



CODE MODERNIZATION QUICK FACTS: Proposed Regulations for Commercial Weddings and Similar Celebrations, When Secondary to a Residence on a Residential Property, or Secondary to a Winery or Vineyard on Agricultural Property

- **Reason for Proposed Changes:** Currently, applications to hold commercial weddings on residential properties are considered under the rules that address “home occupations” (Santa Cruz County Code Section 13.10.613). However, those regulations are not tailored to this purpose and do not provide sufficient standards for effective regulation. Revised rules would provide clear standards for commercial weddings, limit where such uses could occur, and increase opportunities for public input in the permit review.
- **Limits on Location:** Parcel must be at least **8 acres in size, located in the R-R (Rural Residential) or R-A (Residential Agriculture) zone district, and be outside the Rural and Urban Service lines and outside the Coastal Zone.** In the **CA (Commercial Agriculture) or A (Agriculture) Zone Districts,** weddings permitted only when secondary to a winery or vineyard.
- **Permit requirements:** A **conditional use permit** with a noticed public hearing is required, which includes a mandatory neighborhood meeting prior to application submittal. Any approved permit would expire after 5 years unless renewed.
- **Standards:** Parking, emergency vehicle access, sanitation and litter control must be provided, and the project must comply with General Plan policies and permit conditions that establish maximum noise levels. A contact person would be required to be on-site for all events, and their contact information provided to neighbors within 300 feet, to respond to neighborhood concerns.
- **Permit conditions:** Conditions for each permit would limit the number of guests, number of events per year, event hours, and amplified music, and may require spatial buffers between the event location and adjacent parcels, as appropriate to the site and in response to neighborhood concerns. A noise study could be required for sites proposing outdoor weddings or amplified music.
- **Compliance with the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance:** The Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (SCCC Chapter 13.13), including maximum water allowances and limits on turf area, shall apply to new and rehabilitated landscapes, and to existing landscapes over one acre in size.
- **Code enforcement:** A residential property hosting commercial weddings without the required use permit could be subject to code enforcement action. A permitted use that was found not to be complying with permit conditions could also be subject to code enforcement actions.