

SONOMA COUNTY

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT OF THE GRADING, DRAINAGE, AND VINEYARD AND ORCHARD SITE DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

WALKTHROUGH

Ordinance Overview

Among other goals, the proposed ordinance seeks to consolidate all grading, drainage and vineyard and orchard development related code provisions into one comprehensive chapter (Chapter 11) of the Sonoma County Code (SCC). Many of these provisions are new, and carry out the recommendations of the Grading Ordinance Working Group (GOWG) and direction of the Board of Supervisors. As identified below, the heart of the proposed ordinance is Section VII, which sets forth the standards and permit requirements for grading, drainage, and vineyard development activities.

Most of the rest of the proposed ordinance consists of the “housekeeping” necessary to conform the rest of the Sonoma County Code to the new Chapter 11. The proposed ordinance must show deletions indicating the relocation of existing code provisions from their current locations into the proposed chapter, essentially moving the provisions without changing their substance. There are other instances in which outdated provisions are proposed for modification or deletion.

In addition, in December 2007 the County updated the SCC in response to changes in the California Building Code (CBC). The proposed ordinance is an opportunity to revise some SCC provisions to more accurately reflect the CBC changes. Most if not all of the CBC edits are technical and non-substantive.

The following provides a section by section summary.

SECTION I

This section proposes minor edits to the SCC to reference the proposed Chapter 11 and other substantives provisions, thereby making the provisions and standards enforceable under current administrative procedures.

SECTION II

This section strikes code language that has been incorporated into and superseded by proposed Chapter 11A, including the requirement that grading permits be cleared relative to zoning considerations, grading and drainage requirements, and stormwater requirements.

SECTION III

Paragraphs (1) through (31) contain minor edits and/or revisions to Chapter 7 of the SCC, which was recently updated in response to the CBC changes.

Paragraphs (32) through (46) delete from the SCC Appendix J of the CBC, which contains the current grading standards. These standards have been carried forward and expanded in proposed Chapter 11.

SECTION IV

This section relocates the setback from watercourses for structures that require a building permit or agricultural exemption from existing Chapter 11, Article I to an appropriate location in Chapter 7. The section does not change the actual setback requirement.

SECTION V

This section revises or edits definitions contained in SCC, Chapter 7, to more accurately reflect the changes to the CBC.

SECTION VI

This section relocates or deletes most of the existing Chapter 11 – Drainage and Stormwater Management. The section deletes the majority of Article I, although some specific provisions have been relocated to Section VIII, below. The section deletes Article II in its entirety, and relocates Article III to new Chapter 11A.

SECTION VII

This section contains the heart of the proposed ordinance and sets forth the standards and permit requirements for grading, drainage, and vineyard and orchard development activities. As mentioned, the Board directed staff to bring all related code provisions together into one location. The proposed ordinance accomplishes this goal.

The section also follows the GOWG recommendations as closely as possible. Staff has prepared and will distribute a “crosswalk” that identifies the specific locations in which the proposed ordinance carries out GOWG recommendations, and explains the reasons why specific recommendations were not followed. The crosswalk is also on the PRMD web page.

SECTION VIII

This section relocates some specific provisions from Chapter 11, Article I.

SECTION IX

This section amends Chapter 23A of the SCC to conform to the proposed ordinance.

SECTION X:

This section deletes most of the Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance, which has been relocated into the new Chapter 11.

SECTION XI-XIV:

These sections contain administrative provisions necessary for ordinance adoption.