

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-2-060, Zoning Use Table, and RMC 4-11, Definitions

REFERENCE:

N/A

SUBJECT:

Zones permitting craft distilleries (also known as a micro-distilleries), micro breweries, artisanal wineries, and similar uses with tasting rooms.

BACKGROUND:

We received an inquiry regarding the possibility of a small craft distillery locating in the Center Downtown (CD) Zone. This use and other similar uses are not specifically addressed in the city's definitions or Zoning Use Table, RMC 4-2-060. An interpretation is needed to properly classify these uses as distinct from larger volume distilleries.

One definition and a brief summation of a “micro-distillery” is as follows: “A micro-distillery is a small, often 'boutique', distillery established to produce beverage grade alcohol in relatively small quantities. While the term is most commonly used in the United States, micro-distilleries have been established in Europe for many years, either as small cognac distilleries supplying the larger cognac houses, or as distilleries of single malt whisky. Throughout much of the world, small distilleries operate throughout communities of various sizes, mostly without being given a special description.”

Small scale craft distilleries, small wineries, or brewpubs were likely not envisioned when the City initially created definitions for its industrial type uses: Light, Medium, and Heavy Manufacturing. The city's [abbreviated] manufacturing definitions currently read as follows and seem to have anticipated a much larger scale of industrial distillation:

MANUFACTURING AND FABRICATION, LIGHT: The transformation of materials or substances into new products including construction and assembling of component parts, and the blending of materials such as lubricating oils, plastics, resins or liquors. [] This definition includes but is not limited to manufacture and fabrication of electronic components, office products, furniture, glass products, and other manufacturing and fabrication uses as determined by the reviewing official. This definition excludes slaughterhouses, manufacture of shellac, varnish or turpentine, paper, pulp, rubber from crude material, refining and/or manufacturing of petroleum by-products except as an accessory use of less than fifty thousand (50,000) gallons.

MANUFACTURING AND FABRICATION, MEDIUM: The transformation of materials or substances into new products including construction and assembling of component parts, and the blending of materials such as lubricating oils, plastics, resins or liquors. [] This definition includes but is not limited to manufacture and fabrication of, alcoholic products, paints, printing ink, leather goods, and other manufacturing and fabrication uses as determined by the reviewing official. This definition excludes slaughterhouses, manufacture of shellac, varnish or turpentine, paper, pulp, rubber from crude material, refining and/or manufacturing of petroleum by-products except as an accessory use of less than fifty thousand (50,000) gallons.

MANUFACTURING AND FABRICATION, HEAVY: The transformation of materials or substances into new products including construction and assembling of component parts, and the blending of materials such as lubricating oils, plastics, resins or liquors. [] This definition includes, but is not limited to: manufacture and fabrication of automotive vehicles and their parts, cement, brick, lime, gypsum, asphalt, and other manufacturing and fabrication uses as determined by the reviewing official. This definition excludes slaughterhouses, manufacture of shellac, varnish or turpentine, paper, pulp, rubber from crude material, refining and/or manufacturing of petroleum by-products except as an accessory use of less than fifty thousand (50,000) gallons.”

JUSTIFICATION:

Since the scale and impacts of craft distilleries, small wineries, and brewpubs with tasting rooms are significantly different than larger scale industrial distilling plants, wineries, or craft breweries, these uses do not really fit into any of Renton’s three existing definitions of “manufacturing” (light, medium, or heavy). Because these uses are not specifically listed in the Zoning Use Table and are not included in any definition, these uses should be considered as “Unclassified Uses”.

Section 4-2-050 C6 of the Renton Municipal Code allows the Development Services Division Director to make determinations regarding the permissibility of uses not specifically listed in the zoning code, provided the use is:

- "In keeping with the purpose and intent of the zone, and consistent with the Renton Comprehensive Plan policies; and
- Similar in nature to, and no more intense than, a specifically listed permitted, conditional or accessory use; and
- Consistent with subsection C4 of this Section, if determined to be permissible as an accessory use."

*“The purpose of the **Center Village Zone (CV)** is to provide an opportunity for concentrated mixed-use residential and commercial redevelopment designed to urban rather than suburban development standards that supports transit-oriented development and pedestrian activity. Use allowances promote commercial and retail development opportunities for residents to shop locally. Uses and standards allow complementary, high-density residential development, and discourage garden-style, multi-family development. Scale and Character: The Center Village Zone (CV) is intended to provide suitable environments for district-scaled retail and commercial development serving more than one neighborhood, but not providing City-wide services.”*

*“The purpose of the **Commercial Arterial Zone (CA)** is to evolve from “strip commercial” linear business districts to business areas characterized by enhanced site planning and pedestrian orientation, incorporating efficient*

parking lot design, coordinated access, amenities and boulevard treatment with greater densities. The CA Zone provides for a wide variety of retail sales, services, and other commercial activities along high-volume traffic corridors. Residential uses may be integrated into the zone through mixed-use buildings. The zone includes the designated Automall District.”

*“The purpose of the **Center Downtown Zone (CD)** is to provide a mixed-use urban commercial center serving a regional market as well as high-density residential development. Uses include a wide variety of retail sales, services, multi-family residential dwellings, and recreation and entertainment uses.”*

*“The purpose of the **Commercial/Office/Residential Zone (COR)** is to provide for a mix of intensive office, hotel, convention center, and residential activity in a high-quality, master-planned development that is integrated with the natural environment. Commercial retail and service uses that are architecturally and functionally integrated are permitted. Also, commercial uses that provide high economic value may be allowed if designed with the scale and intensity envisioned for the COR Zone. The scale and location of these sites will typically denote a gateway into the City and should be designed accordingly.”*

*“The **Urban Center – North Zones** are established to provide an area for pedestrian-scale mixed-use development that supports the residential and employment goals of Renton’s Urban Center – North. The UC-N1 and UC-N2 Zones are intended to attract a wide range of office, technology, commercial, and residential uses. The overall mix and intensity of uses within both zones will develop over time. Consequently, decisions made in early phases of redevelopment will need to take into consideration the potential for further infill and intensification of uses. The overall mix and intensity of uses is intended to create an urban rather than suburban character. The form of development is expected to use urban development standards and therefore, setbacks, heights, landscaping, parking, and design standards are to be urban in scale and configured in a layout utilizing the street system to create a human-scale, pedestrian-oriented new center. Uses that support urban center development are allowed. Development is expected to include amenities such as gateways, water access, and open space. High-quality development is anticipated, encompassing a mix of residential neighborhoods, shopping, and employment districts and public facilities.”*

*“The purpose of the **Light Industrial Zone (IL)** is to provide areas for low-intensity manufacturing, industrial services, distribution, storage, and technical schools. Uses allowed in this zone are generally contained within buildings. Material and/or equipment used in production are not stored outside. Activities in this zone do not generate external emissions such as smoke, odor, noise, vibrations, or other nuisances outside the building. Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses in the zone are also allowed.”*

A craft distillery, small winery, or small brewery with tasting room will bring people and add vibrancy to the city’s commercial zones and would be in keeping with the purpose and intent of the zones and consistent with the Renton Comprehensive Plan policies. It is also similar in nature to, and no more intense than, restaurant and lounge uses which are outright permitted in these zones. These uses would also be consistent with and appropriate in our Light Industrial (IL) Zone.

DECISION: Craft distilleries with tasting rooms in compliance with Washington State law (e.g. selling no more than 2 liters per customer per day per WAC 314-28-050) are considered to be a permitted use in the Commercial Arterial Zone (CA), Center Village Zone (CV), Center Downtown (CD) Zone, Commercial/Office/Residential Zone (COR), Urban Center – North Zones (UC-N1 and UC-N2), and the Light Industrial Zone (IL). The State of Washington licenses craft distilleries to produce a maximum of 60,000 proof gallons or less per year (WAC 314-28-050).

Small wineries and breweries with tasting rooms are also permitted uses in all of these same zones.

**ADMINISTRATOR/
PLANNING DIRECTOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE: September 27, 2012

**APPEAL
PROCESS:** To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT
DETERMINATIONS:**

The Zoning Use Table was fairly recently collapsed and consolidated from 26 pages of use types to 6 pages. This was done to eliminate conflicts and for ease of use. The level of specificity of this determination is beyond the current level of detail now included in RMC 4-2-060, Zoning Use Table, so this determination and use type should not be incorporated into the table. This determination will be retained for reference in the online list of approved Code Interpretations.