

AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY ZONING ADJACENT TO OLD WILLOWBANK EXPLAINED

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This paper is intended to explain zoning rules for the four parcels located south of Montgomery Avenue between Oakside Drive and Meadowbrook Drive (or, slightly more precisely, the parcels which line up with homes in Old Willowbank on the North side of Montgomery Avenue starting with the address 43154 and ending with 43408. The information in this paper is taken directly from the Yolo County zoning code with the intention of making the contents of the code more understandable and available to the layperson. The ultimate interpreter of the code are staff at the Yolo County Planning Department and a link to staff contact information is provided at the very end of this paper. The four parcels under discussion used to be one parcel but they were subdivided into four parcels sized at 8.53, 13.56, 19.74, and 18.77 acres. One of the parcels has a residence and outbuildings, one parcel has a leveled home site with an orchard, one parcel has two homes and an equestrian facility, and the other parcel remains mostly unimproved as of this date.

Zoning

The zoning for all four parcels is Agricultural Intensive (A-N) which is an agricultural zone found in many locations in Yolo County. The rules for the A-N zoning can be found in the [Yolo County zoning codes](#) at Title 8, Chapter 2, Article 3. Uses in the A-N Zone are primarily limited to intensive agricultural production and other activities compatible with agricultural uses. This includes allowing agriculturally-related support uses, excluding incompatible uses, and protecting the viability of the family farm. The A-N zone has many allowed uses including special event venues, equestrian facilities, bed and breakfasts, farms, vineyards, orchards, small livestock operations, kennels, and other uses compatible with the intent of the zoning. While most small scale use only requires a Site Plan review, any larger scale use that may affect neighboring properties or the surrounding community requires either a Minor or Major Use Permit. The [Use Permit process](#) includes a comprehensive review of the project by County planning staff, a period for public comment, and then a final public hearing before any decision is made on whether or not to approve the project. The two uses that are of most concern to the Old Willowbank neighborhood are the parcels being used as special event facilities or large scale equestrian facilities.

Special event facilities

Special event facilities include farm and residential land and structures that are used for weddings, tastings, special or seasonal celebrations, and other gatherings, and may include tasting rooms. Special event facilities are characterized as “small” or “large” depending on construction of new structures, the

number of events that are held in a given year, the number attendees, and the amount of traffic that is generated. "Small special event facilities" are those that do not involve the construction of substantial new structures used by the public, hold no more than one event per month, or twelve events per year, attract fewer than 150 attendees at each event, and each event generates less than 100 vehicle trips. "Large special event facilities" are those that involve construction of substantial new structures used by the public, hold more than twelve events per year, or the events attract more than 150 attendees or generate more than 100 vehicle trips. Large special event facilities receive a greater level of review to ensure that any potential impacts are addressed. Any structures used by the public are required to be fully permitted, and shall be classified with respect to the occupancy group and the listed use, as determined by the Chief Building Official. Agriculturally exempt structures shall not be used by the public. Small special event facilities are allowed with the issuance of a Site Plan Review in the A-N zone. At the discretion of the Planning Director, a Minor Use Permit may be required for a small project if there are any compatibility issues, or if any of the development standards are not met. Large special event facilities require the issuance of a Minor Use Permit in the A-N. At the discretion of the Planning Director, a Major Use Permit may be required for a large project if there are any compatibility issues, or if any of the development standards are not met. Special event facilities shall provide adequate on-site parking for all attendee's vehicles, including service providers. The project must be designed to be compatible with any adjoining agricultural operations and single family residences, including appropriate setbacks, landscaping, and parking. Adequate land area must be available for the provision of on-site services to accommodate the projected number of attendees.

Equestrian use/Stables

Stables are defined as "private" or "commercial" depending on the number of horses that are boarded and if any events are held at the stable. "Private stables" include the boarding of fifteen (15) or fewer equine animals that are not owned or leased pursuant to a written agreement, by either the property owner or resident. No more than six (6) shows, exhibitions, or other public/quasi-public events may be held per year. For the purposes of this section, a public/quasi-public event is defined as a gathering where an admission fee is charged, and/or where food and drink are sold onsite. Private stables holding public/quasi-public events shall require approval of a Site Plan Review. Private stables that hold more than six (6) such events per year shall be considered a commercial stable, regardless of the number of horses boarded. "Small commercial stables" are those that board between 16 and 20 horses and do not hold more than four events per year. "Large commercial stables" are those that board more than twenty equine animals and may include the retail or wholesale sales of tack, feed, and other equestrian products. Such sales shall be incidental to the operation of the stable. Shows, exhibitions, or other public/quasi events related to equine animals may be included as a part of the large commercial stable. Any structures used by the public, i.e., barns, indoor riding arenas, etc., are required to be fully permitted, and shall be classified with respect to the occupancy group and the listed use, as determined by the Chief Building Official. Agriculturally exempt structures shall not be used by the public. (6) Commercial stables on land under Williamson Act contract shall occupy no more than ten percent (10%) of the total aggregate area, or five (5) acres, whichever is more.

If you have questions about the items discussed here, you can contact Vice Chair John Lindsey from the Willowbank County Service Area Advisory Committee at johnlindseylaw@gmail.com. The County Planning Division can be reached using the contact information found [here](#).