the Sonoma Valley, with higher densities in popular areas, while Scenario A (maximum build-out under present zoning) would produce a density in excess of 16.6 facilities per mile.

In summary, therefore, the residents of the Sonoma Valley seem to be facing, under present zoning regulations in Sonoma County, the following alternatives:

- at best, build-out densities as high as the most congested sections of the Napa Valley, and
- at worst, a build-out density over 4 times the level that already causes grid-lock in the Napa Valley over a much shorter stretch of highway.

Concentration Area				Scenario A - maximum build-out			Scenario B - 20% build-out			Scenario C - 20% w CAC GP2020 language		
Sector	Area	Location	Length	Now	Future	Total	Now	Future	Total	Now	Future	Total
North Valley	1	Oakmont	1.7 miles	2	13	15	2	3	5	2	2	4
	2	Kenwood North	1.7 miles	5	19	24	5	4	9	5	0	5
	3	Kenwood South	1.3 miles	3	12	15	3	2	5	3	0	3
	4	Trinity	1.7 miles	3	18	21	3	4	7	3	3	6
	5	Glen Ellen East	0.5 miles	2	6	8	2	1	3	2	1	3
		not in areas of concentration			11	36	47	11	7	18	11	7
	Subtotal for North Valley			26	104	130	26	21	47	26	13	39
Mid Valley	6	Madrone	1.3 miles	2	17	19	2	4	6	2	1	3
	7	Grove Street	1.3 miles	1	14	15	1	3	4	1	2	3
	8	Sonoma West	1.5 miles	0	38	38	0	8	8	0	4	4
	9	Mid Valley	1.5 miles	0	13	13	0	3	3	0	4	4
	10	116 Grade	2.3 miles	0	37	37	0	7	7	0	5	5
	11	Big Bend	1.7 miles	1	35	36	1	7	8	1	3	4
	not in areas of concentration			0	55	55	0	11	11	0	11	11
	Subtotal for Mid Valley			4	209	213	4	43	47	4	30	34
SR 121	12	Schellville East	1.5 miles	0	15	15	0	3	3	0	3	3
	13	Schellville West	1.7 miles	5	13	18	5	3	8	5	0	5
	14	SR121 Corridor	1.1 miles	1	9	10	1	2	3	1	2	3
	15	Sears Point	1.1 miles	2	9	11	2	2	4	2	1	3
		not in areas of concentration			0	3	3	0	1	1	0	1
	Subtotal for SR 121 area			8	49	57	8	11	19	8	7	15
Totals for the Sonoma Valley				38	362	400	38	75	113	38	50	88

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Acknowledgements.

This study was initiated and funded by the Valley of the Moon Alliance (VOTMA), a not-for-profit alliance of residents and property owners from the Sonoma Valley in Sonoma County. It includes, and incorporates into its calculations, the results of a study of the potential for events facilities on agricultural lands in the SR 121 corridor between Sears Point and Burndale Road that was carried out by the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Committee (SVCAC) in January of 2003.

Special thanks are extended to the following individuals without whom this study would not have been possible:

Project Coordinator: Norman Gilroy

Chairpersons: Del Rydman, Steve Perry, Karl Keener and George Ellman

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Study Report

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Study Area

The geographic scope of this study (see Figures A, B and C) includes properties in the Sonoma Valley that are zoned for "agriculture" and that lie within easy reach of the following highways:

- SR12 between Oakmont in the north and Agua Caliente to the south,
- Arnold Drive between its intersection with SR 12 in Glen Ellen and SR 116 to the south,
- SR 116 from Willie Bird Way to the east to its intersection with SR 121 at Big Bend
- SR 121 from Sears Point to Big Bend and Burndale Road (based on information taken from the study of that area that was completed by the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission (SVCAC) in January of 2003, Findings and some maps included).

Scope of study.

The focus of this study is limited to the "agricultural" zoned properties in the Sonoma Valley as they are defined by the Sonoma County General Plan (i.e. properties zoned DA, LIA, LEA and RC-Resource Conservation). Figures D, E and F show the location of those properties. The study does not include the commercial zoned properties in the Study Area that could, or do now, accommodate events and visitor-serving facilities. Facilities built there would be in addition to the projections provided here.

Purpose.

This study responds to the concerns expressed frequently by local residents, and by some official agencies, about the growing number of events related facilities associated with agricultural operations (primarily wineries) that are being approved one-at-a-time along the main highways that serve the Sonoma Valley. The purpose of the study is to examine:

- a) how the individual approvals for events facilities on agricultural land have already accumulated over time,
- b) the potential for additional events and visitor-serving facilities in the future under the agricultural zoning that is presently in place.
- c) the potential cumulative effects of present and future events facilities on the rural environment of the Sonoma Valley, and
- d) the likely areas of concentration of events and visitor serving facilities, now and in the future.

Concerns in the Sonoma Valley.

Issues that concern local residents include:

- The potential loss of Rural Character as a result of the placement over time of a large number of agricultural production facilities and events facilities on agricultural land along the country roads of the Sonoma Valley,
- Potential concentrations of facilities as a result of present or future ownership patterns, and the lack of advanced planning for growth in the Sonoma Valley,
- Traffic & Safety issues associated with the growing number of visitor-serving facilities, most serving alcohol and all using the same two lane highways to provide access and egress to events largely without coordination and at much the same times and on much the same days throughout the year,
- The cumulative effects of large facilities on ground water availability, especially in water-scarce areas of the Sonoma Valley
- The cumulative effects of ground disposal sanitation facilities that will be needed to serve large facilities on the quality of ground water supplies and local streams and drainage basins
- The cumulative effects of noise (sometimes amplified) from events on residents of the Sonoma Valley.
- The cumulative effects of lights for access roads and evening events on the night sky of the Sonoma Valley.
- The cumulative effects of event center development on hillsides and viewsheds, especially as the relatively dark hillsides are lit at night.

Uses allowable on "agricultural" land under present Sonoma County zoning.

Normally a resident of Sonoma County would expect that agricultural zoning (especially large parcel agricultural zoning) would provide some significant guarantee of protection of the rural character of the County. That expectation might seem reasonable just on the basis of the name of the zoning ("agricultural" zoning = open land used for farming = open land and rural views = protection of the rural character). A very large part of the Sonoma Valley is presently in agricultural zoning, and the proposed language for the up-dated "General Plan 2020" anticipates no change in that situation. As a result, many residents of the Sonoma Valley may feel secure that our rural character is safe for the foreseeable future.

The reality seems, however, to be somewhat different. In Sonoma County, "Agricultural" zoning allows, with a Use Permit, a wide range of "agriculture-related uses" on "agricultural land". They include large scale agricultural processing facilities (including wineries), tasting rooms, and a variety of other year-round sales-, events- and promotion-facilities.

The recent dramatic growth of the wine industry in Sonoma County has resulted in a growing number of applications for very large wine production and storage facilities on agricultural lands. Along with them have come a considerable number of applications for events and visitor serving facilities. Proposals have ranged from small tasting rooms to full scale food and wine markets and events facilities designed for (and perhaps dependent on) frequent weddings and other events attended by 150 to 600 people (and in some cases, up to 2000 people). In addition, wineries and other property owners can request individual over-the-counter "events permits" that further increase the number of events that can be held at their facility over the course of a year.

Increasingly it seems that Use Permit applications for wineries have contained the argument that revenue generating event facilities are needed to guarantee the success of the winery in a competitive market. As a result, winery applications are frequently being referred to as "events facilities masquerading as wineries". Even some small production wineries in Sonoma County have received approval for 60 or more events per year.

Perhaps as a result, a commonly held rationale seems to have developed among potential applicants that event facilities are somehow now "allowed" on agricultural land. One recent applicant was heard to say that "the usual events facility allowed on agricultural land would accommodate gatherings of up to 150 people up to 65 times a year". The expectation seems to have developed that that is what a winery or a large ag. producer can expect to get for a new facility.

This in turn has led to a concern on the part of many residents that the growing number of events facilities, each hosting one or two large weddings or similar gatherings every summer weekend and others on a daily basis, is about to get out of hand. They worry that further increases in the number of events facilities on agricultural land could place too heavy a load on the highways and on the quality of life of local residents if allowed to continue unabated. The fact that local weather patterns limit the events season in Sonoma to roughly nine months of the year (March through November) further compresses the time frame in which the cumulative load from the events allowed under approved Use Permits will be imposed on the highways and the way of life in the Sonoma Valley.

Interestingly, however, most of those concerns have, so far, been based largely on impressions and rough estimates. Prior to this time, no definitive study used reliable existing data to evaluate the likely number, extent and distribution of events facilities on agricultural lands in Sonoma Valley based on the "agricultural zoning" that exists now. Yet that zoning, as it is codified in the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance and in the Sonoma County General Plan, will shape the future of the rural character of the Sonoma Valley over the long term. It therefore seemed prudent to examine it, and its likely effects, before it is too late to turn back. That is what this study sets out to do.

Treatment of events facilities in the Sonoma County "General Plan 2020" up-date

The process of up-dating the Sonoma County General Plan (General Plan 2020) is now under way, and some of the proposed language for the Plan begins to address issues associated with production and events facilities on agricultural lands in Sonoma County. The topic has already been the subject of much debate at the GP 2020 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) level, and more debate can be expected as the text for the up-dated plan goes before the Sonoma County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Policy level language has been proposed by the CAC that offers a way to deal with the cumulative effects of proposals for events facilities on agricultural land in Sonoma County. However the recommended approach is untested and it is predictable that compromises will have to be made in the proposed language as time goes by.

It is also important to keep in mind that the new General Plan policies will have little real effect on conditions for the future unless and until they are adopted into, and implemented by, the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance. Presently the GP 2020 text makes no recommendations for changes in the agricultural zoning regulations or the zoning map for the Sonoma Valley that would lessen or limit the number of parcels on which events facilities could be requested, and built, with a Use Permit.

As it stands at the time of this study (August 2004), the policy recommended by the CAC for inclusion in GP2020 states:

"AR-5g: Local concentrations of any commercial or industrial separate agricultural support uses, including processing, storage, bottling, canning and packaging, agricultural support services, and visitor-serving and recreational uses as provided in Policy AR6f, even if related to surrounding agricultural activities, are detrimental to the primary use of the

land for the production of food, fiber and plant materials and shall be avoided. In determining whether or not the approval of such uses would constitute a detrimental concentration of such uses, consider all the following factors:

1. Whether the above uses would result in joint road access conflicts, or in traffic levels that exceed the Circulation and Transit Element's objectives for level of service on a site specific and cumulative basis
2. Whether the above uses would draw water from the same aquifer and be located within the zone of influence of area wells.
3. Whether the above uses would result in three or more adjacent parcels with agriculture-related support or visitor-serving and recreational uses sited within 0.5 miles of each other.
4. Whether the above uses would be detrimental to the rural character of the area.

In cases where the proposed processing use would process only products grown on site, such use would not be penalized in accordance with this concentration policy."

The text also calls for "a comprehensive event coordination program to provide monitoring and scheduling of special events to minimize cumulative impacts of such uses, particularly in areas of concentration".

A look at the future.

This study therefore sets out to see what the future of the Sonoma Valley could be like if its events facility potential is developed at:

- A. The maximum levels permitted under the present zoning (the "worst case" described here),
- B. A more conservative 20% of the maximum levels permitted under present zoning, and
- C. 20% of maximum if the proposed GP 2020 policy controls were adopted without dilution.

Approach to the Study

The field research for this study has been gathered, with one exception, entirely by volunteers from the Sonoma Valley. The exception has been a mapping contract with the Sonoma Ecology Center (SEC), the funds for which were donated by the members of VOTMA. The analysis and the final text for this study were prepared by Norman Gilroy, Karl Keener, George Ellman, Steve Perry and Del Rydman. All are residents of the Sonoma Valley. At the time of writing, both Keener and Gilroy serve on the Sonoma Valley Citizens Advisory Commission, and Keener, Ellman and Rydman serve on the Board of the Valley of the Moon Alliance (VOTMA)

This study is based on factual information drawn from the public record and from databases provided by the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma Ecology Center. Its findings are therefore consistent with the accuracy of the data bases it uses. Parts of the study (e.g. the 1 to 5 "likelihood" ratings in the chart in Appendix 1) are, however, based on the subjective judgments of the various two-person field teams that evaluated each parcel based on criteria including suitability to use, accessibility and aesthetic backdrop. Even with adjustments for new information, however, the scale of the likely proliferation of events facilities in the Sonoma Valley is likely to hold at, or above, the levels predicted in the "20% build-out" or the "GP2020" scenarios evaluated here. The study includes the following:

Baseline mapping.

The Graphic Information System team at the Sonoma Ecology Center (SEC) first drew upon its own database and on County records to produce large-scale computer-generated maps that show the configuration and location of all of the Assessors Parcels in the upper portion of

the Sonoma Valley. The outline of the Study Area was superimposed on the base maps (Figures A, B), and individual identification numbers were assigned to all the 1784 parcels that lie within the Study Area in preparation for the analysis presented here.

Due to the size of the study area, the Study Area was divided into North and South sections, with some overlap allowed between the sections to make it easy to understand the local correlation of properties near the match line while looking at a single map. SEC also prepared smaller scale maps that showed the Land Uses existing in 2003 (Figures G and H) and the areas of Agricultural and Commercial Zoning (Figure D and E) to identify the general range and location of the target properties on which event facilities might occur under present zoning.

Similar maps (also prepared by SEC – see Figures C, F, I and L) were taken from the previous study of the SR 121 corridor conducted by SVCAC and were added to expand the study so that its evaluation would include the entire Sonoma Valley.

Statistical Chart

SEC first prepared a baseline Excel chart that listed all the 1784 numbered parcels within the Study Area by AP# and provided data on the ownership, acreage, zoning and present uses of each parcel. The chart was then used to winnow out the approximately 792 parcels in the Study Area that are zoned "Agriculture" (i.e. in the DA, LIA, LEA or RRD zones). Working charts were then prepared that provided columns in which to plot field information and list the ratings prepared by a team of local volunteers (see Appendix 1).

Field data gathering

A team of 10 volunteers, divided into two-person evaluation teams, jointly attended an "evaluation" workshop to increase evaluation consistency between teams and then worked in the Study Area over a number of weeks to make drive-by visits to each of the properties listed on the chart. Random audits of the data gathered were also done. Using a data gathering form (see Appendix 2), the team:

- a. Confirmed the status of the present uses on each property and
- b. Identified where an events-related facility already existed,
- c. Rated each undeveloped property on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) probability scale for its suitability as a future site for an events facility. Ratings were based on size of parcel, proximity to road access, visibility, topography and appropriateness for the use.

The data from the Field Survey was then transferred to the analytical chart in Appendix 1 ready for review.

Analytical process

- **Tabulation of present "events related" uses on agricultural land.**

A mark (1) was made in the appropriate column on the chart for each parcel on which a tasting room or other events facility already existed at the time of the survey. The number 1 was used so that the number of existing facilities could be totaled at the end of the evaluation chart.

- **Potential for subdivision under present zoning.**

A comparison was made between the present acreage of each parcel and the minimum lot size allowed under present zoning. Where it appeared possible that a parcel could be subdivided into smaller legally conforming parcels under today's zoning, the possible number of parcels was listed in the next column in the chart, and that became the number to be used for the "worst case" analysis contained in the study.

- **"Likelihood Rating" of properties.**

Each property was rated in the field for the ease with which it could be converted to visitor-related or events uses at some future time. A rating scale with a range from "1 – very unlikely" to "5 – very likely" was used, and the "likelihood ratings" assigned by the Field Data team were transferred to the appropriate probability columns in the chart.

For properties where the potential exists for a future subdivision, the number placed in the likelihood column reflects the anticipated (not the present) number of parcels and the number of potential parcels there is distributed based upon the field data gathered. In some cases, a separate visit was made by another team member to confirm the rating decision as closely as possible.

Once all the parcels had been rated, the chart was used to produce the totals that appear on the bottom line, and these are the numbers on which the project's findings are based. Totals were also calculated for each region in the Sonoma Valley, and they are shown in the chart.

- **Plotting of potential events facility sites on the maps.**

Since this study concerns itself with identifying the locations where it is most likely that events-facility conversion will occur, only the high likelihood categories were plotted on the maps for evaluation. For clarity, different symbols and colors were used on the maps to indicate:

- a. All "very high" (category 5) ratings
- b. All "high" (category 4) ratings
- c. All existing events and visitor serving facilities on agricultural land.

The SEC team later digitized that information, and it is shown on the computer based maps in Figures J (north) and K (south).

- **Combining the data with the SR121 study**

Since a similar methodology had been used in the study of the SR 121 corridor that was conducted in 2003 by SVCAC, it was possible to copy the data from that study directly into the chart for the SR12/Arnold Drive study. It is shown in the final section of the chart. Though the mapping process used in the SR121 study differed somewhat in its detail (e.g. the final maps were not digitized, and the 5 and 4 ratings were separated in the chart but not on the final map) the relevant maps and information from that study are included here for reference as Figures C, F, I and L

- **Identification of potential "areas of concentration".**

The maps were used to make a visual determination of where clustering's of symbols indicated that concentrations of events facilities (existing and potential) would be likely to occur. Those concentrations were then evaluated under three scenarios (see below) and their locations were noted on the composite map that is included as Figure M.

Figure M was then used to make a count of the maximum number of present and potential events facilities in each area of concentration. An estimate was then made of the potential build-out:

- a) Maximum Build-out (Scenario A) and
- b) Under a 20% development scenario (Scenario B), and
- c) At 20% build-out if the proposed GP 2020 text were to be applied in all areas of concentration Scenario (C).

The results of these estimates are summarized in the "Findings" section that follows.

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Findings

Fifteen potential areas of concentration have been identified in the Study Area, and each has been evaluated under three possible scenarios. The findings from those evaluations are as follows:

- **A. based on a build-out of the maximum number of high potential parcels identified:**
 - Area 1: Oakmont – 2 existing facilities, 13 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 2: Kenwood North – 5 existing facilities, 19 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 3: Kenwood South - 3 existing facilities, 12 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 4: Trinity - 3 existing facilities, 18 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12 and Trinity Road
 - Area 5: Glen Ellen East - 2 existing facilities, 6 potential on a short road off SR12
 - Area 6: Madrone – 2 existing facilities, 17 potential on 1.3 miles of SR12 and Madrone Rd.
 - Area 7: Grove Street – 1 existing facility, 14 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of Grove and Carriger
 - Area 8: Sonoma West – None existing, 38 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold, Petaluma Ave. & Leveroni Rd.
 - Area 9: Mid Valley - No existing facilities, 13 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold and Watmaugh.
 - Area 10: 116 Grade - No existing facilities, 37 potential on a 2.3 mile stretch of SR 116
 - Area 11: Big Bend - 1 existing facility, 35 potential on 1.7 miles on Arnold, SR121 and Bonneau Rd
 - Area 12: Schellville East - 2 existing facilities, 15 potential on a 1.5 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 13: Schellville West - 5 existing facilities, 13 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 14: SR121 corridor - 1 existing facility, 9 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 15: Sears Point - 2 existing facilities, 9 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121

258 parcels are located in the areas of concentration, with an additional 104 parcels located outside of the areas of concentration. With the 38 existing visitor serving facilities, the total number of potential facilities at maximum build-out in Sonoma Valley is 400.

- **B. Based on a conservative 20% build-out, assuming build-out is distributed evenly:**
 - Area 1: Oakmont – 2 existing facilities, 3 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 2: Kenwood North – 5 existing facilities, 4 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 3: Kenwood South - 3 existing facilities, 2 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of SR12
 - Area 4: Trinity - 3 existing facilities, 4 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12 and Trinity Road
 - Area 5: Glen Ellen East - 2 existing facilities, 1 potential on a short road off SR12
 - Area 6: Madrone – 2 existing facilities, 4 potential on 1.3 miles of SR12 and Madrone Rd.
 - Area 7: Grove Street – 1 existing facility, 3 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of Grove and Carriger
 - Area 8: Sonoma West – None existing, 8 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold, Petaluma Ave. & Leveroni Rd.
 - Area 9: Mid Valley - No existing facilities, 3 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold and Watmaugh.
 - Area 10: 116 Grade - No existing facilities, 7 potential on a 2.3 mile stretch of SR 116
 - Area 11: Big Bend - 1 existing facility, 7 potential on 1.7 miles on Arnold, SR121 and Bonneau Rd.
 - Area 12: Schellville East - No existing facilities, 3 potential on a 1.5 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 13: Schellville West - 5 existing facilities, 3 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 14: SR121 corridor - 1 existing facility, 2 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121
 - Area 15: Sears Point - 2 existing facilities, 2 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121

By this count, at 20% build-out a total of 56 new facilities could be built in the areas of concentration out of a valley-wide total of 75 new facilities. With the 38 existing facilities, this would total 113 events

and visitor serving facilities in the Sonoma Valley when build-out is complete at 20%.

• **C. At 20% if the CAC's GP 2020 recommendations are applied rigorously in the future:**

Area 1:	<u>Oakmont</u> – 2 existing facilities, 2 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
Area 2	<u>Kenwood North</u> – 5 existing facilities, 0 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12
Area 3	<u>Kenwood South</u> - 3 existing facilities, 0 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of SR12
Area 4	<u>Trinity</u> - 3 existing facilities, 3 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR12 and Trinity Road
Area 5	<u>Glen Ellen East</u> - 2 existing facilities, 1 potential on a short road off SR12
Area 6	<u>Madrone</u> – 2 existing facilities, 1 potential on 1.3 miles of SR12 and Madrone Rd.
Area 7	<u>Grove Street</u> – 1 existing facility, 2 potential on a 1.3 mile stretch of Grove and Carriger
Area 8	<u>Sonoma West</u> – None existing, 4 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold, Petaluma Ave. & Leveroni Rd.
Area 9	<u>Mid Valley</u> - No existing facilities, 4 potential on 1.5 miles of Arnold and Watmaugh.
Area 10	<u>116 Grade</u> - No existing facilities, 5 potential on a 2.3 mile stretch of SR 116
Area 11	<u>Big Bend</u> - 1 existing facility, 3 potential on 1.7 miles on Arnold, SR121 and Bonneau Rd.
Area 12	<u>Schellville East</u> - No existing facilities, 3 potential on a 1.5 mile stretch of SR121
Area 13	<u>Schellville West</u> - 5 existing facilities, 0 potential on a 1.7 mile stretch of SR121
Area 14	<u>SR121 corridor</u> - 1 existing facility, 2 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121
Area 15	<u>Sears Point</u> - 2 existing facilities, 1 potential on a 1.1 mile stretch of SR121

Under this scenario, 30 new facilities out of the total of 47 (i.e. 64 %) could be constructed in the areas of concentration if build-out were limited to the 20% of maximum assumed here. With the 38 facilities already in place, that would result in a total of 88 facilities valley-wide under this scenario. The 20% build out level is, however, purely an assumption made for the purpose of this study. The real arbiter of the ultimate build-out under present regulations is the market demand, and in a thriving economy the 20% build-out assumption could be low.

The results of Scenarios A, B and C are summarized below:

Concentration Area				Scenario A - maximum build-out			Scenario B - 20% build-out			Scenario C - 20% w CAC GP2020 language		
Sector	Area	Location	Length	Now	Future	Total	Now	Future	Total	Now	Future	Total
North Valley	1	Oakmont	1.7 miles	2	13	15	2	3	5	2	2	4
	2	Kenwood North	1.7 miles	5	19	24	5	4	9	5	0	5
	3	Kenwood South	1.3 miles	3	12	15	3	2	5	3	0	3
	4	Trinity	1.7 miles	3	18	21	3	4	7	3	3	6
	5	Glen Ellen East	0.5 miles	2	6	8	2	1	3	2	1	3
		not in areas of concentration			11	36	47	11	7	18	11	7
	Subtotal for North Valley			26	104	130	26	21	47	26	13	39
Mid Valley	6	Madrone	1.3 miles	2	17	19	2	4	6	2	1	3
	7	Grove Street	1.3 miles	1	14	15	1	3	4	1	2	3
	8	Sonoma West	1.5 miles	0	38	38	0	8	8	0	4	4
	9	Mid Valley	1.5 miles	0	13	13	0	3	3	0	4	4
	10	116 Grade	2.3 miles	0	37	37	0	7	7	0	5	5
	11	Big Bend	1.7 miles	1	35	36	1	7	8	1	3	4
	not in areas of concentration			0	55	55	0	11	11	0	11	11
	Subtotal for Mid Valley			4	209	213	4	43	47	4	30	34
SR 121	12	Schellville East	1.5 miles	0	15	15	0	3	3	0	3	3
	13	Schellville West	1.7 miles	5	13	18	5	3	8	5	0	5
	14	SR121 Corridor	1.1 miles	1	9	10	1	2	3	1	2	3
	15	Sears Point	1.1 miles	2	9	11	2	2	4	2	1	3
		not in areas of concentration			0	3	3	0	1	1	0	1
	Subtotal for SR 121 area			8	49	57	8	11	19	8	7	15
Totals for the Sonoma Valley				38	362	400	38	75	113	38	50	88

Conclusions and comparisons.

This study demonstrates that, under the present agricultural zoning in Sonoma County, there is a strong likelihood that the Sonoma Valley could be the home of between 88 and 113 visitor serving and/or events facilities in the foreseeable future (with the "worst-case" estimate including as many as 400 facilities valley-wide).

The Sonoma Valley (Sears Point to Oakmont, and including the branch of SR121 stretch from Big Bend to Burndale) is approximately 24 miles long. At a density of 88 facilities (Scenario C above), the average would be 3.7 visitor serving facilities per mile. At a density of 113 (Scenario B above), the average would be 4.6 per mile. At 400 (Scenario A above), the average would be 16.7 per mile. These averages do not, however, allow for the additional clustering that is likely to occur in popular areas (like Kenwood, the Mid Valley sections on Arnold Drive, the SR 116 hill, and the SR 121 corridor to Sears Point) where the build-out densities can be expected to be higher.

For purposes of comparison, it is useful to note that the densest section of Highway 29 between St Helena and Rutherford in the Napa Valley now has an average of 4 facilities per mile (20 wineries with events facilities on a 5 mile stretch of the Highway). All are large facilities that are very prominent from the highway, though some staggering of setbacks made possible by the width of the valley has lessened the visual impact on passers by. Other sections of SR 29 (Calistoga, Oakville, etc.) and the Silverado Trail have somewhat lower average densities, though the average visitor-facility density over the whole Upper Napa Valley from Yountville to Calistoga on SR29 is 3.2 facilities per mile in August 2004 (i.e. 54 facilities in just over 17 miles).

Unlike Highways 12, 116, 121 and Arnold Drive, however, the State Highway (SR 29) that serves the Napa Valley has turning lanes and merging lanes at all major turn-offs, and the Napa Valley has a parallel road (the Silverado Trail) that provides an alternate route in times of congestion or accidents. Even so, SR 29 experiences virtual grid lock daily on weekdays both during the morning and evening commute hours and even at lunchtime in the stretches on either side of St. Helena. Similar traffic conditions also exist there on summer weekends, especially when various wineries are hosting events or promotional activities.

The question must be asked, therefore, whether, as a publicly accepted policy, the Sonoma Valley is content to accept such densities, and that associated traffic problems, as the prospect for its future? Or should steps be taken now to lessen the potential for such a density of build-out on agricultural land for the good of the residents of the Valley, for the protection of the Sonoma Valley's rural character, and for the good of the wineries and other agricultural activities that depend upon the rural character of the Valley and the good will of their neighbors for the success of their businesses.

Choices for the future of Sonoma Valley

• Zoning Ordinance

In each of the present agricultural zones, modify wording related to how events facilities are handled to support ag business and communities rural quality of life. Define what a winery is and should events be included as part of the Use Permit process or treated as a separate marketing technique.

- o **Create a new "allied agricultural activities" definition** to include and define large scale production and events facilities - develop a new procedure to handle such facilities that takes them out of the "every winery should have one" - or "every winery has a right to have one" category.
- o **Require rigorous substantiation** where a claim is made that "we can't make the project go without an events (or wedding) facility"
- o **Tailor the size of allied ag facilities to the actual agricultural production capability on site.** Prohibit use of the same parcel(s) of ag land in more than one calculation of ag production capability.
- o **Increase the per-parcel acreage requirements** to minimize future increases in the number of parcels able to support an "allied agricultural activity". Where appropriate, change the parcel size controls on present "Ag" parcels in the Sonoma Valley
- o **Require a demonstration of the connection with agriculture** for all applications that include events, special events, passport, wine clubs, weekly BBQs, formal open houses and other public events. Require clear linkage re how each type of event relates to the proposed (or approved) usage on the site.
- o **Provide incentives for the preservation of rural character** (careful settings, deep setbacks, screen planting, small scale character, mitigation of impacts, et.)

• 2020 General Plan Update

- o Learn from Napa Valley winery practices, and **decide on the total number of winery's that will be allowed in each segment of the Sonoma Valley**, and where they would be allowed.

o **Adopt and strengthen even further the proximity limitation language now proposed for GP 2020** - "no more than 3 in a half a mile" may still be too close together, and areas of concentration can be close together and effectively go on mile after mile after mile. Key concentration to protect the rural character and ag total business in the valley.

o **Develop, and include in the General Plan 2020, a "Sonoma Valley Specific Area Plan"** that replaces the North Sonoma Valley Specific Plan

• **County Event Coordinator position (per GP 2020 update)**

o Adopt the GP2020 recommendation re the establishment of a coordinator to monitor and enforce events related conditions on permits in the Sonoma Valley

o Establish guidelines under which the coordinator will monitor scheduling, approving, tracking and enforcement of events activities allowed by permits in the Sonoma Valley.

o Budget for, and hire, the coordinator

• **Moratorium**

o **Place a moratorium on new wineries/events facilities in Sonoma Valley until the General Plan is adopted and addresses the issues.** Don't rely on market conditions to control what happens within the valley.

• **Initiative usage for resolution**

o **Consider use of the initiative process** in the event County officials are not responsive to more stringent controls on large scale development on agricultural land in the Sonoma Valley

The study team generated the above choices, but all agree that the County experts at PRMD and the decision makers can generate additional choices that need to be implemented to insure a future for the Sonoma Valley.