



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 9/18/2025

File #: 25-1122

To: Planning Commission

From: Planning and Building Department

Agenda Section: Public Hearing

SUBJECT:

Amendments to Commercial Cannabis Microbusiness Standards - Path to Enabling Microbusinesses to be permitted as Zoning Clearance Certificates under certain conditions.

Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 000-000-000

Record No.: LRP-2025-19214

Countywide

An amendment to the Commercial Cannabis Microbusiness provisions of the Inland Zoning Regulations to amend subsections 314-55.4.8.2 and 314-55.4.10.3 to broaden the permit-type options for cannabis microbusinesses and to enable nonvolatile cannabis manufacturing in association with cannabis cultivation activities. This Zoning Ordinance Amendment applies to the entire inland region of Humboldt County.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopt the resolution which does the following:
 - a. Finds the Planning Commission has considered the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) previously adopted for the Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance as well as the Addendum to the EIR that was prepared for the Amendments to Microbusiness Standards project pursuant to Section 15164 of the CEQA guidelines; and
 - b. Finds the proposed project complies with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance; and
 - c. Recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the amendments to the Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed modification to the Commercial Cannabis Land Use Ordinance is in response to the

direction by the Board of Supervisors to assess the potential for reduced requirements for microbusiness permits. The changes are minor in nature and are intended to allow microbusinesses with alternate permit types under certain circumstances. The code adjusts what may be allowed with a Zoning Clearance Certificate (ZCC) but also clarifies what situations still require Special Permits (SP) or Conditional Use Permits (CUP).

- A. Special Permit for Microbusiness. (314-55.4.10.3) The current language of the code states that Microbusinesses may be permitted with a special permit. The inland code will be changed to allow Microbusinesses to be permitted as Zoning Clearance Certificates in cases where the “highest level of required permit among the proposed uses” is a ZCC. This will clarify the ability of the Planning Department to permit combined uses with a Zoning Clearance Certificate, Special Permit, or Conditional Use Permit, as applicable, on a case by case basis. Additionally, due to this change enabling Zoning Clearance Certificates for microbusinesses, the Locational Criteria is proposed to be changed to specify that microbusinesses proposing on-site customer traffic still require Special Permits and paved roads. A new subsection is proposed that provides an exception to allow microbusinesses in FP and TPZ zones in cases where all new cannabis activities exclusively take place within existing structures, as the impacts expected from allowing such activities in such zones would be minimized with that rule. An additional new subsection clarifies that other sections of code referring to Microbusinesses should be interpreted as requiring a Special Permit, which maintains the status quo for section 55.4.8.1.2 and 55.4.10.2, which provide certain exceptions for indoor cultivation and onsite retail sales when licensed as microbusinesses.
- B. ZCC for Nonvolatile Manufacturing. (314-55.4.8.2.2.4) The proposed code adds a new subsection to the Manufacturing section that would allow nonvolatile manufacturing activities to be permitted in association with cultivation permits via a Zoning Clearance Certificate. Existing permitted sites would still require Modification to their permits, rather than a separate ZCC. Cultivation sites utilizing this new subsection would be prohibited from onsite customer traffic and would be exempt from the standard requiring paved roads that either meet the Category 4 standard or have a centerline stripe. This does not replace the option for a Special Permit for a Nonvolatile Manufacturing activities in agricultural zones; it is merely an additional option. The new option is intended to harmonize with the changes to the Microbusiness code, such that manufacturing activities as part of a microbusiness may be permitted via ZCC.

These are mostly minor changes that more effectively match the status quo of operations by Planning Staff. The addition of a ZCC option for nonvolatile manufacturing in association with cannabis cultivation is a new opportunity that can make it easier for cultivators to more vertically integrate their businesses. Regardless of the Planning Commission’s decision, this opens discussion and clarifies to the public some of the options that are available. Further detail and discussion are available in Attachment 4.

Environmental Review:

An Addendum to a previously adopted Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for consideration per §15164 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The project was referred to County Counsel.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission could choose not to recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance Amendment or could choose to modify the proposed amendments based upon public input and Commission discussion.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
 - A. Draft Ordinance No. ____ amending Section 314-55 of HCC
2. Existing Regulations
3. CEQA Addendum
4. Discussion
5. “What microbusiness can be permitted as a ZCC?” Table

Please contact Augustus Grochau, Associate Planner, at agrochau@co.humboldt.ca.us or 707-441-2626 if you have questions about this item.