

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION
May 28, 2026

PROJECT TITLE

Stonehouse Hotel

APPLICANT

Paul Thompson

ADDRESS/LOCATION

3331 and 3555 Highway 12

PROPERTY OWNER

Sonoma Stonehouse LLC

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS

181-120-034, 181-120-033

FILE NUMBERS

PRJ25-001 (CUP25-001 & HDP25-001)

APPLICATION DATES

January 8, 2025

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATES

April 9, 2026

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

Major Conditional Use Permit

Major Hillside Development Permit

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Major Design Review

PROJECT SITE ZONING

Planned Development (PD 0441)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Retail and Business Services

PROJECT PLANNER

Suzanne Hartman

RECOMMENDATION

Approval

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
FROM: SUZANNE HARTMAN, CITY PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: STONEHOUSE HOTEL

AGENDA ACTION: TWO RESOLUTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Planning Commission, by two resolutions, approve a Major Conditional Use Permit and Hillside Development Permit to allow the construction of a new 70-room hotel building, renovation and conversion of the existing Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, and associated outdoor pool, garden, courtyard spaces, parking, landscaping, and related site improvements, located at 3331 and 3555 Highway 12. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The applicant requests a Major Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and a Hillside Development Permit (HDP) to allow the construction of a new 70-room hotel building and renovation of the existing historic Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, resulting in a combined total of 75 hotel rooms. Project amenities include a rooftop courtyard, fitness facility, and outdoor features such as dining patios, gardens and a pool. Outdoor amenities and meeting areas are approved as accessory hotel facilities. Events or gatherings shall be incidental to the hotel use and shall operate in compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance, parking requirements, and all conditions of approval. Events marketed or operated as a separate event venue use, or events resulting in parking, traffic, noise, or operational impacts beyond those analyzed for the hotel use, shall require additional review and approval by the Planning Division and may require amendment to the Conditional Use Permit. A total of 77 on-site parking spaces are proposed, including 40 spaces within a ground-level garage and 37 spaces in a surface parking lot. Pursuant to the site's Planned Development zoning district (PD 0441), hotels require approval of a CUP, and an HDP is required for the areas of development proposed on slopes exceeding a 10 percent grade. The project will also require Design Review approval for the new building, which will be considered by the

Design Review and Preservation Board, following action by the Planning Commission on the CUP and HDP.

BACKGROUND

1. Project Description

Hotel Use and Site Improvements

The applicant proposes to construct a 70-room hotel building and renovate the existing historic Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, resulting in a combined total of 75 hotel rooms on the site on a 2-acre property. The project amenities include rooftop courtyard, exterior enclosed patios, gardens, pool, fitness facility, ground-level reception area, and a semi-subterranean parking garage. The project also includes retaining walls, planters, hardscaping, fencing, access gates, and related site improvements.

Parking and Access

The Project includes 77 vehicle parking spaces, including 40 spaces within a ground-level garage and 37 spaces in a surface parking lot. Vehicle access is currently provided from Highway 12, and a new gated emergency vehicle access is proposed from Sunridge Drive.

Tree Removal and Replacement

The Project proposes removal of 34 inventoried trees, including 13 heritage trees. Required tree replacement and mitigation are discussed in greater detail in the Zoning analysis below.

2. Surrounding Land Uses

North: Planned Development, Very Low Residential

South: Planned Development, Very Low Density Residential

East: Planned Development, Low Density Residential

West: RR-20 (Rural Residential), Very Low Density Residential

Surrounding Context and Highway 12 Corridor

The project site is located directly adjacent to Highway 12 and is surrounded by detached single-family residential uses. Highway 12 is defined as a scenic road in the Santa Rosa General Plan 2050. Scenic roads carry vehicles through areas of notable beauty and/or with natural resources, landmarks, historic features, or cultural interest points. The project site is not located within the -SR Scenic Road combining district; however, staff considered the Project's visual relationship to the Highway 12 corridor as part of the General Plan, Hillside Development Permit, and visual analysis.

3. Existing Land Use – Project Site

Historic Stonehouse Building

The project site includes the existing Stonehouse building and an adjacent vacant parcel. The existing Stonehouse Hotel has a history spanning more than a century on Highway 12. The original building was constructed in 1909 by Massimo Galeazzi, who built it from locally quarried basalt blocks and operated it as the Rincon Hotel — a boarding house, tavern, and grocery store serving the stonecutters who worked the quarries in the surrounding hills. After a fire destroyed the original wood second floor, Galeazzi rebuilt it entirely in stone in 1912. Over the following century the existing Stonehouse building passed through numerous incarnations — a sanitarium in the 1930s, a restaurant and bar through the 1940s and 1950s, an entertainment venue in the 1960s, a corporate headquarters in the 1980s, and ultimately the Stonehouse Inn bed and breakfast in the early 2000s. The proposed Project will preserve the stone structure in its entirety.

Existing Site Conditions

The northern portion of the project site slopes gently from west to east and is currently occupied by the Stonehouse building and an existing parking lot. The central portion of the site has a large level pad and some concrete retaining walls that are the remnant of a long-demolished warehouse. The remaining southerly area of the site slopes steeply from west to east. Per the Arborist Inventory Report, there are 50 inventoried trees on the site. There is a grouping of trees on the uphill portion of the southwest corner that are noted to be preserved, many are small oaks. Vehicle access to the site is currently provided by Highway 12.



4. Project History

Prior Entitlement History

The Stonehouse property has been subject to multiple prior land use approvals. In 1998, the City Council rezoned the property to the C-2-PD District, later reflected as Planned Development (PD 0441), with a Policy Statement intended to limit uses to those compatible with the Highway 12 corridor, the surrounding residential neighborhood, and the historic character of the property. In 2000, the Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for a 68-room lodging project on the site, including reuse of the existing Stonehouse building for 14 lodging rooms and construction of additional lodging units. In 2005, the City Council amended the PD Policy Statement to add senior housing as a conditionally permitted use. The current Project differs from those prior approvals and proposes construction of a new 70-room hotel building and renovation of the existing Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, for a total of 75 hotel rooms.

Current Application Timeline

May 2, 2023	Development Review Pre-Application Meeting
January 18, 2024	Zoning Administrator approval of Minor Conditional Use Permit CUP23-016 to allow operation of a 14-room boutique hotel within the existing Stonehouse building.
July 15, 2024	Neighborhood Meeting
September 5, 2024	Concept Design Review
January 8, 2025	Project Applications Submitted
April 4, 2025	Notice of Application Distributed
May 15, 2026	Notice of Public Hearing Distributed

On January 18, 2024, the Zoning Administrator approved Minor Conditional Use Permit CUP23-016 to allow reuse of the existing Stonehouse building as a 14-room boutique hotel, with no major construction or architectural changes proposed. The current Project is broader in scope and includes construction of a new 70-room hotel building, renovation of the existing Stonehouse building into five hotel rooms, and associated site and hillside improvements. Therefore, the current Project requires Planning Commission review of a Major Conditional Use Permit and Hillside Development Permit.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan

The [General Plan](#) addresses issues related to the physical development and growth of Santa Rosa and guides the City's planning and zoning functions. The project site is designated Retail and Business Services. This designation allows a

wide variety of retail and service enterprises, offices, and restaurants. The Project is consistent with this designation, which allows retail and service enterprises. The expanded hotel use is allowed in the General Plan land use designation and will serve to support tourism. By accommodating visitors, the hotel enhances customer traffic for nearby businesses and contributes to the vitality of retail and service enterprises envisioned by the land use designation.

The most relevant applicable General Plan goals and policies with Staff's analysis are included in the table below.

Land Use and Economic Development

Goal 2-5: Create a business-friendly, diverse, and sustainable economy through the attraction of new business, and the expansion, retention, and support of existing business.

Action 2-5.7: Identify, support and prepare land for expanded industrial and commercial development and redevelopment opportunities.

Policy 2-9.1: Support opportunities to expand economic opportunity to all segments of the community.

Consistent. The Project involves the expansion of the existing hotel use on an underutilized commercial property, while preserving the original Stonehouse Hotel. Expanding the use will provide an increase in jobs and economic opportunity related to hospitality.

Urban and Environmental Design

<p>Policy 4-1.1: Preserve and enhance the visual beauty and value of the city's natural waterways, hillsides, historic districts, buildings, structures, and landscapes.</p> <p>Policy 4-1.3: Enhance and strengthen the visual quality of major entry routes into the City, as well as major corridors that link neighborhoods with downtown.</p> <p>Policy 4-1.2: Strengthen and emphasize community focal points, visual landmarks, and features that contribute to the identity of Santa Rosa by applying the design concepts and standards of the Zoning Code, Design Guidelines, Historic Combining Districts, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan.</p>	<p>Consistent. The existing Stonehouse Hotel is one of Santa Rosa's most recognized visual landmarks on the Highway 12 corridor, and the proposed project preserves the structure in its entirety. The new hotel building, which has been designed to be architecturally compatible with the existing structure, is set back from and subordinate to the Stonehouse building on the highway-facing elevation, ensuring the historic structure remains the primary visual anchor of the site. Further, the Project's proposed landscaping along Highway 12 will enhance and strengthen the corridor's visual quality.</p> <p>The development aligns with the integrity and character of the surrounding residential uses and applies concepts and standards set in the Zoning Code and other guiding City documents by applying appropriate setbacks to new structures, installing downward directed lighting and vegetative screening along property lines to minimize noise, light and glare and other impacts.</p>
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2. Zoning

Planned Development Zoning and Allowed Use

The project site is located within Planned Development District PD 0441. The approved Policy Statement governs allowable land uses and permit requirements within the PD. The Policy Statement allows hotels, motels, and related uses subject to Conditional Use Permit approval. Because the Policy Statement remains the controlling zoning document for the site, the proposed hotel is reviewed as a Major Conditional Use Permit under the applicable PD framework.

The proposal would expand the existing hotel use while preserving the historic Stonehouse structure. The PD 0441 Policy Statement is intended to allow low-traffic-generating uses compatible with the adjoining residential neighborhood and the historic character of the property.

Traffic and Access

A Traffic Study prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG), dated December 4, 2024, concluded that the development will generate about 599 daily trips and is not expected to significantly affect the surrounding roadway network. The existing access via the right-in/right-out driveway on Highway 12 is deemed sufficient, and will not lead to significant traffic or environmental impacts.

Development Standards

The PD zoning district does not list a maximum lot coverage and refers to the City Zoning Code for the required parking. According to Zoning Code Section 20-23.040, Commercial district general development standards, properties within the General Commercial zoning district are permitted a lot coverage of up to 100 percent; the Project's proposed building coverage will be 35 percent of the site.

The hotel is setback 20 feet from the rear property line and more than 20 feet from all other property lines, which complies with setback requirements in Chapter 20-32, Hillside Development Standards.

The height of the hotel is 34 feet with a tower extending to 36 feet. The proposed height complies with the PD district's 35-foot height limit, and towers or other architectural features may extend above the 35-foot limit if approved through Design Review.

Parking and Accessory Amenities

Pursuant to Chapter 20-36 of the Zoning Code, one vehicle parking space is required for each guest room. The Project proposes 75 hotel rooms and 77 vehicle parking spaces. There are 25 compact vehicle parking spaces, which is less than 50 percent of the total parking spaces.

The second-level courtyard, fitness facility, dining patios, gardens, pool, and related outdoor areas are proposed as accessory amenities for hotel guests and are not proposed as separately operated restaurant, event, or public assembly uses. Therefore, parking was evaluated based on the hotel use at one space per guest room.

Lighting

The Project is conditioned to comply with Zoning Code Section 20-30.080, which limits the height of outdoor lighting fixtures to 17 feet and requires lighting fixtures to be shielded or recessed to minimize light spillover onto neighboring properties. As conditioned, the Project complies with the Zoning Code.

Tree Removal and Replacement

The Arborist Inventory Report evaluates the proposed removal of 34 trees, including 13 heritage trees, and identifies required replacement planting and

mitigation consistent with City Code Chapter 17-24. The Project is conditioned to establish tree protection zones to prevent damage to trees proposed to remain and to replace or otherwise mitigate the removal of the heritage trees, consistent with Chapter 17-24.

The Arborist Inventory Report calculates that 108 replacement trees are required. The Project proposes to plant 66 trees on site and requests to satisfy the remaining 42 replacement trees through an in-lieu payment, as allowed where a development site is inadequate in size to accommodate all required replacement trees. All such payments shall be used for tree-related educational projects and/or planting programs of the City.

Conditional Use Permit Findings

The following findings are required for approval of the Conditional Use Permit:

- 1) The proposed use is allowed within the applicable zoning district and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code and the City Code; and
- 2) The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan; and
- 3) The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity would be compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity; and
- 4) The site is physically suitable for the type, density, and intensity of use being proposed, including access, utilities, and the absence of physical constraints; and
- 5) Granting the permit would not constitute a nuisance or be injurious or detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or welfare, or materially injurious to persons, property, or improvements in the vicinity and zoning district in which the property is located; and
- 6) The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The detailed findings required for approval of the Major Conditional Use Permit are included in Resolution 1. In summary, the Project is consistent with the site's Planned Development zoning and Retail and Business Services General Plan designation, expands an existing hotel use while preserving the historic Stonehouse building, provides adequate parking and access, and includes conditions addressing noise, lighting, traffic, operations, and neighborhood compatibility.

Hillside Development Standards

Purpose and Applicability

A Hillside Development Permit is required for proposed development on sites with slopes of 10 percent or greater. The Hillside Development Permit provides a review process for the City to consider the appropriateness of proposed development on hillside parcels, to ensure that a proposed project minimizes its visual and environmental impacts.

Existing Slope and Site Conditions

Existing slopes in the area of the proposed site are between 1 to 45-percent. The northern portion of the project site slopes gently from east to west and is currently developed with the original Stonehouse Hotel and the parking lot. The central part of the site features a large level pad and retaining walls, a remnant of a long-demolished warehouse building. The remaining southerly area of the site slopes steeply from east to west and includes a grove of primarily oak trees in the southwest corner.

Grading, Drainage, and Site Design

The majority of the site is currently vacant/undeveloped and has slopes ranging from near flat to 45-percent, with portions of these slopes being created by previous construction activities on the site. The slopes that exceed 25-percent towards the center of the site appear to be previously constructed slopes associated with prior site development rather than undisturbed natural hillside terrain. Most grading would occur on the southern portion of the site to accommodate the new hotel building and associated site improvements. Based on the slope analysis and visual analysis, the proposed grading on slopes greater than 25 percent is limited to areas that are previously disturbed and/or are visually insignificant. The runoff currently flows from the southwest side to the northeast and eventually discharges into the city of Santa Rosa public storm drain system that eventually discharges to Santa Rosa Creek. The project will be graded to maintain the existing drainage pattern without impacting existing structures and downstream facilities. Multiple bioretention locations are being proposed on the site to treat runoff from new impervious areas. The parking garage is recessed into the hillside to lessen the structure's visibility from public view while still accommodating the minimum required parking spaces.

Visual Analysis and Screening

The Project minimizes alteration of the natural topography through specific design measures. The new hotel building will not be located near the ridgeline. The ground-level parking garage is partially recessed into the hillside rather than constructed fully above grade, and avoids a large flat graded pad through a

stepped floor design that conforms to the rising natural grade of the site. The hotel is setback 20-feet from the rear property line and will be setback by more than 20-feet from all other property lines, which complies with setback requirements stated within Chapter 20-32: Hillside Development Standards. Alterations determined by the review authority to be minor may be approved if any of the following applies: (A) for road or driveway construction across slopes greater than 25 percent but determined by the visual analysis to be insignificant; (B) over previously constructed slope; or (C) within terrain areas determined by the visual analysis to be visually insignificant and/or hidden. The slope analysis and project plans show that a significant portion of the Project proposes to develop on previously constructed slopes, and the visual analysis concludes that the areas of the site where development is proposed will be visually insignificant. Further, the combination of the retained tree grove, the existing boundary trees, the proposed perimeter fence, and proposed vegetative screening will collectively ensure that the new hotel building and associated site improvements will be properly screened from the adjacent residential properties.

Hillside Development Findings

The following findings are required for approval of the Hillside Development Permit:

- 1) Site planning minimizes the visual prominence of hillside development by taking advantage of existing site features for screening, including tree clusters, depressions in topography, setback hillside plateau areas, and other natural features;
- 2) Site development minimizes alteration of topography, drainage patterns, and vegetation on land with slopes of 10 percent or more;
- 3) Site development does not alter slopes of greater than 25 percent, except in compliance with Section 20-32.020.B (Applicability—Limitations on hillside development);
- 4) Project grading respects natural features and visually blends with adjacent properties;
- 5) Building pad location, design, and construction avoids large areas of flat pads, and building forms are instead "stepped" to conform to site topography;
- 6) The proposed project complies with the City's Design Guidelines;
- 7) The proposed project complies with the requirements of this chapter and all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code;

- 8) The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan and any applicable specific plan; and
- 9) The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare.

The detailed findings required for approval of the Hillside Development Permit are included in Resolution 2. In summary, the Project minimizes visual prominence by locating the new hotel outside of the ridgeline, recessing the parking garage into the hillside, using stepped building design, and retaining and supplementing perimeter landscaping to screen views from adjacent residential properties.

3. Summary of Public Comments

Public comments received during the Neighborhood Meeting, Concept Design Review Meeting, and through written correspondence primarily raised concerns related to noise, traffic safety, neighborhood compatibility, and site operations.

Staff Response:

Noise

An Environmental Noise Impact Study was provided by the applicant and conducted by Yorke Engineering, dated October 2024. The Study reviewed potential impacts for both the construction and hotel operations phases of the Project and were evaluated at the nearest sensitive receptor for excessive noise and vibration exposure. The Study concluded that the primary noise source at all measurement locations is from traffic along Highway 12. Temporary construction noise would be limited to daylight hours and would permanently cease upon completion of construction. The hotel would have similar on-site equipment consistent with surrounding residential uses, such as a pool, pool equipment and an outdoor yard. Typical operations of the proposed hotel would not involve activities that generate substantive levels of vibration that would affect surrounding uses. The Study concluded that all proposed construction and hotel operational noise impacts are less than significant. The Study also recommends the use of building assemblies with sufficient Sound Transmission Class (STC) ratings on highway-facing habitable rooms to meet the City's 45 dBA day-night noise level for interior noise standard. The Project has been conditioned to remain in compliance with the Noise Ordinance, City Code Chapter 17-16.

Traffic and Access

A Traffic Study conducted by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers, dated December 4, 2024, concluded that the additional trips associated with the proposed Project will not significantly impact the existing surrounding roadway

network. Additionally, based on the low volume of forecast Project peak hour right-turning traffic, and given that the Project site's driveway is restricted to right-turn movements only, it is not anticipated that the Project's traffic vehicles will queue onto Highway 12.

Neighborhood Compatibility / Operations

The Project site is located within Planned Development District PD 0441, which was established to allow low-traffic-generating uses that are compatible with the adjoining residential neighborhood and the historic character of the Stonehouse property. The proposed hotel use is consistent with the PD framework, which allows hotels, motels, and related uses subject to Conditional Use Permit approval. The Project has been designed to preserve the existing Stonehouse building as the primary visual landmark along Highway 12, locate the new hotel building farther back on the site, recess the parking garage into the hillside, and provide perimeter landscaping and screening adjacent to residential properties. Outdoor amenities, including the pool, gardens, dining patios, and courtyard spaces, are proposed as accessory hotel amenities and are not proposed as separately operated restaurant, event, or public assembly uses. Conditions of approval require compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance and Outdoor Lighting standards, including downward-directed lighting and controls to reduce spillover onto adjacent properties. With these design and operational controls, staff finds that the Project can operate in a manner compatible with nearby residential uses.

4. Public Improvements

Highway 12 Frontage Improvements

The Project will include off-site improvements along Highway 12. These improvements include the installation of a contiguous sidewalk along the full Highway 12 frontage, a new driveway apron connecting to the existing sidewalk at the adjacent property, and street lighting along the frontage. Additionally, existing overhead utility facilities within the project frontage may be required to be undergrounded, and all new utility services to new structures shall be installed underground. These improvements aim to improve streetscape continuity along the Highway 12 corridor and bring the site's frontage into conformance with the City's standards. A Caltrans Encroachment Permit is also required to be obtained prior to beginning any work in the State Highway Right-of-Way.

Engineering Conditions

For a more comprehensive list of on- and off-site improvements, refer to the attached Exhibit A, provided by Engineering Development Services, dated April 16, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of the Project will not have an effect on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

CEQA Review

Staff has reviewed the submitted technical studies in light of the current Project description and determined that the analyses adequately evaluate the proposed 75 room hotel project and associated site improvements.

The Project has been found in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under the following CEQA Guidelines sections:

Class 32 Infill Exemption

- The Project qualifies for a Class 32 categorical exemption for infill development pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. The Project meets the criteria in CEQA Guidelines Section 15332(a) through (e), as described below:
 - a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The Project is consistent with Santa Rosa General Plan 2050, and the current City of Santa Rosa Zoning Code. The land use designation is Retail and Business Services, which allows offices, restaurants, and retail and service enterprises, including businesses related to hospitality. The zoning is Commercial Planned Development (PD 0441), which allows hotels and similar uses by obtaining a Conditional Use Permit. The commercial PD district is consistent with the property's General Plan land use designation. The PD district restricts uses to those compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood and the historical character of the existing Stonehouse building.

- b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses because the size of the project site is two acres.
- c) The project site has no value, as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The project site is largely developed consisting of existing structures and an empty lot. A Biological Resources Assessment, prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions, dated October 31, 2025, states that "No significant breeding/nesting colonies were observed during the field survey." The Biological Resources Assessment concluded that special-status plant and wildlife species are unlikely or have no potential to occur on the Project site. Although the site contains mixed oak woodland that may provide nesting

habitat for common protected birds, implementation of pre-construction nesting bird surveys and avoidance measures would ensure compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. The Project has been conditioned to retain a qualified Biologist to perform pre-construction surveys for nesting birds. The survey shall be conducted 5 days prior to the initiation of project activities to determine whether active nests are present. If an active nest is located, the qualified Biologist shall determine an appropriately sized avoidance buffer based on the species and anticipated disturbance level. The qualified Biologist shall monitor the active nest during maintenance and/or construction activities and stop or divert project activities in the vicinity, as needed, to prevent any potential impacts that may result from the construction of the proposed project until the young birds have fledged.

All special-status plant and wildlife species documented within the vicinity of the Study Area are unlikely or have no potential to occur. There are no aquatic features present on site. Therefore, the Project would not result in any impact on any State or federally protected aquatic features. Additionally, compliance with the measures described in the Arborist Inventory Report would ensure that the Project would remain consistent with the City's Tree Ordinance.

- d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

A Traffic Study conducted by LLG Engineers, dated December 4, 2024, concluded that the development will generate about 599 daily trips, which is not expected to significantly impact the surrounding roadway network. The existing access via the right-in/right-out driveway on Highway 12 is deemed sufficient. The project qualifies for a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) screening exemption due to its low-VMT location, primarily serving local trips. The Project will not lead to significant traffic or environmental impacts. It is not anticipated that vehicles will queue onto Highway 12 because the driveway is restricted to right-turn movements only. Pursuant to Chapter 20-36: Parking and Loading Standards, one vehicle parking space is required for each guest room. The Project proposes 75 rooms in total and 77 vehicle parking spaces, complying with the City's minimum parking requirement.

An Environmental Noise Impact Study, prepared by Yorke Engineering, dated October 2024, concluded that the project would not result in excessive levels of noise or vibration at off-site receptors and no mitigation measures are necessary nor recommended. The project has also been conditioned to remain in compliance with the Noise Ordinance, City Code Chapter 17-16.

An Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Analysis, prepared by Yorke Engineering, LLC, dated October 30, 2024, evaluated criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions associated with proposed construction and hotel

operations of the Project in accordance with the thresholds of significance established by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The analysis concluded that Project-related criteria pollutant emissions during both the construction and hotel operational phases would remain below all applicable BAAQMD significance thresholds, resulting in a less than significant impact on regional air quality. The Project's greenhouse gas impacts were also determined to be less than significant, and no additional mitigation measures were identified as necessary.

- e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project is conditioned to incorporate all Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practices (BMPs) as part of the Final Storm Water LID Submittal. City staff has reviewed the plans and conditioned the Project appropriately.

Section 15183 Streamlining

- The Project also qualifies for streamlining pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 because it is consistent with the General Plan 2050 and would not result in significant effects that are peculiar to the Project or the site and were not analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

- a) Effects that are peculiar to the project or the parcel on which the project would be located.

There are no project specific effects which are peculiar to the Project or its site, and which the General Plan EIR failed to analyze as significant effects. The project site is located in an area developed with commercial and residential uses. The property does not support any peculiar environmental features, and the Project would not result in any peculiar effects. In addition, all Project impacts were adequately analyzed by the General Plan EIR.

- b) Effects that were not analyzed as significant effects in the General Plan EIR. The Project does not include any new land use that could create an effect that has not been previously analyzed by the General Plan.

- c) Effects that are potentially significant off-site impacts and cumulative impacts that were not discussed in the prior EIR prepared for the General Plan.

There are no potentially significant off-site and/or cumulative impacts which the General Plan EIR failed to evaluate. The proposed Project is within the scope of the General Plan EIR and would represent a small part of the growth that was forecasted for build-out of the General Plan. The General Plan EIR

considered the incremental impacts of the future development, such as the Project, and no potentially significant off-site or cumulative impacts have been identified which were not previously evaluated.

- d) Effects that are previously identified significant effects which, as a result of substantial new information which was not known at the time the EIR was certified, are determined to have a more severe adverse impact than discussed in the prior EIR.

The applicant has provided a focused traffic study, prepared by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, Engineers (LLG), dated December 4, 2024. Also, the applicant has provided a Biological Resources Assessment, prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions, dated October 31, 2025. None of the studies revealed any new information or condition that suggests a previously identified significant effect is more severe than determined at the time the General Plan or Specific Plan EIR were certified.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

None of the exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. In particular, based on the technical studies prepared for the Project, there is no substantial evidence that unusual circumstances would result in a significant environmental effect.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Concept Design Review

The Design Review and Preservation Board reviewed the Project through Concept Design Review on September 4, 2024, and provided generally supportive comments regarding the overall site layout. Board comments included requests to consider additional EV charging spaces, ensure proposed design and materials complement the existing Stonehouse building, and incorporate defensible space and “fire-wise” planting. The applicant has provided a response letter to all of the Board’s suggestions.

Future Design Review

The Project is scheduled for review by the Design Review and Preservation Board on June 4, 2026. Final architectural design approval is not before the Planning Commission as part of this action.

PUBLIC 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 by posting an on-site sign, publishing notice in a newspaper of general circulation, mailed notice to surrounding property owners and occupants, electronic notice to parties that had

expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on 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.

LEVINE ACT

This project is subject to the Levine Act (Gov. Code Section 84308) which prohibits city officials from participating in certain decisions regarding licenses, permits, and other entitlements for use if the official has received a campaign contribution of more than \$500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant in the previous 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. Please see the attached Disclosure Form for information on individuals interested in the proposed land use action and any monetary contributions to city officials. For more information see the FPPC website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

ISSUES

Staff has identified no unresolved issues that would preclude Planning Commission action on the requested Major Conditional Use Permit and Hillside Development Permit.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Disclosure Form
- Attachment 2 - Location Map
- Attachment 3 - Project Plans
- Attachment 4 - Slope Analysis
- Attachment 5 - Visual Analysis
- Attachment 6 - Landscape Plans
- Attachment 7 - Traffic Analysis
- Attachment 8 - Noise Study
- Attachment 9 - Biological Resources Assessment
- Attachment 10 - Arborist Inventory Report
- Attachment 11 - Air Quality and GHG Analysis
- Attachment 12 - Geotechnical Report
- Attachment 13 - Policy Statement (PD 0441)
- Attachment 14 – Public Comments
- Resolution 1/Exhibit A
- Resolution 2/Exhibit A

CONTACT

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