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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**3.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

**Introduction**

The Project Description chapter of the EIR provides a comprehensive description of the proposed Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment Project (proposed project) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. The proposed project includes several text amendments to the County’s 2008 Winery Ordinance, which regulates wineries in the unincorporated portions of Placer County. The proposed text amendments are intended to preserve and protect farmland while also enhancing the economic viability of Placer County’s agricultural operations and supporting the tenets of agritourism.

This chapter provides all of the information required for a project description in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15124, including location, list of objectives, general description of the project’s characteristics, and intended uses of the EIR. In addition, due to the complexity of the project, this chapter includes a section entitled, “Framework of the EIR Analysis.” In general, this section describes the methodology used to estimate additional activity at existing and future winery and farm brewery facilities as a result of the proposed project.

Please note that this chapter provides an overall general description of the existing environmental conditions; however, detailed discussions of the existing setting in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, as it relates to each given potential impact area, is included in each technical chapter of this EIR. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15125, the description of the environmental setting shall not be longer than necessary to understand the potential significant effects of the project.

**Background**

In the years since the County of Placer’s 2008 Winery Ordinance was approved, wine industry concerns regarding the County’s existing Winery Ordinance have been raised, specifically citing a lack of promotional events allowed without a use permit. Under the existing Ordinance, wineries are required to apply for an Administrative Review Permit (ARP) in order to hold promotional events such as winemaker dinners. This ARP allows for a maximum of six promotional events per year. Based upon trends within the industry to afford events by right and the desires of the community to continue regulation of events, staff determined that it was appropriate to re-examine the existing Winery Ordinance.

The Placer County Planning Commission held a series of workshops between December 2013 and February 2015 in relation to the review and adoption of a Winery Ordinance Zoning Text Amendment. The workshops introduced and analyzed a variety of potential changes to the

Ordinance. Public comments provided by the Planning Commission, Placer County Vintners Association, Placer County Agricultural Commission, the applicable Municipal Advisory Councils, and community members were taken into account in order to address the diversity of ideas on the subject. Subsequent to the February 26, 2015 workshop, County staff prepared a draft Zoning Text Amendment and Initial Study/Negative Declaration (IS/ND) to review the potential environmental effects associated with implementation of the changes. The IS/ND was circulated for a 30-day public review period beginning on July 11, 2015 and closing on August 10, 2015. During the public review period, the County received comments from one legal firm, one public interest group, and three individuals on the adequacy of the proposed IS/ND. As a result of public comment, County staff brought the Zoning Text Amendment to the Planning Commission as an information item during a regularly scheduled public hearing on January 14, 2016. During this public hearing, County staff informed the Planning Commission that the County’s Environmental Review Committee had determined that in light of the comments received on the IS/ND, an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared.

Subsequent to the January 2016 public hearing, a task force of internal staff members was formed in order to improve the Zoning Text Amendment. The task force included staff members from various disciplines within the Community Development Resource Agency, Department of Public Works and Facilities, Environmental Health Services, Economic Development, and Agricultural Commissioner’s office. In early 2017, the task force determined that some modifications should be made to the Ordinance. Based on input received from agencies and members of the public, the team proposed eight modifications to the January 14, 2016 version of the draft Winery Ordinance. The changes were presented before the Planning Commission on June 8, 2017 at a final public workshop in order to discuss the merits of the new proposal and for County staff to receive comments and direction from the Commission. The currently proposed Zoning Text Amendment is the proposed project that will be evaluated in this EIR and is attached hereto as Appendix A.

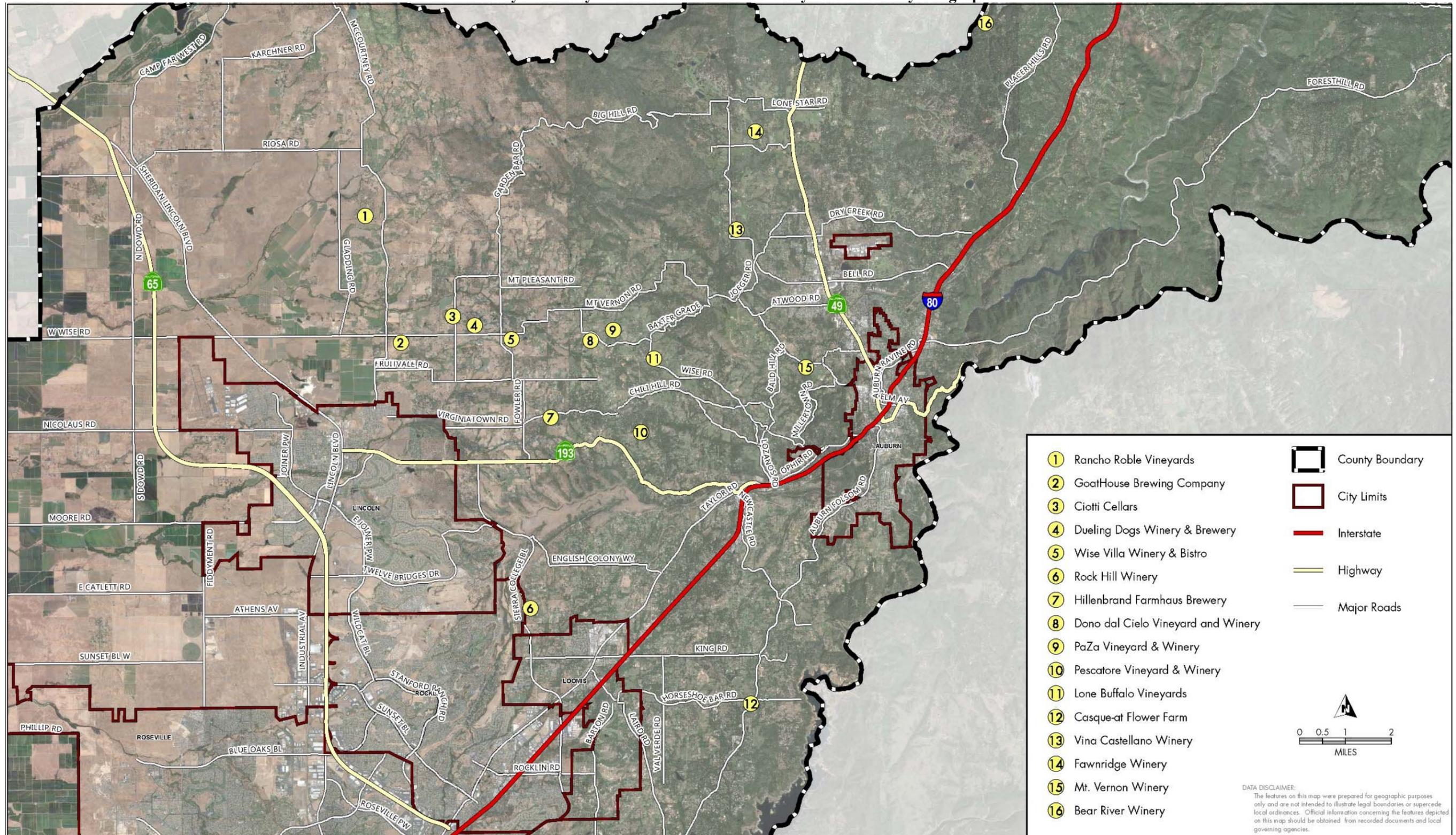
Additionally, the Zoning Text Amendment is now referred to as the Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment in order to regulate farm breweries. Similar to wineries, these facilities produce adequate agriculture necessary to create a value-added agricultural product (i.e. craft beer).

## **3.2 PROJECT LOCATION**

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The proposed project would amend the existing Winery Ordinance, which regulates wineries in the unincorporated portions of Placer County. All of the existing wineries and current and pending farm breweries are located in the western-central portion of the County (see Figure 3-1). While the Winery Ordinance applies to all unincorporated portions of Placer County, the geographic study area of this EIR is appropriately focused on the areas of western Placer County where wineries and farm breweries are currently concentrated. Detailed justification for this approach is provided in the “Framework of Analysis” section of this chapter.

**Figure 3-1  
 Placer County Boundary in Relation to Current Winery/Farm Brewery Geographic Area**



### **3.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

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The policy focus of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment is to preserve and protect farmland while also enhancing the economic viability of Placer County’s agricultural operations and supporting the tenants of agri-tourism, which is a type of tourism that brings visitors directly to a farm or ranch. The Zoning Text Amendment is intended to balance the needs of various stakeholder groups and support the core principle that the primary use of the property is to cultivate and process agriculture in order to make a locally grown and value-added product.

### **3.4 PROJECT COMPONENTS**

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#### **Project Overview**

The existing Winery Ordinance (the Winery Ordinance) was adopted on August 26, 2008 and consists of Section 17.56.330 (Wineries) and Section 17.04.030 (Definitions) of the Placer County Code. The draft language of the Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance Zoning Text Amendment (Appendix A) contains County staff’s proposed changes based on public comment received during the above-discussed outreach efforts.

#### **Summary of Proposed Ordinance Changes**

The draft Winery and Farm Brewery Ordinance language includes the following substantive changes to the current Winery Ordinance:

- Add definition of “Farm Brewery” to the Ordinance
- Amend “Winery” definition to reference appropriate California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) license
- Add definition of “Tasting Room” to the Ordinance
- Modify definition of “Event” in the Ordinance
- Define new 10-acre minimum parcel size requirements for Production-only Facilities and Tasting Rooms
- Create table outlining “Event” allowances, maximum capacity, and use permit requirement
- Clarify hours of operation of all facilities
- Update the potable water standards for facility water systems
- Update the wastewater disposal standards for all facilities
- Update the standards for facility access roadways
- Add “Accessory Use - Restaurant” as allowable land use subject to CUP

Please refer to Appendix A for the full draft language of the proposed Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment. The following section will discuss certain, proposed text changes in further detail.

### Add Definition of “Farm Brewery”

In recent years, the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency has been asked to make a determination that farm breweries are the functional equivalent of wineries. From a land use perspective, these facilities operate very similarly. For example, the agricultural product is grown or sourced locally and then processed on-site, the public may come to the site to sample and drink the product, and the venue may host promotional events to sell their product. It has been determined that farm breweries should be required to meet the same development standards as a winery, including agricultural planting minimums, parking, access, hours of operation, noise regulation, lighting, food facilities, tasting facilities, provision of water, and waste disposal. Under the Zoning Text Amendment, events would be regulated under the same standards and guided under similar General Plan policy to promote agricultural operations and permit a wide variety of promotional and marketing activities for County-grown products in agricultural zone districts. For the purposes of acknowledging this niche within the growing craft beer industry, the following definition is proposed to be added to the Ordinance.

*“Farm Brewery” is a facility, for the brewing and bottling of beer that produces less than 1,500 barrels of product per year and grows hops and agricultural products necessary for making the beverage on-site. A farm brewery is bonded through the Alcohol, Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau and has a current California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) License Type 23 Small Beer Manufacturer License.”*

The definition of a “Farm Brewery” would be added to Section B. Definitions, within Section 17.56.330. The intent of limiting the definition to this section is to acknowledge a regulatory framework needed for a Farm Brewery and distinguish this use from other brewery-type uses that are allowed in other zone districts under the “Restaurants and Bars” and “Food Products” land uses.<sup>1</sup>

### Amend “Winery” definition to reference appropriate California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) license

The current winery definition cites the types of activities that occur at a winery, which is the agricultural processing facility for grapes and other fruit juices that are converted to wine. According to the State of California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC), products such as wine, mead, and cider are regulated under the Type 02 license. As such, a reference to the license is now included in the winery definition. Agricultural minimums for those product types (e.g., mead and cider) would still be a required under the development standards noted in Section D.1.a. of the ordinance.

### Add Definition of “Tasting Room”

A “Tasting Room” definition has been added to the Ordinance to make it clear that a tasting room is only allowed in Residential<sup>2</sup> and Agriculture and Resource<sup>3</sup> zone districts if production takes place on-site. A tasting room without on-site production may be allowed in Commercial and Industrial zone

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the County is also proposing to add a definition for “Brewery” in the general Definitions section of Chapter 17, Planning and Zoning (Section 17.04.030).

<sup>2</sup> Residential Agriculture (RA) and Residential Forest (RF).

<sup>3</sup> Agricultural Exclusive (AE), Farm (F), and Forest (FOR).

districts subject to the permit requirements specified in Table 1 of Section C of the proposed Ordinance. This will be referred to as a stand-alone tasting room. Further, Agricultural Promotional and Special Events, as defined in the proposed Zoning Text Amendment (see below), shall only be allowed as an accessory use to a tasting room.

The proposed tasting room definition is as follows:

*“Tasting Room” is accessory to a winery or farm brewery, typically located on the premises of a winery or farm brewery’s production facilities, at which guests may sample the winery or brewery’s products. A tasting room is only allowed in Residential, Agriculture and Resource zone districts if production takes place on-site. (See also “stand alone tasting room.”)*

### Modify “Event” Definition

The County has determined that it is critical to establish a clearer definition of “Event” for two main reasons: 1) General Plan policy cites promotion of agricultural operation and the marketing of County-grown products as key components to enhancing the economic viability of Placer County agricultural operations, as well as the preservation and protection of agricultural lands; and 2) several comments regarding the inadequacy of the “Event” definition were made during the IS/ND comment period for the 2016 draft Ordinance.

Vintners expressed that a small part of their business model is to hold private events where the consumer is required to purchase a certain amount of wine per attendee as a requirement of utilizing the facility. The proposed definition clarifies that these events, with fewer than 50 people at one time, and where only the winemaker’s wine is sold, could be considered promotional in nature. The redefinition of “Event” under the proposed amendments now distinguishes between Agricultural Promotional Events and Special Events, as follows:

*An “Agricultural Promotional Event” is directly related to the education and marketing of wine and craft beer to consumers including but not limited to winemaker/brewmaster dinners, pick-up parties, release parties, and membership club parties. An Agricultural Promotional Event accommodates 50 people or less at one time (excluding staff). If greater than 50 people are in attendance at one time, those events shall be regulated in the same manner as a Special Event. See Table 1.*

*A “Special Event” is an event of greater than 50 people where the agricultural-related component is subordinate to the primary purpose of the event. Included in this definition are events such as private parties, fundraisers, social or educational gatherings where outside alcohol may be allowed, and events where the property owner is compensated in exchange for the use of the site and facility (referred to as a facility rental). Special Events do not include industry-wide events, the normal patronage of a tasting room, and private gatherings of the owner where the general public does not attend.*

It is important to emphasize that Agricultural Promotional Events and Special Events can only be held at production facilities that have tasting rooms and where grapes, hops, or other agriculture products contributing to beverage production are grown on-site. Whereas the currently adopted Ordinance

restricts the number of promotional events at each facility to six per year, subject to first securing an ARP, the proposed project redefines “event” to distinguish between Agricultural Promotional Events and Special Events. As described in greater detail below, Special Event would continue to be limited in number, similar to the current Ordinance. Agricultural Promotional Events, on the other hand, would not be limited in number, though each event must not exceed 50 attendees at any given time.

With respect to existing facilities, the proposed by-right allowances for Agricultural Promotional Events and Special Events apply only to production facilities with tasting rooms on parcels 10 acres and greater; see the next section for more detail. However, this does not mean to imply that wine production facilities with tasting rooms on parcels smaller than 10 acres cannot conduct events.<sup>4</sup> Under the proposed Zoning Text Amendment these facilities could do so subject to conditions of approval and separate environmental review under a conditional use permit (CUP) (RA and RF) or MUP (AE, E, FOR). Under the current Ordinance, existing wineries on parcels 4.6 to less than 10 acres would be allowed to conduct up to six promotional events per year with an ARP. If ARP or other permit has not been obtained that allows the event activity, any proposal for events after the adoption date of the proposed Ordinance would constitute an expansion of operation and require compliance with the new regulation (e.g., the facility would need to obtain a MUP). Given that wine production facilities with tasting rooms on 4.6 to less than 10 acres are already allowed six events under the currently adopted Ordinance (with an ARP), a net change to the operations of these facilities on 4.6- to less than 10-acre parcels would not occur as a result of the Zoning Text Amendment. Thus, wine production facilities, with tasting rooms on 4.6- to less than 10-acre parcels, are not being evaluated in this EIR because further environmental review would be conducted with any future use permit application.

With respect to private parties, the County interprets private use at a winery or farm brewery to mean that said facilities could be used for a social gathering for friends or relatives provided there is no compensation for the function. However, a private party for which the winemaker or brewer is compensated for the product made on the property or rental of the facility is regulated under Section 17.56.330 (Wineries). Under the Agricultural Promotional Event definition, private parties, for which compensation is provided, are limited to a maximum of 50 people at any given time. Private parties are also encompassed in the proposed Special Event definition, in which case they are not only limited in attendees, but number of occurrences per year, as will be further discussed below.

Additionally, many operators live on the same premise as their tasting room, and if a winery or farm brewery were to hold a private event/party without compensation (e.g.; dinner with friends or their own child’s birthday party), the County would not be prohibited from proceeding, under law, to abate a public nuisance (Ord. 5625-B § 1, 2010; Ord. 5126-B, 2001) or enforce the County’s Noise Ordinance (Ord. 5280-B, 2004).

#### Define New 10-Acre Minimum Parcel Size

According to Section E.1. of the current Winery Ordinance, the minimum parcel size for establishment of a winery in the Residential (RA and RF) and Agricultural and Resource (AE, F, FOR) zoning districts is 4.6 acres. There is no parcel size minimum for the other zoning districts

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<sup>4</sup> Farm breweries are not included here as farm breweries do not currently exist on any small-sized parcels.

where wineries are currently allowed. The proposed Zoning Text Amendment proposes two sets of minimum parcel size requirements, as they relate to production facilities and tasting rooms.

*Production-only Facilities (see Table 1 of Section C)*

- The 4.6-acre minimum parcel size remains the same for the Residential and Agricultural and Resource zoning districts for wine and farm brewery production.
- **Net change:** A 10-acre minimum parcel size is now proposed for large winery production (20,000+ cases annually), whereas the existing Ordinance has no minimum for large winery production facilities.

*Tasting Rooms – (see Table 2 in Section D.3.)*

- The minimum parcel sizes for establishment of a tasting facility in the AE, F, FOR, and RA and RF zone districts are set forth in Table 3-1 below.
- **Net change:** For the AE, F, and FOR zoning districts, the minimum parcel size has increased from 4.6 acres to 10 acres for any new production facility with a tasting room to be established without a use permit.<sup>5</sup>

<b>Table 3-1</b>					
<b>Permit Requirements for Wine and Beer Tasting Facilities in Residential and Agricultural Resource Zone Districts</b>					
<b>Parcel Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Residential</b>		<b>Agriculture and Resource</b>		
	<b>RA</b>	<b>RF</b>	<b>AE</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>FOR</b>
<b>4.6 to Less than 10</b>	CUP	CUP	MUP	MUP	MUP
<b>10+</b>	MUP	MUP	C	C	C

Notes:  
 C = Zoning Clearance (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050)  
 CUP = Conditional Use Permit (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050)  
 MUP = Minor Use Permit (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050)

The intent of increasing the minimum parcel size from a 4.6-acre minimum to 10-acre minimum in these zone districts is to reduce potential for conflict between neighboring residential land uses and commercial agricultural operations. Agricultural and some rural residential land uses are afforded the right to farm in accordance with Placer County Code Section 5.24.040. At the same time, noise- and traffic-generating promotional events, such as wine club events, have the potential to negatively affect adjacent land uses. The County has identified that a greater parcel size could alleviate these adverse effects for two main reasons. First, larger parcel sizes can enable the use of increased buffer widths from the property line and the proposed event location. Second, the shift to allow these operations by right on parcels 10 acres or greater is consistent with counties around the state.

<sup>5</sup> Wineries in RA and RF zones are currently subject to an ARP; and under the proposed project, wineries and farm breweries in these residential zones would be subject to a MUP. As wineries in these two residential zones would continue not to be permitted by right; they are not discussed further.

Create Table Outlining Special Event Allowances, Maximum Capacity, and Use Permit Requirement

Under the proposed project, maximum attendance at winery and farm brewery special events is now limited based upon parcel size (see Table 3-2). The number of Agricultural Promotional Events with attendance greater than 50 is also limited based upon parcel size. As shown in the table, parcel sizes for wineries and farm breweries are characterized as either small (4.6 to less than 10 acres), medium (10 to less than 20 acres), or large (20 acres or larger).

<b>Table 3-2 Maximum Special Events Allowed Per Year<sup>1</sup></b>			
<b>Parcel Size (Acre)</b>	<b>Max Attendees at One Time (Excluding Staff)</b>	<b>Max Special Events / Year</b>	<b>Use Permit Requirement</b>
<b>4.6 to Less than 10 (small)</b>	As determined by use permit	6	MUP <sup>2</sup>
<b>10 to Less than 20 (medium)</b>	100	6	C
<b>20+ (large)</b>	200	12	C
Notes: <sup>1</sup> Agricultural Promotional Events with attendance greater than 50 at one time are limited per this Table. <sup>2</sup> A MUP is required for a winery or farm brewery for parcels 4.6 to less than 10 acres in size in Zone Districts where allowed by the Land Use and Permit Table (Section 17.06.050). This use permit will consider conditions for events as limited by this table. C = Zoning Clearance (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050) CUP = Conditional Use Permit (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050) MUP = Minor Use Permit (Placer County Code Section 17.06.050)			

Clarify Hours of Operation

The currently adopted Winery Ordinance does not specify allowable hours of operation. Typical tasting hours at wineries in operation today are between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM, while special extended tasting hours or other events continue into the evening and end by 8:00 PM Sunday-Thursday and 10:00 PM Friday through Saturday. Codifying tasting hours is one way to regulate that the facilities are for sampling the product and typically would not operate into the evening. The Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment proposes the following:

*All facilities shall be allowed to conduct normal tasting from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Events shall be allowed from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM on Friday and Saturday and from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM Sunday through Thursday. If a winery or farm brewery is required to have a Minor Use Permit or Conditional Use Permit by this Ordinance or has an existing permit and is lawfully operating, limits on hours of operation will be in accordance with the conditions placed on those entitlements.*

## Update Potable Water and Waste Disposal Sections

### *Potable Water*

The currently adopted Ordinance requires the facility owner to provide bottled water for consumption if more than 24 people per day over a 60-day period are served, unless otherwise approved by the County Environmental Health Division.

The Zoning Text Amendment proposes to clarify potable water standards in accordance with State regulations. For example, if a facility serves more than 24 people daily, 60 days or more per year, then a public water system shall be required. The type of public water system would be a Transient-Non-community water system, which includes restaurants, campgrounds, small wineries, motels and other non-residential facilities. Such a public water system requires a permit from the State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water.

### *Wastewater Disposal*

The Zoning Text Amendment clarifies that winery or farm brewery process wastewater is prohibited from being discharged to a septic system. Process wastewater is water used in the wine or beer making process, which is high in organic material. A Waste Discharge Permit or Waiver of Waste Discharge issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) is required prior to building permit issuance if the wastewater will not be discharged into a community sewer system, but rather an alternative form of discharge would be used, such as land application. With land application systems, process wastewater is applied to a vegetated land surface, and the applied wastewater is treated as it flows through the plant and soil matrix. Land application of process wastewater from wineries and farm breweries already occurs within the County, under the RWQCB's Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements for Small Food Processors, Wineries, and Related Agricultural Processors, and would not change under the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.

Additionally, the Zoning Text Amendment clarifies that a separate septic system needs to be provided if a winery or farm brewery has buildings with plumbing.

## Update Access Standards Section

The Zoning Text Amendment requires facilities open to the public and having access from a County-maintained road to construct a paved commercial encroachment standard per the County Land Development Manual (LDM) engineering design plates.

For facilities that are accessed by non-County maintained roads, the owner would be required to obtain an encroachment permit from the County to update ingress, egress, and sight-distance per the County LDM engineering design standards and serving Fire District requirements where the non-County maintained road connects to a County-maintained road, if existing conditions do not already meet County standards.

In addition, if a winery or farm brewery has public tasting and is accessed by a private road, the applicant shall provide proof of access rights as determined by the County and an affirmative written

statement of the legal right to access and use said road for the purposes of the requested facility. The owner must also obtain written approval of the governing board of the applicable road maintenance association or homeowners association. If a governing body or association does not exist, written approval from a majority of the individuals who have access rights to the road shall be required. The owner shall include with said statement the proposal for road maintenance or provide evidence of an existing road maintenance agreement. The owner shall be required to indemnify the County for any claims resulting from said road access.

Add Winery Production (Zero to 20,000 cases) as Allowable Use in Resort Zone District with an Administrative Review Permit

The current Winery Ordinance allows wholesale and retail sales of wine and grape products, as well as wine tasting in the Resort (RES) Zone District. This zone district accommodates commercial land uses and is typically found in mountainous areas, water-oriented areas, or other areas with commercial recreation potential. The Zoning Text Amendment proposes to allow production of wine (0-20,000 cases) in RES-zoned properties subject to an ARP.

Add “Accessory Use - Restaurant” as Allowable Land Use with CUP

Restaurants are described as a land use in the Section 17.04.030 – Definitions of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance. According to Section 17.06.050 – Land Use and Permit Tables, Restaurants are not currently allowed in Agricultural, Resource, or Open Space land uses. Specifically, the proposed change refers to the Agricultural Exclusive, Farm, and Forest zone districts. The project proposes that an “Accessory Use - Restaurant” would be allowed in the Agricultural Exclusive, Farm, and Forest zone districts as long as the food preparation and service is subordinate to the primary use on a property as a winery or farm brewery, and subject to a Conditional Use Permit.

### **Framework of EIR Analysis**

The changes proposed to the existing adopted Winery Ordinance help inform what would be the appropriate framework of the environmental analysis contained in this EIR. The framework of the environmental analysis would be as follows:

1. Increase in Event Activity. The EIR will focus on the potential physical environmental impacts associated with the ability to conduct additional by-right events and new uses under the proposed Zoning Text Amendment.
  - a. Agricultural Promotional Events. While not limited in number, an assumption for this EIR that wineries and farm breweries will host back-to-back events all day, every day is unrealistic. Several factors exist that limit a particular facility’s ability to host events, including number of staff, budget, parking capacity, overlap with regular tasting room hours, etc. In an effort to conduct a reasonable analysis in this EIR, based upon reasonable forecasts, the County solicited input from a variety of facilities currently

operating in the County.<sup>6</sup> Though the facilities that are the subject of the analysis throughout this EIR vary in size, the general agreement is that hosting Agricultural Promotional Events is difficult, as the facilities in western Placer County are relatively small, and as such, have limited resources.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to larger-scale operations in prominent wine regions such as Napa and Sonoma counties, the facilities in western Placer County have limited staff and monetary resources. Consequently, the organization/logistics of hosting multiple events over the course of a short period of time are very difficult.

Further, the general consensus is that, with the exception of those facilities having a use permit to operate like an event center, hosting events is secondary to the primary intent of the business, which is to grow grapes/hops and produce wine/beer. Events are a mechanism by which the operator can generate income to help support their primary business. Another factor to be considered is that Agricultural Promotional Events are currently often scheduled outside of normal tasting room hours, and this trend is expected to continue. The reason that promotional events are often scheduled outside of normal tasting room hours is that most facilities do not have sufficient parking to support normal patronage of the tasting room, in addition to the attendees of a promotional event. Such is supported by the fact that temporary overflow parking cannot be used for Agricultural Promotional Events (only Special Events and events occurring through a Temporary Outdoor Event permit - see Section 17.56.330 (E)(1)(d) of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment).

This EIR recognizes that some Agricultural Promotional Events have different attendance characteristics. While the majority of the events are anticipated to have relatively finite attendance, such as winemaker dinners and membership club parties, a smaller subset would have attendees coming and going over the course of the event, such as wine pick-up and wine release parties. These events have been termed “rolling” events in this EIR, which assumes the 50-person max occupancy at one time turns over three times for a maximum overall attendance of 150 people.<sup>8</sup>

- b. Special Events. The EIR will evaluate the potential environmental effects that could result from a maximum of 12 Special Events or Agricultural Promotional Events with attendance >50, at facilities on large parcels (>20 acres). While the Ordinance currently allows six Special Events, and thus the net increase for facilities on large

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<sup>6</sup> As stated in Kostka and Zischke, *Practice Under the California Environmental Quality Act, Second Edition, Vol 1*, Section 11.32, “When it is difficult to forecast future actions, an EIR may rest its analysis on reasonable assumptions (*State Water Resources Control Bd. Cases* (2006) 136 CA4th 674, 797.” The forecasts should be based upon substantial evidence which, according to PRC 21080(e) and Guidelines Section 15384, consists of facts, reasonable assumptions predicated on facts, and expert opinion supported by facts, but does not include argument, speculation, or unsubstantiated opinion. The information gathered from interviews with local winery and farm brewery operators constitutes substantial evidence from which the County could formulate reasonable assumptions.

<sup>7</sup> Meeting Summary, Placer County CDRA Meeting with Farm Breweries and Wineries, July 14, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> This total attendance estimate for “rolling” Agricultural Promotional Events generally accords well with event trip generation observed by KD Anderson (see Chapter 10, Transportation and Circulation, for more detail), and input provided by Amador Vintners Association on July 9, 2018.

parcels is only six events, this Ordinance amendment would enable facilities to host a new type of use under the Special Event category, namely weddings. Thus, the determination was made that the EIR analysis should evaluate effects, such as traffic, from all 12 potential Special Events on large parcels. The maximum attendance for a Special Event on large parcels is 200 people. While wineries and farm breweries on medium parcels would not be afforded additional Special Events, as compared to their current allowance, they would be able to host a new type of use under the Special Event category, namely weddings and similar events having amplified music. Per Table 3-2, on medium parcels, Special Events have a maximum attendance of 100 people. In order to evaluate the potential impacts of weddings and like events for medium parcels, the determination was made that the traffic analysis should also evaluate traffic from Special Events on medium parcels.

- c. Conclusion. Considering the factors in Section 1(a), this EIR reasonably assumes that each facility could host up to two additional events per day as a result of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment. However, it is not assumed that up to two events would occur each day, seven days a week. Rather, the EIR reasonably assumes a maximum of up to two additional events per day, three days a week – Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Starting with these general parameters, the following additional annual assumptions were formulated, based upon industry input and the proposed Zoning Text Amendment, to perform the technical analysis contained in the EIR.

- Duration of Winery/Farm Brewery Peak Season of Activity is 8 months = 35 total weeks<sup>9</sup>
- Up to two events per day occur three days per week (Fri, Sat, Sun) = 210 total events

For additional parameters, medium- and large-parcel size facilities need to be considered separately, as follows:

*Medium Winery/Farm Brewery (Annual)*

- 6 – 100 person Special Events
- 196 – 50 person Agricultural Promotional Events
- 8 – Rolling Agricultural Promotional Events (no more than 50 people at one time, but assumes the event turns over three times for total attendance of 150 people)<sup>10</sup>

*Large Winery/Farm Brewery (Annual)*

- 12 – 200 person Special Events
- 190 – 50 person Agricultural Promotional Events

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<sup>9</sup> Duration of peak season based on personal communication with Amador Vintners Association, July 9, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Selection of eight (8) rolling Agricultural Promotional Events per year based upon personal communication with Amador Vintners Association, July 9, 2018. This generally assumes one (1) wine release party per quarter and one (1) wine/food pairing event per quarter.

- 8 – Rolling Agricultural Promotional Events (no more than 50 people at one time, but assumes the event turns over three times for total attendance of 150 people)
2. Existing Facilities studied in this EIR. The analysis throughout this EIR focuses on the existing Medium (10- to less than 20-acre) and Large (>20 acres) parcel-sized wineries/farm breweries, as Agricultural Promotional Events would be allowed by-right. This includes the following existing facilities (see Figure 3-1):
- a. Medium Parcel Size (10- to less than 20-acre)
    1. Wise Villa Winery and Bistro
    2. Lone Buffalo Vineyards
    3. Rancho Roble Vineyards
    4. Vina Castellano Winery
    5. Goathouse Brewery
    6. Hillenbrand Farmhaus Brewery
    7. Casque at Flower Farm
    8. Ciotti Cellars
  - b. Large Parcel Size (> 20 acres)
    1. Mt. Vernon Winery
    2. Dono Dal Cielo Vineyard and Winery

These 10 facilities are referred to as existing study facilities throughout this EIR.

It should be noted that Wise Villa has a CUP to operate as a Community Center. Nonetheless, Wise Villa has been included in the EIR analysis because, in addition to the allowable events specified in its current CUP, Wise Villa will be afforded additional flexibility under the proposed Zoning Text Amendment with respect to Agricultural Promotional Events. Casque at Flower Farm also has a CUP to operate as a community center, though specification on number of allowable events is not provided. Similar to Wise Villa, Casque has been included in the EIR analysis because it will be afforded additional flexibility under the proposed Zoning Text Amendment with respect to Agricultural Promotional Events.

It is also important to note that while Rock Hill Winery is located on a 14-acre parcel, and thus considered a medium winery, it is located on a RA-zoned property. Wineries in RA (and RF) zones are currently subject to an ARP; and under the proposed project, wineries and farm breweries in these residential zones would be subject to a MUP. Because Rock Hill Winery would need to obtain a MUP if they desired to increase events at the site, above their existing ARP approvals, this winery is not evaluated further in this EIR.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, wine production facilities with tasting rooms on 4.6 to less than 10 acres are already allowed six events under the currently adopted Ordinance (with an ARP), a net change to the operations of these facilities on 4.6- to less than 10-acre parcels would not occur as a result of the Zoning Text Amendment. Thus, wine production facilities, with tasting rooms on 4.6- to less than 10-acre parcels, are not being evaluated

in this EIR because further environmental review would be conducted with any future use permit application.

3. Future Winery and Farm Brewery Growth Projections. All future winery/farm brewery applications would be subject to the proposed Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment. Under the proposed project, future facilities on medium- and large-sized parcels would now be afforded the ability to host an unlimited number of Agricultural Promotional Events, and medium and large wineries/breweries would be afforded the ability to host a limited number of Special Events each year. As a result, Chapter 12, Cumulative Impacts and Other CEQA Sections, of this EIR will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with the ability to conduct Agricultural Promotional Events and Special Events at future wineries/farm breweries subject to the proposed project.

However, this EIR is not required to evaluate the physical environmental effects of construction of new facilities, because the Zoning Text Amendment would not result in the direct development of additional medium or large wineries/farm breweries, as they are already permitted by-right in certain zones, and the project is not expanding the number of zones where by-right development can occur.

In order to perform such an evaluation, the County conducted research of historic winery/farm brewery growth within its own jurisdictional boundaries, as well as the jurisdictions of other comparable, foothill counties, namely, El Dorado and Amador counties. The research can be summarized as follows:

- a. Placer County

Placer reviewed its historic growth rate for wineries and farm breweries between 2003-2017 and determined that the average annual growth rate for this 14-year period was 1.3 new facilities per year.

- b. El Dorado County

Based upon correspondence with El Dorado County, there were 57 wineries in 2008, and in 2017, there were a total of 71 wineries.<sup>11</sup> Thus, over this approximate 10-year period, the average annual growth in El Dorado County was approximately 1.4 new wineries per year.

- c. Amador County

Based upon correspondence with Amador County, the number of wineries at time of Winery Ordinance adoption in 1993 was 21.<sup>12</sup> The number of wineries in 2017 was

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<sup>11</sup> Personal communication between Shawna Purvines, Principal Planner, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, and Charlene Carveth, Agricultural Commission, El Dorado County, November 6, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Personal communication between Nick Pappani, Vice President, Raney Planning and Management, Inc., and Susan Grijalva, Planning Director, Amador County, June 23, 2017.

approximately 50. Thus, over this 24-year period, the average annual growth in Amador County was approximately 1.2 wineries per year (29 total wineries/24 total years).

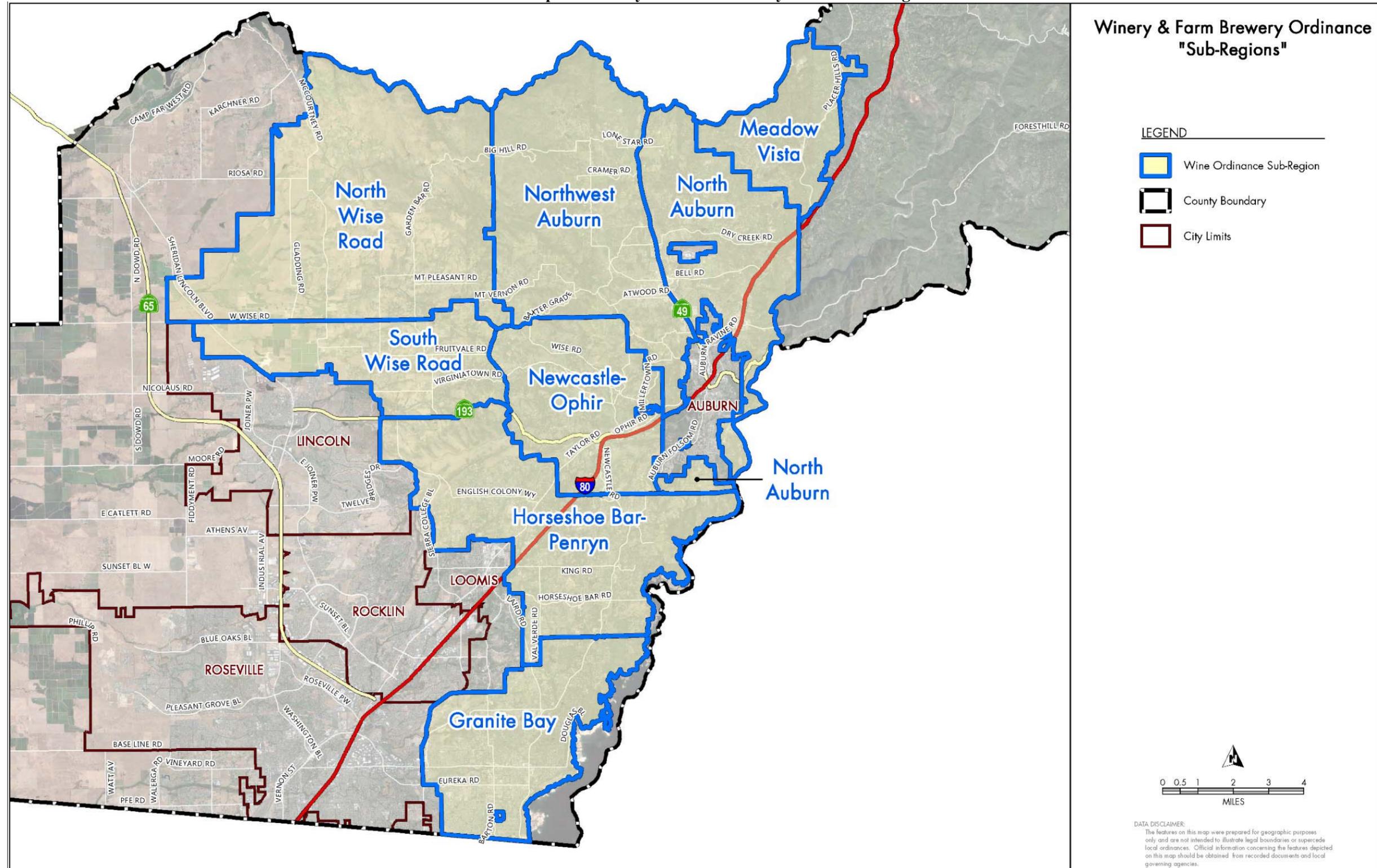
d. Summary

The above research demonstrates that the historic annual growth rates for Placer, El Dorado, and Amador counties are very similar, ranging from 1.2 to 1.4 new facilities per year. While certain years may see more growth than other years, an average annual growth rate would be a reasonable assumption for purposes of the cumulative analysis within this EIR. The County has elected to use an annual average growth rate of 1.5 new facilities per year, which is inclusive of both winery or farm brewery development. While this growth rate accounts for both wineries and farm breweries, the rate is conservative given that this EIR is only analyzing wineries and farm breweries on medium and large parcel sizes, for reasons set forth above (i.e., facilities with tasting rooms on small parcels require a use permit). Thus, the estimated growth rate in Placer County over the period evaluated, 2003 through 2017, would be much less for wineries and farm breweries located only on medium or large sized parcels. The estimated average annual growth rate would be 0.6 new facilities per year, for a total of 12 new facilities over 20 years.

***Total cumulative winery/farm brewery growth estimate:*** consistent with industry standard practice, the cumulative study period for this EIR is 20 years. Assuming 1.5 new facilities per year, the total growth evaluated in this EIR equates to 30 new facilities.

4. Concentrated growth of Wineries and Farm Breweries within “sub-regions” of Western Placer County. In order to provide a reasonable analysis of this Zoning Text Amendment’s potential cumulative impacts, this EIR assumes that future winery/farm brewery growth will be concentrated in western Placer County, in and around the areas where current facilities are located. Figure 3-2 shows the “sub-regions” that have been defined for the purposes of the analysis of this EIR. While the sub-region boundaries generally follow the established boundaries of the County’s Municipal Advisory Councils (MACs), select adjustments have been made to better reflect the concentrations of existing wineries and follow the primary access roads to these areas. In concept and practice, concentrated growth will result in greater combined, related effects as the majority of future facilities would be nearer to one another, as well as existing facilities, thus increasing the intensity of combined effects, such as vehicle traffic, roadway noise, etc. In contrast, if the EIR were to assume that future facilities would be spread throughout the County, separate from one another, their effects would be more isolated, and thus, potentially underestimated.

Figure 3-2  
 Future Anticipated Winery and Farm Brewery Growth Sub-Regions



This assumption is also congruent with the geographical and climatic characteristics of western Placer County and their conduciveness to high quality wine grape production. High quality grapes are produced when vines undergo moderate stress from limited water and/or nutrients and are subjected to wide day-night temperature fluctuations. When daytime temperatures are high, there is a high rate of photosynthesis, resulting in accumulated sugars. At night, plants convert the sugars into other compounds in a process called respiration. When nighttime temperatures are low, respiration rates go down so the plants are able to stockpile more sugars and flavor components, which contribute to the intense flavor and color profiles of foothill grapes.

The foothill areas of western Placer County, generally east of Lincoln and west of Meadow Vista, have the appropriate microclimates where day/nighttime temperature fluctuations are higher than the valley areas of far western Placer County in the summer and early fall. In addition, the valley areas in western Placer County (i.e., west of Lincoln and Roseville) have higher frost risk than the foothill region during cold temperature periods because cold air can sit in the valley, whereas it drains/flows off from the foothills. These factors render the valley areas of western Placer County less suitable for high quality wine grape production. The higher elevations of Placer County are not well-suited for high quality grape growth due to their colder temperatures and shorter growing season. Areas above 2,700 feet in elevation are generally not very suitable for wine grape production.<sup>13</sup>

With respect to soils, in contrast to the fertile, nutrient-rich soils of the valley areas, the foothill regions are characterized predominantly by shallow soils low in nutrients and organic matter. In the lower foothill zone of decomposed granite soils, water-holding capacity may also be limited. Shallow soils, low fertility soils, and limited water-holding capacity can all cause moderate plant stress which contributes to the intensity of flavor and color of wine grapes. This causes moderate plant stress and contributes to the flavor profile of the grapes.

Given that high quality wine grape production is a driving factor for the economic viability of wineries, it is reasonable to assume that future wineries would continue to locate in the foothill region of western Placer County. Figure 3-3 and Figure 3-4 show the location of the sub-regions in relation to existing zoning (Figure 3-3) and existing parcel size (Figure 3-4), with a delineated, dashed focus area. These figures depict where zoning allowances support wine and farm beer production and tasting rooms without the need for a use permit. Additionally, the figures show where the soils and microclimates are conducive to high quality grape production.

### *Future Growth Projections*

As a component part of the EIR winery/farm brewery growth analysis, the aforementioned “sub-regions” identify where growth is primarily anticipated to occur in western Placer County over the 20-year cumulative horizon (Figure 3-2 through Figure 3-4).

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<sup>13</sup> Fake, Cindy, Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor, University of California, Cooperative Extension Placer County. Personal communication with Nick Pappani, Vice President, Raney Planning and Management, Inc. March 28, 2018.

Figure 3-3  
 Future Anticipated Winery and Farm Brewery Growth Sub-Regions and Zoning

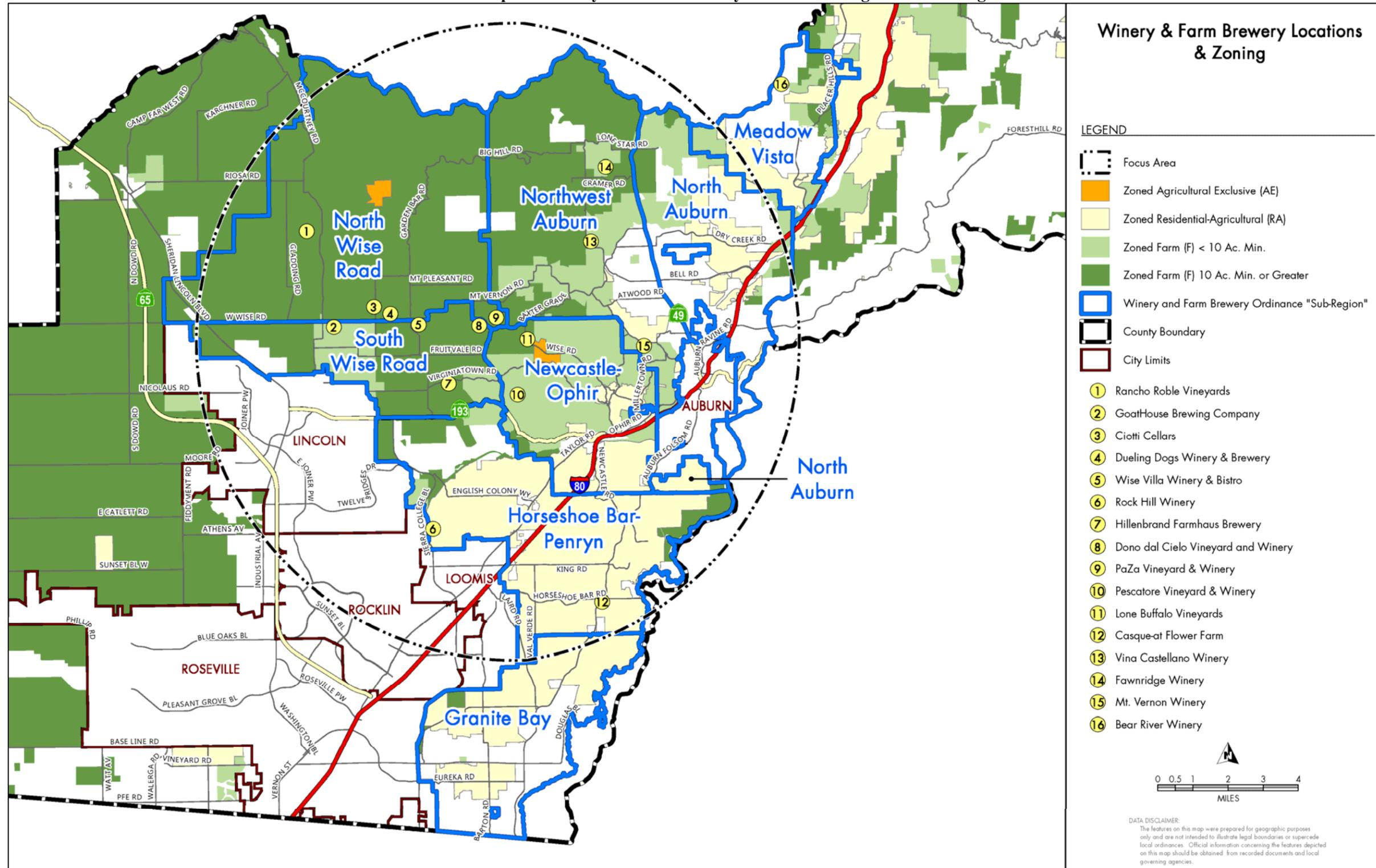
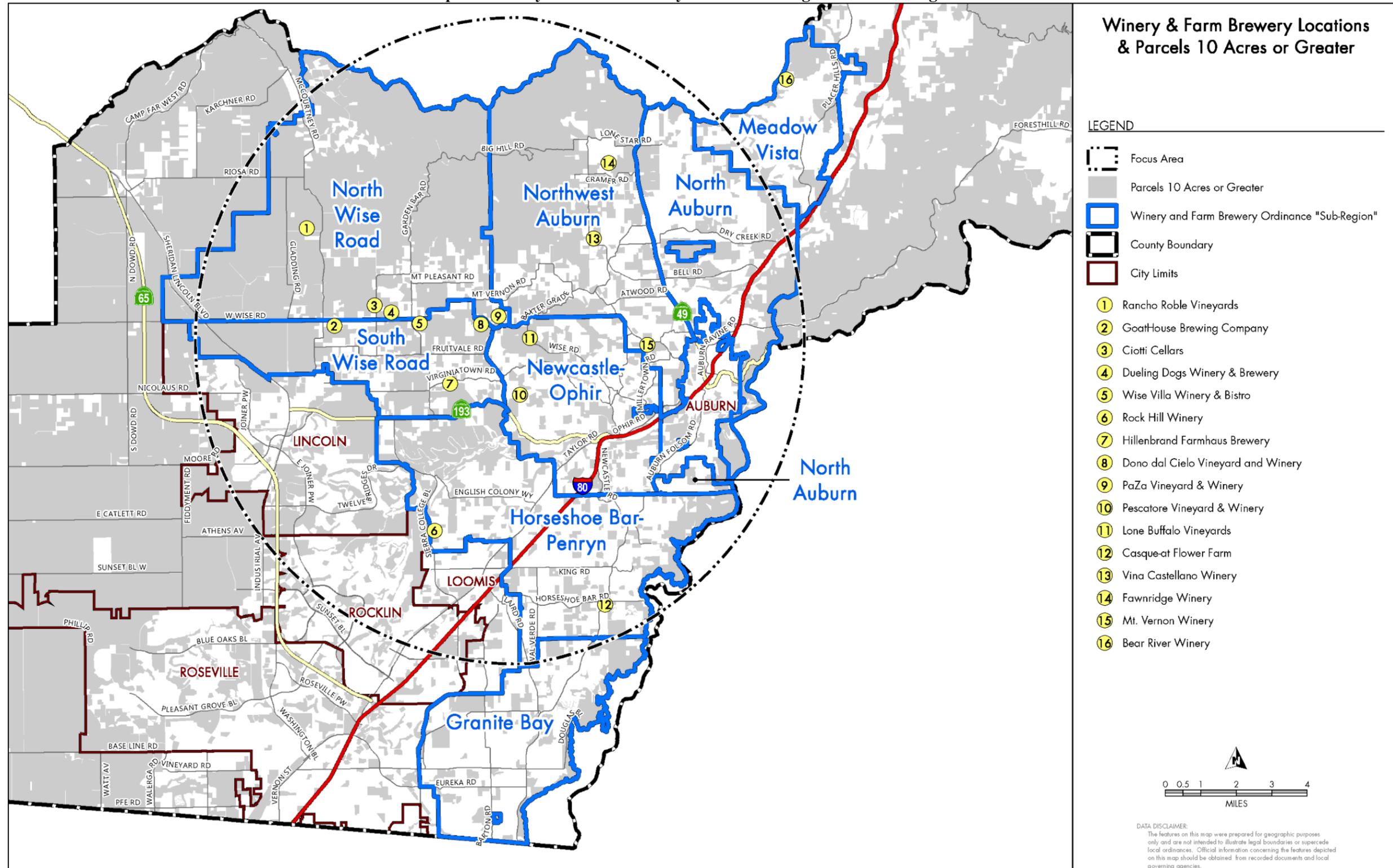


Figure 3-4  
 Future Anticipated Winery and Farm Brewery Growth Sub-Regions with Existing 10-Acre Parcels



The method by which the County geographically allocated the 30 projected wineries/farm breweries is illustrated in Table 3-3 (see also footnotes 1-3). In general, the percentage of existing medium/large facilities in each sub-region is used to estimate how many of the 30 new facilities would reasonably be expected to occur within each sub-region. Using this method, the following results are noteworthy:

- Future winery/farm brewery growth is concentrated in the following five sub-regions shown in Figure 3-2 through 3-4 (this is the “focus area”, illustrated with a dashed line in the figures):
  1. North Wise Road
  2. South Wise Road
  3. Newcastle/Ophir
  4. Northwest Auburn
  5. Horseshoe Bar/Penryn
- South Wise Road sub-region is allocated the greatest percentage of facilities (40% or 12 out of 30).

<b>Table 3-3</b>				
<b>Winery/Farm Brewery Growth by Sub-Region</b>				
<b>Winery Sub-Region</b>	<b>Existing Med/Large (parcel-size) Facilities</b>	<b>% of Existing Med/Large Facilities per Sub-Region<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Future Growth Allocation by Sub-Region<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Allocation of Large Facilities by Sub-Region<sup>3</sup></b>
North Wise Road	2	20%	6	2
South Wise Road	4	40%	12	4
Newcastle/Ophir	1	10%	3	0
Northwest Auburn	2	20%	6	2
Horseshoe Bar/Penryn	1	10%	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>8</b>

Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Percentages calculated as follows: # in sub-region/total number med/large. For example: 2 (North Wise)/10 (total facilities) = 20%.
- <sup>2</sup> The percentage of existing medium/large facilities in each sub-region is used to estimate how many of the 30 new facilities would reasonably be expected to occur within each sub-region. For example, the South Wise Sub-Region contains 40% of the total number of existing facilities - assuming 40% of the 30 future facilities would occur within the South Wise Sub-Region results in a total 12 additional facilities.
- <sup>3</sup> The total of eight (8) new large facilities is included in the overall total of 30 wineries/farm breweries. The methodology is as follows. Approximately 20% (2/10) of the existing med/large facilities are located on large parcel sizes – this analysis uses a slightly more conservative assumption of 25%. Assuming 25% of the 30 future facilities would occur on large parcel sizes results in a total of approximately eight (8) new large facilities. Currently, one (1) large parcel size winery is located in the North Wise Sub-Region and one (1) large parcel size winery is located in the South Wise Sub-Region. Using this data to allocate the eight (8) new large facilities would result in four (4) in North Wise and four (4) in South Wise. However, rather than allocating four (4) new large facilities to South Wise, two (2) of these were allocated to Northwest Auburn given the abundance of 20+ acre parcels in this Sub-Region, and the fact that this Sub-Region also contains 20% of the existing facilities, similar to the North Wise Sub-Region.

The County recognizes that this Zoning Text Amendment applies countywide, and thus, one or more new wineries or farm breweries could be developed outside of the above-listed sub-regions. However, the County recognizes that even if a new facility were to be established outside of these sub-regions, they would most likely occur in relatively remote locations, where additional by-right events allowable at the facility under this Zoning Text Amendment would produce isolated effects. For example, as shown in Figure 3-3, existing population centers within the unincorporated County have very few parcels with the proper zoning to accommodate by-right development and operation of future facilities. The population centers and immediate environs are dominated by Residential-Agriculture zoning, wherein any winery or farm brewery would require a MUP.

### **3.5 REQUIRED PUBLIC APPROVALS**

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The proposed project will be considered by the Planning Commission, who will make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding adoption of the revised Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment. If approved, the following actions will be required:

1. Certification of the EIR for the proposed project by the County Board of Supervisors
2. Adoption of the Winery and Farm Brewery Zoning Text Amendment by the County Board of Supervisors