

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: GABE OSBURN, DIRECTOR
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: FIRST 2025 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PACKAGE: DUTTON
AVENUE GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND REZONING

AGENDA ACTION: TWO RESOLUTIONS AND AN ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council: (1) adopt, by resolution, an Addendum to the previously approved Dutton Avenue Residences Mitigated Negative Declaration; (2) adopt, by resolution, a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation for 3150 Dutton Avenue from Medium Density Residential to General Industry; and 3) introduce an ordinance rezoning 3150 Dutton Avenue from R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential) to IG (General Industrial), consistent with the General Plan land use designation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The undeveloped 5.95-acre property at 3150 Dutton Avenue is located in the southernmost part of southwest Santa Rosa. The property owner proposes amending the General Plan land use designation from Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre) to General Industry and rezoning the site from R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential) to IG (General Industrial). This proposed General Plan land use amendment is part of the First 2025 General Plan Amendment Package.

BACKGROUND

1. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Light manufacturing and warehousing
South: Light manufacturing and warehousing
East: Rail corridor; multi-family residential beyond
West: Vacant residential and industrial land



Figure 1: Surrounding Industrial and Residential Land Uses

The project site is located on the east side of Dutton Avenue, approximately 440 feet south of the intersection with Bellevue Avenue. It is surrounded by commercial and industrial uses to the north, south, and west; fully developed residential uses to the east, separated from the site by the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) tracks; and an undeveloped parcel to the west designated for residential and commercial uses.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

3150 Dutton Avenue is flat, undeveloped land. The site contains no trees or woody shrubs and is primarily covered with non-native upland weeds and grasses. No improvements have been made to the parcel and there is no proposed development at this time.

4. Project History

March 14, 2006	Council Adoption of a General Plan Amendment from General Industry to Medium Density Residential, to accommodate future residential development (Resolution No. 26520).
March 21, 2006	Council Adoption of a Zoning Map Amendment from General Industrial to Multi-Family Residential (R-3-18), to accommodate future residential development (Ordinance No. 3771).
October 18, 2018	Design Review Board Approval of a 107-unit multi-family project, including adoption of a MND (Resolution Nos. 18-984 & -985).

September 25, 2024	Project applications submitted. Applicable fees were paid on October 3, 2024.
November 1, 2024	Notice of Application mailed to surrounding property owners and occupants.
November 4, 2024	Native American tribes with known interest in the area were notified of the proposed project pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52.
November 14, 2024	Native American tribes with known interest in the area were notified of the proposed project pursuant to Senate Bill 18 (SB 18).
December 27, 2024	Notice of Neighborhood Meeting mailed to surrounding property owners and occupants.
January 8, 2025	Neighborhood Meeting held; one attendee.
March 13, 2025	As discussed in the Board/Commission/Committee section of this report, the Planning Commission adopted three resolutions recommending that the City Council approve this project (Resolution Nos. PC-RES-2025-003, -004, & -005).
April 11, 2025	A Pre-Closure of Consultation Letter was sent to Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (Tribe).
May 2, 2025	A Close of Consultation Letter was sent to the Tribe.

5. Tribal Consultation

- Lytton Rancheria responded to the SB 18 letter and AB 52 notification and requested cultural surveys and/or archaeological reports. After reviewing additional information about the project, and the MND and associated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), Lytton responded that they were not seeking further consultation.
- The Stewarts Point Rancheria Kashia Band of Pomo Indians responded to the SB 18 letter noting that the proposed project is out of their Aboriginal Territory with no comments or concerns.
- The Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria requested consultation pursuant to SB 18. As a result of tribal consultation, the Tribe requested, and the City agreed in good faith, to add three protective measures to address and provide direction in the unlikely event unknown subsurface objects are discovered during project construction. These measures have been added as conditions of approval:
 - a. Prior to any ground disturbing activities for future development at the project site, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare a Cultural Resources

Monitoring Plan for review by and in consultation with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, and approval by the City. The Plan shall identify the type of archaeological material that could potentially be found within the Project site and procedures to follow should any material be encountered during ground disturbing activities. The Plan shall provide procedures and guidelines for in-field assessment of the significance of any archaeological material identified during monitoring.

- b. A qualified professional archaeologist and tribal monitor from the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria shall be retained to monitor all initial ground disturbing and grading work for future development. The archaeologist must meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology. The archaeologist and tribal monitor shall have the authority to halt construction activities at the location of a discovery to review possible archaeological material and to protect the resource while the materials are being assessed. Monitoring shall continue until, in the archaeologist's judgement, in consultation with the tribal monitor, additional archaeological resources are not likely to be encountered. If no archaeological resources are discovered during construction, the archaeologist shall prepare a report to document the negative findings after construction is complete.
- c. Work shall halt within 50 feet if human remains are uncovered during construction. The significance of the find shall be assessed, and the appropriate management shall be pursued. California law recognizes the need to protect interred human remains, particularly Native American burials and items of cultural patrimony, from vandalism and inadvertent destruction. The procedures for the treatment of discovered human remains are contained in California Health and Safety Code §§ 7050.5 and 7052 and PRC § 5097. If remains are uncovered, the City and the County coroner shall be notified immediately. The coroner is required to examine all discoveries of human remains within 48 hours of receiving notice of a discovery on private or State lands (Health and Safety Code § 7050.5[b]). If the coroner determines that the remains are those of a Native American, he or she must contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) by phone within 24 hours of making that determination (Health and Safety Code § 7050[c]). The City and the professional archaeologist shall contact the Most Likely Descendant, as determined by the NAHC, regarding the remains. The Most Likely Descendant, in cooperation with the City, shall determine the ultimate disposition of the remains and any associated artifacts.

Consultation was closed on May 2, 2025.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

1. Request for General Plan Amendment

The General Plan land use designation of General Industry is intended to provide areas for manufacturing and distribution activities, that may have potential for creating nuisances, and accessory office and retail uses. Uses may generate truck traffic and operate 24 hours a day. Unrelated retail and service commercial uses that could be more appropriately located elsewhere in the city are not permitted.

The proposed amendment implements the following General Plan goals and policies:

Land Use and Livability	
LUL-A	Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern to reduce travel, energy, land, and materials consumption while promoting greenhouse gas emission reductions citywide.
LUL-K	Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.
Economic Vitality	
EV-B	Facilitate the retention and expansion of existing businesses and provide sufficient land for business expansion and attraction of new employers that utilize the area's existing labor pool.
EV-D	Maintain the economic vitality of the downtown, business parks, offices and industrial areas.

As seen in the images below, with the exception of 3150 Dutton Avenue identified by the red arrows, properties along the eastern side of Dutton Avenue, adjacent to the SMART tracks, are designated General Industry on the Land Use

Diagram. This contiguous industrial strip extends approximately two miles, from the north side of Duke Court to south of Todd Road. In 2006, the General Plan land use was amended from General Industry to Medium Density Residential, which the City Council approved on appeal, against the recommendation of both City staff and the Planning Commission. The Council's decision was based on the property's proximity to a planned SMART station. SMART has since confirmed the anticipated station is no longer planned at this location. In light of this change, the property owner is requesting a General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation back to General Industry.

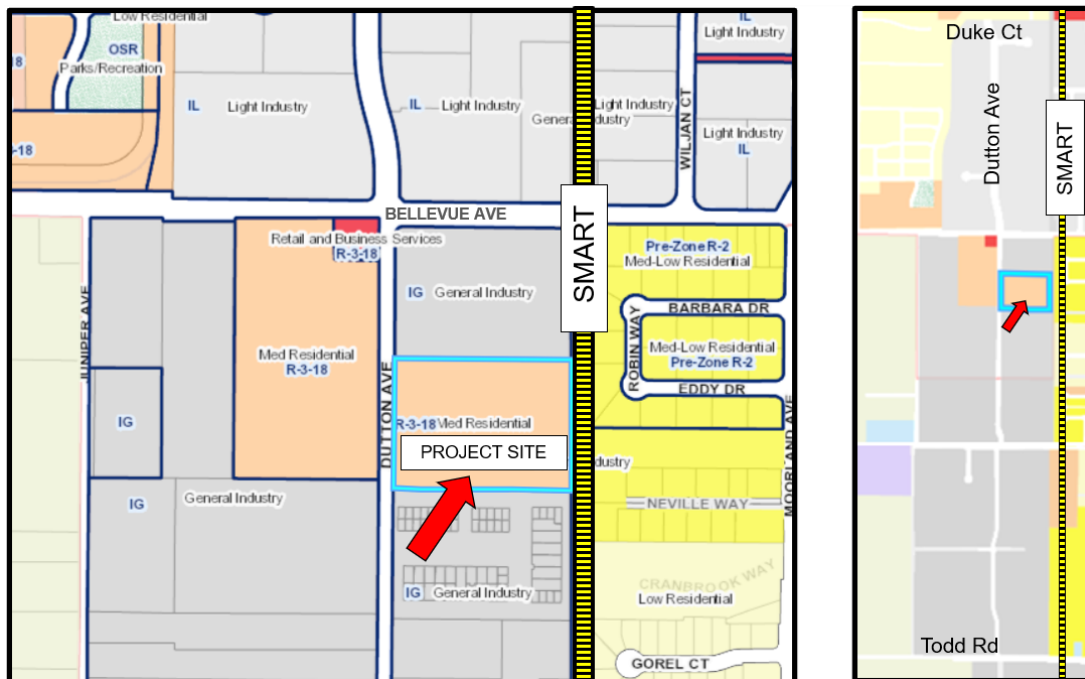


Figure 2: General Plan Land Use Map with Project Site and Surrounding (in Grey) Industrial Land Uses

The proposed land use amendment demonstrates consistency with existing industrial uses. Given the property's proximity to Highway 101, it implements the General Plan policy for a compact development pattern encouraging reduced travel, energy use, and consumption of land and materials. The proposed amendment protects industrial land supply by returning the property to its previous General Industry land use designation and ensures compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods by removing residential land uses out of a predominantly industrial corridor. The proposal aligns with the Economic Vitality goals of the 2035 General Plan by supporting new business development, and providing sufficient land for expansion, and promoting industrial growth in an area where City services and utilities are available.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-64.050](#), the following findings must be made

for an amendment to the City's General Plan:

- A. The proposed amendment ensures and maintains internal consistency with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan.
- B. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.
- C. The site is physically suitable (including absence of physical constraints, access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and provision of utilities) for the requested/anticipated land use developments.
- D. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

As demonstrated by the draft General Plan Amendment resolution, staff analysis has concluded that all required findings can be met.

2. Government Code Sections 65863 and 66300

The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process, part of Housing Element Law, determines how many new homes and their affordability levels each local government must plan for. RHNA is set by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), with Councils of Governments (COG), including the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), responsible for allocating regional housing needs to each city and county.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 65863, which is known as the "No Net Loss" Law, a jurisdiction must maintain adequate sites to accommodate its remaining unmet RHNA, by each income category, throughout the planning period. The subject site is listed in the 2023-2031 Housing Element with an approved 86-unit moderate-income RHNA site. The 2023-2031 Housing Element includes a RHNA surplus of approximately 49% overall, and 25% in the moderate-income category, which will provide adequate offset for the 86-unit loss in units that will result from the proposed General Plan Amendment.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 66300, which is known as the Housing Crisis Act, a jurisdiction may not change the General Plan land use designation of a parcel to a less intensive use or reduce the residential capacity, unless the jurisdiction concurrently changes other parcels to ensure no net loss in residential capacity.

The property at 3150 Dutton Avenue is listed in the 2023-2031 Housing Element with an anticipated residential capacity of 86 moderate-income units. The 2023-2031 Housing Element includes a RHNA surplus of approximately 49% overall,

and 25% in the moderate-income category. As such, the City would continue to maintain a surplus in RHNA units, even with a reduction in the 86 potential residential units. However, in compliance with the Housing Crisis Act, and to ensure that the City maintains sufficient sites to accommodate its RHNA, the proposed General Plan 2050 update, which is scheduled for adoption by Council as part of this General Plan Amendment Package (June 3, 2025), includes a land use change to increase residential density as part of a proposed residential project at 615/625 Acacia Lane (Low Density Residential to Medium-High Density Residential). The Acacia Lane project would result in greater than 140 additional residential units, which will ensure "No Net Loss" in compliance with Government Code 65863.b(2), and will ensure a concurrent land use amendment to increase residential capacity in compliance with Government Code Section 66300 (Housing Crisis Act).

3. Zoning

The applicant also requests to rezone 3150 Dutton Avenue from the R-3-18 (Multifamily Residential) zoning district to the IG (General Industrial) district, and has submitted a Rezoning application in accordance with Zoning Code [Chapter 20-64](#). IG zoning implements the General Industry land use designation (see [Section 20-20.020](#) Zoning Map and zoning districts), so the zoning will remain consistent with the proposed change in land use designation.

Below are the zoning districts surrounding the subject property:

North:	IG, existing industrial development
South:	IG, existing industrial development
East:	County, developed with residential uses. The properties along Barbara Drive, Eddy Drive and Robin Way are pre-zoned Medium-Low Density (R-2) and currently are under review by LAFCO for Annexation.
West:	R-3-18, undeveloped lot

Zoning Code Section [20-24.020\(C\)](#) establishes permit requirements for uses within the IG zoning district. Consistent with the General Plan land use designation, these uses typically involve industrial and manufacturing activities and may operate 24 hours a day. Uses allowed in IG zoning district typically require a Conditional Use Permit (minor or major) and have the potential for creating objectionable noise, smoke, odor, dust, noxious gases, glare, heat, vibration, or industrial wastes. All new structures would also require Design Review.

The proposed amendment is internally consistent with other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code. While the project does not propose any development, a future development will be able to meet lot size, lot coverage, setback, and

parking requirements.

Pursuant to Zoning Code [Section 20-64.050](#), the following findings must be made to rezone a property:

- A. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of all elements of the General Plan, and any applicable specific plan.
- B. The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare of the City.
- C. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- D. The site is physically suitable (including absence of physical constraints, access, compatibility with adjoining land uses, and provision of utilities) for the requested zoning designations and anticipated land uses/developments.

As demonstrated on the draft Rezoning Ordinance, staff analysis has concluded that all required findings can be met.

4. Summary of Public Comments

Planning staff has received three written comments, attached to this report, and summarized below:

- Questions about surrounding uses
- Concerns about placing industrial uses near residential
- Questions as to whether the project involves a development proposal
- Support for a redesignation back to industrial

Staff addressed all comments with additional information and project documents, and no further issues were raised. As referenced above in the General Plan Amendment Analysis section, the site is separated from the residential areas to the east by the SMART tracks and surrounded by a long strip of industrial uses which extend from Duke Court to south of Todd Road. No new development is proposed at this time; however, future development will be reviewed for compatibility with neighboring and nearby uses.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On October 18, 2018, the Design Review Board adopted a MND and granted Design Review for a five-structure, 107-unit, apartment complex (Resolution Nos. 19-984 & 19-985). The MND evaluated potential environmental impacts of the multi-family residential development, comprised of 33 one-bedroom, 64 two-bedroom, and 10 three-bedroom units, and ancillary onsite uses, and concluded that the project would not result in potentially significant impacts that could not be mitigated to a less than significant level. Required mitigation was related to Noise and Transportation.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164, an Addendum to the MND, prepared by Environmental Science Associates (ESA), dated March 2025, which analyzed impacts of conceptual development based on uses allowed in the IG zoning district, including aesthetics, agriculture & forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology & soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards & hazardous materials, hydrology & water quality, land use & planning, mineral resources, noise, population & housing, public services, recreation, transportation & circulation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire was prepared. The Addendum did not identify any project-specific impacts stating that, “the analyses conducted, and the conclusions reached in the 2018 IS/MND remain relevant and valid.”

The Addendum further concludes that:

- None of the criteria described in Section 15162(a) of the CEQA Guidelines has occurred, for which the City would be required to prepare a subsequent negative declaration under CEQA; and
- The document satisfies the criteria described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15164(a). An addendum is the appropriate CEQA document for the current circumstances relevant to the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 as none of the conditions described in Section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent negative declaration have occurred.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 13, 2025, the Planning Commission, by three resolutions, recommended that (1) the City Council adopt an Addendum to the previously approved Dutton Avenue Residences Mitigated Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 2005092141) for the Dutton Avenue Development Project, located at 3150 Dutton Avenue; (2) the City Council approve a General Plan Amendment on the subject property from Medium Density Residential to General Industry; and (3) that the City Council approve the rezoning on the subject property from the R-3-18 (Multi-Family Residential) zoning district to the IG (General Industrial) zoning district.

NOTIFICATION

The project was noticed as a public hearing per the requirements of [Chapter 20-66](#) of the City Code. Notification of this public hearing was provided through various methods: posting an on-site sign, publishing a notice in the Press Democrat, mailing notices to surrounding property owners and occupants, sending electronic notices to parties interested in projects within this area of Santa Rosa, and posting notices on the City Hall bulletin board and the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2: Project Narrative
- Attachment 3: Location Map
- Attachment 4: Neighborhood Context
- Attachment 5: General Plan Map
- Attachment 6: Zoning Map
- Attachment 7: Previously Approved Initial Study-Mitigated Negative Declaration
- Attachment 8: Approved Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Attachment 9: Mitigated Negative Declaration Addendum
- Attachment 10: Design Review Board Resolution No. 18-984
- Attachment 11: Design Review Board Resolution No. 18-985
- Attachment 12: Council Resolution No. 26520
- Attachment 13: Council Ordinance No. 3771
- Attachment 14: Planning Commission Draft Minutes, March 13, 2025
- Attachment 15: Planning Commission Resolution No. PC-RES-2025-003
- Attachment 16: Planning Commission Resolution No. PC-RES-2025-004
- Attachment 17: Planning Commission Resolution No. PC-RES-2025-005
- Attachment 18: Public Correspondence

- Resolution 1: Addendum to adopted MND / Exhibit A – Addendum to MND / Exhibit B – Previously Approved Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program / Exhibit C - Previously Approved MND
- Resolution 2: General Plan Amendment
- Ordinance: Rezoning

PRESENTER

Susie Murray, Supervising Planner