



July 7, 2022

Mr. Matthew Keipper
5th and Mendocino Partners LLC
44 Montgomery Street #1300
San Francisco, CA 94104

Updated Traffic Study for the 420 Mendocino Avenue Project

Dear Mr. Keipper;

As requested, W-Trans has prepared an evaluation of the potential transportation impacts for the proposed mixed-use project at 420 Mendocino Avenue in the City of Santa Rosa, which is a modified version of a previously-approved project. This letter report presents our analysis and findings relative to the project's trip generation, the project's impacts on vehicle miles traveled (VMT), need for an on-site parking supply, and adequacy of site access for all modes of transportation.

Project Description

A previous proposal for a project at this location was analyzed; the approved project included a seven-story building with 116 dwelling units and 2,130 square feet of commercial space on two contiguous parcels, with frontages on Mendocino Avenue and Riley Street.

As currently proposed, the project includes the original two parcels plus a third parcel, which includes frontages on 5th Street and Riley Street. The revised project is for an eight-story building with 161 residential units and approximately 2,715 square feet of commercial space, which is proposed as a restaurant; the restaurant would be located at the corner of 5th Street and Riley Street on the ground floor of the residential building; it would replace a restaurant that existed in the existing 7,300 square foot commercial building until 2017. In addition to this building there is a second single-story commercial building on the site as well as a surface parking lot; the existing buildings would be demolished.

Vehicle access to the on-site parking lot would be from Riley Street. It is understood that while the on-site parking supply as proposed would be 100 spaces, there is a potential to increase this to approximately 132 spaces if deemed necessary based on additional market analysis. Pedestrians would access the residential units from Riley Street, Mendocino Avenue, or 5th Street. The project site plan is enclosed.

Trip Generation

The anticipated trip generation for the proposed project was estimated using standard rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) in *Trip Generation Manual*, 11th Edition, 2021 for "Multifamily Housing (Mid-Rise) Close to Rail Transit (ITE LU 221) in a dense, multi-use urban setting. A portion of one of the existing commercial buildings is currently being used as an office, while the remainder of the existing commercial space is vacant. Since the proposed restaurant would replace a larger, previously existing restaurant, the trip generation for that space was not included as the existing space could be reoccupied and generate trips again without further analysis, and no deductions were taken for the existing commercial use. The trip generation estimate is therefore conservative.

The proposed project is expected to generate an average of 324 trips per day, including 40 trips during the a.m. peak hour and 40 during the p.m. peak hour. As the anticipated trip generation results in fewer than 50 new trips during each peak hour a full traffic impact study with an operational analysis is not typically required per the City's *Guidance for the Preparation of Traffic Operational Analysis*, 2019. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – Trip Generation Summary

Land Use	Units	Daily		AM Peak Hour				PM Peak Hour			
		Rate	Trips	Rate	Trips	In	Out	Rate	Trips	In	Out
Multifamily Housing (Mid-Rise) Close to Rail Transit	161 du	2.01	324	0.25	40	6	34	0.25	40	30	10

Note: du = dwelling unit

Alternative Modes

Pedestrian Facilities

Given the proximity of the site to bus stops, downtown, shopping facilities, and restaurants, it is likely that many project residents would walk to destinations throughout downtown Santa Rosa. Additionally, many employees and patrons of the proposed restaurant would be expected to walk to and from the project site, including trips from transit stops to the project. In general, a network of sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signal phases, and curb ramps provide access for pedestrians, although curb ramps at the crosswalks at the intersections of 5th Street/Riley Street, Mendocino Avenue/5th Street, and Mendocino Avenue/Ross Street do not include truncated domes and are therefore not in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. There are continuous sidewalks on all frontages of the project site that connect to the City's downtown core area and to nearby bus stops on B Street and 3rd Street.

For on-site circulation, the project would include pedestrian walkways to provide access for tenants to Mendocino Avenue and 5th Street. The walkways could also be used for egress from the adjacent building at 404 Mendocino Avenue.

A review of the collision history in the vicinity of the project indicates that from August 1, 2016, through July 31, 2021, there were two collisions involving vehicles and pedestrians, each resulting in a pedestrian injury. One collision occurred at the intersection of Mendocino Avenue/5th Street and the other at the intersection of 5th Street/Riley Street. Both collisions were reported with a primary collision factor of pedestrian right-of-way violation. Mendocino Avenue between McConnell Avenue and 4th Street has been identified in the *Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update*, 2018, as a high injury pedestrian corridor, but the Mendocino Avenue/5th Street intersection is signalized and includes pedestrian phases. The 5th Street/Riley Street intersection has a marked crosswalk but no traffic controls, and there is an existing commercial loading zone marked in the eastbound direction just before the crosswalk. Loading activities could potentially affect visibility of pedestrians crossing at this location, though the current markings do not appear to pose safety concerns based on a single incident.

Finding – Pedestrian facilities serving the project site are adequate.

Bicycle Facilities

In the project vicinity there are existing Class II bike lanes along 3rd Street, Santa Rosa Avenue, and B Street. Bicyclists share the road with vehicles on all other streets in the surrounding area, including along the bicycle boulevard on Humboldt Street; it is noted that the posted speed limit for streets in the downtown area is 25 mph. The Prince Memorial Greenway/Santa Rosa Creek Trail connects downtown with points further west. There are several completed segments of the SMART multi-use pathway parallel to the rail corridor approximately one-half mile from the project site. The segment from 6th Street to Guerneville Road has been completed, and ultimately the path is planned to extend along the entire length of the SMART line, from Larkspur to Cloverdale.

According to the City of Santa Rosa's Municipal Code, Chapter 20.36.040, downtown residential units are required to provide one bicycle parking space per every four units. The project includes a secure room that would provide

bicycle parking for 48 bicycles. Since the project includes 161 units, 41 parking spaces are required. The proposed supply therefore exceeds the City's requirements.

The review of collisions near the project shows that there was one collision involving a vehicle and bicyclist reported on 7th Street near the intersection of Mendocino Avenue, resulting in a bicyclist injury. The collision was determined to be a sideswipe but no primary collision factor was identified. There are no existing or proposed bicycle facilities on this roadway segment and this location was not included among the City's high injury bicycle corridors identified in the *Santa Rosa Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update, 2018*.

Finding – Bicycle facilities serving the project site are adequate.

Transit Facilities

Sonoma County Transit (SCT) and Santa Rosa CityBus provide fixed route bus service in the City of Santa Rosa and have stops located on B Street and 3rd Street, within one-quarter mile of the site, which is considered an acceptable walking distance. These transit agencies provide loop service within the City of Santa Rosa and regional service to communities within Sonoma and Marin Counties. Further, the site is just more than a quarter-mile of the Downtown Transit Center where connections can be made to 24 bus routes, including local and regional routes.

Dial-a-ride, also known as paratransit, or door-to-door service, is available for those who are unable to independently use the transit system due to a physical or mental disability. SCT Paratransit is designed to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities within Sonoma and the greater County of Sonoma area. CityBus paratransit is contracted out to MV Transportation and is designed to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities within three-quarters of a mile from existing CityBus routes.

Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)

The project site is located one-half mile northeast of the SMART Corridor and the Santa Rosa downtown station. The SMART commuter rail system currently includes 12 stations, extending from the Sonoma County Airport station to Larkspur. Upon completion, the passenger rail service will extend further north to Cloverdale, at the north end of Sonoma County, resulting in a 70-mile-long rail corridor. Within walking distance of the southernmost SMART station is the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, where riders can access Golden Gate Ferry service to San Francisco.

Finding – Transit facilities serving the project site are adequate.

Parking

Since the project is located within the *Downtown Station Area Specific Plan* boundary, it is not subject to minimum vehicle parking requirements included in the City of Santa Rosa Municipal Code Section 20-36.040. As proposed, the project would provide 100 on-site covered parking spaces. It is noted that the on-site spaces would be unbundled, meaning a parking space is not included in the rent and residents who own vehicles would need to pay for on-site parking. As noted previously, there is the potential for the supply to be increased to approximately 132 spaces.

City parking Garages 1 and 3, located on 7th Street and 5th Street, respectively, are both located within one-tenth of a mile walking distance of the project site. As referenced in the Station Area Plan, both five-level garages have adequate space throughout the day. A 2019 occupancy study found that Garage 1 and Garage 3 had 270 spaces (36 percent of capacity) and 237 spaces (34 percent of capacity) available to be leased, respectively; this 2019 analysis set a 10 percent buffer aside as a contingency and to accommodate events. Given that travel patterns may be permanently changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, future occupancy rates at the garage may be

lower than what was anticipated at the time the study was conducted, therefore resulting in capacity to accommodate the project parking demands more easily than was anticipated in the Station Area study.

Finding – The project is not subject to minimum parking requirements. Based on the abundance of access via alternative modes, including walking, biking and transit, together with the on-site parking to be provided and the potential to make more efficient use of the City’s downtown garages, it is anticipated that the parking needs of this project would be met. If the project’s parking capacity is increased, this finding would remain unchanged.

Site Access

The site would be accessed via an exclusive left-turn enter/left-turn exit driveway located on Riley Street, which is one-way northbound. The majority of frontages along Riley Street are used for parking for the commercial and office uses along both sides of the street. Because there are no entrances to downtown commercial establishments on Riley Street, pedestrian volumes are low compared to other parallel streets in the downtown area, such as Mendocino Avenue. Given the one-way direction of travel, lack of opposing traffic, and low vehicle and pedestrian volumes, a left-turn pocket would not be warranted at the project’s driveway.

Finding – Access to the site would be adequate.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)

Senate Bill (SB) 743 established the change in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as a result of a project as the basis for determining transportation and traffic impacts. In establishing its thresholds of significance for VMT analysis, the City of Santa Rosa relied upon guidance provided by the California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in the publication *Transportation Impacts (SB 743) CEQA Guidelines Update and Technical Advisory*, 2018. The City’s standards are outlined in the *Vehicle Miles Traveled Guidelines Final Draft*, June 2020. With respect to assessing VMT for residential projects, the final draft guidelines indicate that projects generating VMT per capita that is 15 or more percent below the countywide average are presumed to have a less-than-significant transportation impact. The OPR publication, as well as CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b)(1) also indicate that “generally, projects within one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high-quality transit corridor should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact.”

OPR encourages the use of maps to identify low VMT areas for which the impacts could be presumed to be less than significant, allowing jurisdictions to “screen” projects in those areas from quantitative VMT analysis. The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) prepared a draft residential screening map for the City of Santa Rosa, and since the project site is located within a screened area it is reasonable to conclude that the project would have a less-than-significant VMT impact. The City’s guidelines also indicate that projects within one-half mile of an existing major transit stop can be screened from detailed VMT analysis; the project meets this criterion due to its proximity to the Transit Mall and the Santa Rosa Downtown SMART commuter rail station.

Finding – Based on the City of Santa Rosa’s VMT guidelines, the City’s VMT screening map and the project’s proximity to the Transit Mall and SMART rail station and indicate that the project is anticipated to result in a less-than-significant transportation impact on VMT.

Conclusions and Recommendations


- The project is estimated to generate 324 daily trips, including 40 trips in the a.m. peak hour and 40 in the p.m. peak hour.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities are adequate to serve the project.

- The project meets the City's VMT screening criteria and would therefore be expected to have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.
- The project's parking supply would be adequate as proposed and with the potential increase in spaces.
- Access to the site would be adequate.

Thank you for giving W-Trans the opportunity to provide these services. Please call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Barry Bergman, AICP
Senior Planner


Dalene J. Whitlock, PE, PTOE
Senior Principal

DJW/bdb/SRO480.L1

Enclosure: Site plan

