

Proposed Workforce Housing (WH) Combining Zone

PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposed Workforce Housing (WH) Combining Zone is to increase housing opportunities for Sonoma County’s local workforce in areas that are close to employment and transit.

APPLICABILITY

The WH Combining Zone can be applied to properties within an urban service area that are also within 3,000 feet of a transit center or employment node with at least three acres of commercial zoning or 10 acres of industrial zoning. The WH Combining Zone may be applied to properties in the Limited Commercial (LC), Retail Business and Service (C2), Industrial Park (MP), Rural Industrial (M3), Limited Urban Industrial (M1), and the Public Facilities (PF) zoning districts. The WH Combining Zone would be applied to properties with approval of a zone change to add the combining zone.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Housing projects within the WH Combining Zone that meet affordable housing program requirements and the design and development standards will require administrative design review and a building permit. Projects that provide only market-rate housing or that do not meet the standards may be approved with a use permit.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Density: The WH Combining Zone allows a density of 16 to 24 dwelling units per acre, with additional density allowed under the County’s density bonus programs for affordable units. Project density will be calculated using the density unit equivalent table shown below, where smaller units are counted as a fraction of a unit, allowing more units in the same building size.

Density Unit Equivalent

Dwelling Unit Size	Density Units
Micro Apt. or Studio (<500 sf)	0.33 density unit
One bedroom (<750 sf)	0.5 density unit
Two bedrooms (<1,000 sf)	0.75 density unit
Three bedrooms	1.00 density unit
Four or more bedrooms	1.5 density units

Size: Developments in the WH Combining Zone are incentivized to provide smaller units through the use of density unit equivalents, and are required to provide a minimum of 15 percent of the units as micro-apartments.

Affordability: Projects must comply with the County’s Affordable Housing Program, which requires 10% or 15% of rental units and 20% of ownership units to be affordable.

Design: Workforce housing projects are subject to design review and the standards contained in the R3 (High Density Residential) zone. Affordable projects may qualify for an increase in height limit or lot coverage. Workforce housing units may not be used for transient occupancy.

