

**From:** [Janet Noe](#)  
**To:** [Hartman, Suzanne](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Community Concern Regarding Proposed Stonehouse Hotel Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 26, 2026 10:52:55 AM

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**To:** Planning Commission  
**cc:** Suzanne Hartman, Project Planner

I am writing as a nearby resident regarding the proposed 70-room Stonehouse Hotel project at 3331 & 3555 Hwy 12. While I understand the importance of thoughtful development in Santa Rosa, I have concerns that this proposal is out of character with the surrounding neighborhood and does not reflect the existing Stonehouse site's history, architectural feel, or community identity.

The proposed design appears disconnected from the established character of the area and introduces a large commercial hotel project into a neighborhood environment that already has multiple nearby lodging options. With at least two other hotels located within a relatively short distance, it is unclear why another 70-room hotel is necessary at this location or how it uniquely benefits the surrounding community.

I am also concerned about the cumulative impacts this project may create, including increased traffic, parking overflow, lighting, noise, and a broader shift toward more intense commercial development in the area.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission to carefully consider whether this project is truly compatible with the neighborhood, the Stonehouse property itself, and the long-term character of this part of Santa Rosa.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

-Janet Noe

Janet Noe

147 Massimo Circle

Santa Rosa, CA 95404

**From:** [Maggi Andrews](#)  
**To:** [Hartman, Suzanne](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Stonehouse Hotel  
**Date:** Sunday, May 24, 2026 10:21:08 AM

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Hello Suzanne Hartman

I read the Notice of Public Hearing for the Stonehouse Hotel, and looked at the Design Review Board link provided. While I didn't find any information specific to this project, Google found the project documents at <https://www.srcity.org/4225/Stonehouse-Hotel-Phase-II>

Has an Environmental Impact report been done, or is one even needed? The documents didn't seem to address the traffic impact on a very busy stretch of Highway 12. The existing driveway access is not far from the Brush Creek stoplight, but it still would be a difficult situation. There is an EVA shown in the northeast corner - could that be made into a public access point?

*Maggi Andrews*

**From:** [Frederick Allebach](#)  
**To:** [PLANCOM - Planning Commission](#); [Hartman, Suzanne](#)  
**Cc:** [CityCouncilListPublic](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Stone house hotel project public comment  
**Date:** Sunday, May 24, 2026 8:27:22 AM  
**Attachments:** [image.png](#)

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Fred Allebach

5/23/26

### **Stone house hotel project public comment**

I live close to the Stone House. I saw the billboard for a public hearing and received an email notice of the Planning Commission meeting. I read the staff report. I'm not for or against the project but I have a few comments.

#### **General comments**

The property is in a bad location with limited access. Ingress and egress are both on westbound Hwy 12 only. In a year and half, I have never seen one vehicle go in and out of the property.

It's plain to see the current hotel business is not doing well. It never looks busy. Due to traffic noise the owner put up a 6' stone wall sound barrier across the front of the building plus a row of big, leafy trees which in total has impaired the great facade and special visual character of the building. This shows that traffic noise *is* an issue for guests. The Stone House is plain too close to a highway that has a lot of fast-moving, accelerating traffic.

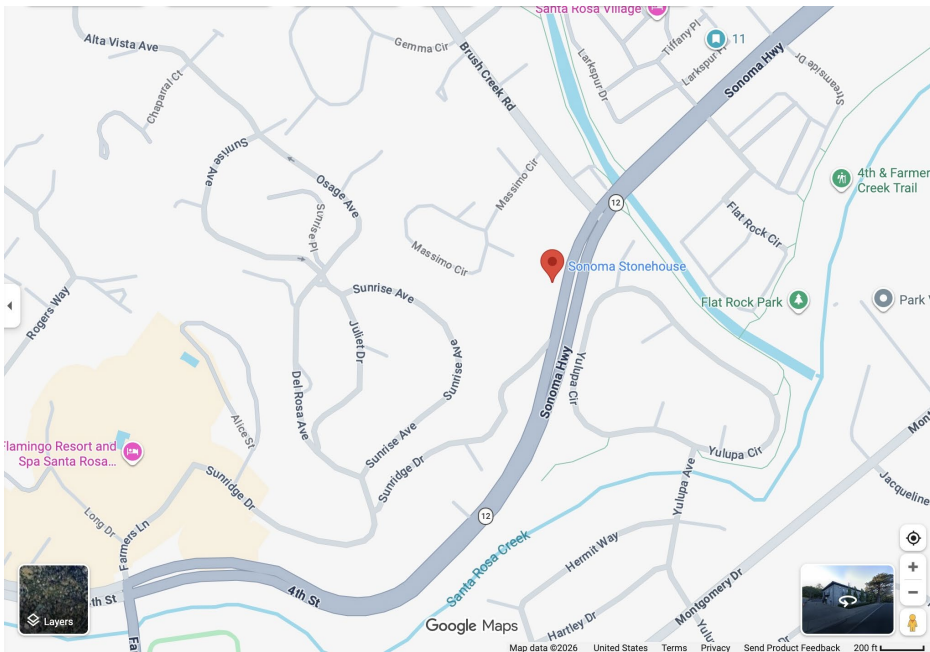
#### **Traffic**

The plan calls for approximately 700 new vehicle trips a day where there are now hardly any. Traffic is going westbound on Hwy 12 at 40 - 50 mph. This is a potential safety issue. Vehicles come by the Village Parkway and Brush Creek traffic lights (immediately prior to the Stone House) at high rates of speed and there have been numerous major accidents from people pulling out and getting hit. The sheer number of ambulance calls and sirens here is amazing; there are a LOT of accidents in this area of Highway 12 and Farmer's Lane. The more rats we put in the cage, the worse the traffic, frustrations, and accidents get.

For safety, hotel guests will need to wait until the light at Brush Creek stops Hwy. 12 traffic, otherwise accident risk will be higher.

#### **Use of side streets**

Sunridge Dr. immediately to the west of the property will most certainly be a short cut route taken by guests to the Hillside Restaurant (killer good breakfast, great huevos rancheros!) and nearby shopping centers with many stores and amenities. Currently there is barely room for one car and a pedestrian on Sunridge and brush is grown way out onto the road. With increased hotel traffic the brush will need to be cut way back for pedestrian safety and maybe speed humps put in as well.



## Hotels and Monopoly

In the game of Monopoly, the object is to get a hotel and charge as high a rent as possible. For local wine tourism boosters getting a hotel plus an event center is the Holy Grail, just like Monopoly. That's how you cash in. But, regional demand for hotels is down. With the city in a major budget crunch and with a willing hotel builder and the city hungry for money and income, this proposed hotel is like waking up and smelling that bacon cooking. Approval is almost certain.

However, Americans have discovered, at least before the age of alternative facts, that high cholesterol and salty breakfasts are not good for long term health. I'll develop this thought more as I go on.

## Glut of hotels?

With nearby existing hotels (Flamingo and Hillside Inn), one wonders what the demand for rooms and events is now and if a new 70-room hotel in the same area will dilute the overall customer base? (This is a similar scenario to a new proposed car wash near Hwy 12 and Mission where there are already two others.) Given that increased *economic vitality* and *economic sustainability*, from more leisure tourist and business traveler spending, are given as reasons for the project, is there any analysis of this increased hotel room demand? Where's the data and the chart?

Hotels thrive on booms and we are in a bust: tourism is down, NorCal hotel starts are down, wine is down, spending is down, travel is down, the US is on the way down. Hotels and local economies now will be fighting for increasingly less scraps.

A new hotel will likely have the effect of killing business for the Flamingo and Hillside. If this is generally the case, then taking any project that comes along and boosting it represents more of an economic survival of the fittest plan for the city, for whatever good or ill *competition* will bring rather than as sustainable economic planning that seeks focused, intentional resident and economy serving businesses.

Sustainable planning and business as usual economic development seem to be at cross purposes in the city. \*

## **Hotel glut redux**

Given that the Flamingo and Hillside have much better locations, chances are the Stone House endeavor will fail just like it has already but in the meantime the city will make money on fees, construction material taxes, and TOT.

I know the city has great hopes of some sort of growth renaissance and in that potential future maybe more hotel rooms will pay out. Santa Rosa is a hotel hub for the region, maybe building higher room supply is justified with the Fairgrounds and South Santa Rosa Specific Plan bonanzas coming up, if the city hits the jackpot.

Bottom line, the city won't lose if the development doesn't work out and will only benefit in the short run with increased income. But there is a larger risk of a J-curve crash where everybody loses. The city is gambling that faith in growth, booms, and *economic vitality* is a winning strategy overall. How does this strategy affect the 40% of city residents who make less than 80% of state median household income when the current survey tells us that equity is not in the top five as a city priority?

## **What about hotel-generated workforce housing?**

My name would not be Fred Allebach if I did not get around to this. A 75-room hotel complex and property with amenities will require a decent house, grounds, and admin workforce and a concomitant number of city workforce housing units to support these hotel jobs. Given that the city already has a significant, long-term deficit of Very low-income housing, and hotel workers stand to make Very low to Low-income MHI, a quid pro quo should be put in place where the project contributes toward the housing of its future employees.

City-standard compensation for project-generated workforce housing should be a quid pro quo and a condition of approval.

If we assume a mid-range hotel with median amenities that would be .75 staff per room. That is 56.25 staff jobs to run this hotel. Round that up to 65 or 70 to account for the luxury rooms in the Stone House itself and possible events. The city in-lieu fee is \$3 to \$5 per square foot which is going to be chump change for building affordable units for hotel employees but it will add money to city funds to leverage Affordable Housing projects that support hotel workers and the like.

Hotel rooms are a smaller square footage than an actually livable unit so any in-lieu fee quid pro quo needs to take the higher end of the fee, \$5 plus per square foot.

Whatever arrangement is made, the project should make a decent and substantial financial contribution for the future workforce housing needs it will generate. This needs to be a condition of approval.

## **Community Workforce Agreement**

The city should make a CWA part of the deal.

## **Project red flag for NIMBY pushback**

I was a NIMBY once but had a change of heart. I recognize from my NIMBY days a pattern in the staff report where I see an almost wholesale approval of the project: "no significant impacts", "recommend to approve." There is no way anyone can prevail over a staff report that says there will not be any troubles, the full force of the city will be backing the project.

However, hillside NIMBYs are a tough bunch with lawyers, guns, and money and strong

pushback, CEQA stalling, an appeal and a lawsuit after council approval is possible. If NIMBYs really fight, final approval may take five-plus years and result in a substantially scaled down project with maybe half or less the number of rooms.

This Planning Commission meeting will wake the NIMBYs up, many may miss this stage of the process. Once this story hits the paper then the shit will hit the fan from the force of all the folks living on that hill that will have to deal with the increased traffic on Sunridge Drive.

A developer that didn't assume a fight would be foolish and hence the number of rooms and amenities are a large ask up front. There should be a built-in willingness to eventually settle for less. Can the developer weather five-plus years of no motion and current low occupancy?

If the developer sweetens the pie by substantially addressing its future workforce housing needs that may be enough to put the project over the top and immunize it from NIMBY pushback.

### **Fred's prediction**

The Planning Commission and Council will likely rubber stamp the staff-recommended process and approve this project because the whole thing is sanctioned by the General Plan that is written by consultants that buy whole hog into growth meme assumptions. Inconsistencies about inclusion, equity, sustainability, and project impacts will be glossed over. The city backs all projects. Everyone is in a feedback loop telling everyone else what they want to hear. No worries, the insider cohort has all the power.

Wealthy hillside NIMBYs will gum up the process with everything they have and stall it for as much time as they can in whatever ways the old CEQA-stalling dance still applies. If new state laws have clipped NIMBY wings, the hotel will go forward but it will start to hamstring the Flamingo and Hillside hotels and result in NE quad hotel economic slow death and not vitality. The poor location, noise, and future track record of car-pull-out accidents inherent at the Stone House location will make for a slow-death endeavor as well.

Optional reading below.

### **\*Digression #1 What's our economic paradigm and why?**

Boom and bust cycles and survival of the fittest are how nature operates. Nature also operates on a fundamental interlinking and cooperation between systems and entities. Our vaunted human intelligence has tried to find ways to hedge against the busts, store the grain, try to avoid tragedy of the commons behavior.

Here we find the roots of our two major economic philosophies: capitalism (individual competition) and socialism (cooperation/ group selection/ inclusive fitness). A reasonable person would agree we need both but our current economic approach is substantially biased away from cooperation. With our dominant competition-biased faith, social goods are left to be created by an emergent property of a greedy, self-interested invisible hand that has objectively created a world full of pollution and inequity. This is what faith gets you, an absence of critical thinking and a propensity to do the same stupid stuff over and over again.

### **\*\* Digression #2 Growth, the sacred cow rules all**

The way local government works, only the council decides and directs. This makes it so all the diverse and possibly adaptive staff and public expertise on various matters must get strained through the biases and limits of only seven people who hold the power to hire and fire top staff who provide such advice. Why have top-educated staff that we are paying an arm and a

leg for if they only do what they are told, can't bring their expertise forward, and can't spend any time developing innovative, unsolicited advice?

Suggestion, use the former Japanese model where unsolicited employee feedback and input was valued and seen as adaptive. Allow staff 5% of time to think of better ways and have that be an ongoing agenda item.

In Santa Rosa as in Sonoma County, most decision makers and their Commission appointees are *business friendly*, i.e. capitalism biased. Inclusivity, equity, and full cost accounting, triple bottom line sustainability stay on the side as inconvenient truths to bypass in whatever ways possible. This is generally the dominant power structure here.

As part of the dominant paradigm, growth is hence viewed by cities as a panacea, a cure-all, a necessity. The absence of growth is seen as stagnation and death. No growth, less vibrant, less vital, less competitive with other cities... higher unemployment, no funding for services and maintenance.

Costs\*\*\* keep rising and hence a growth Ponzi scheme is required to pay for it all.

Yet, slavish allegiance to growth has proved to be the unsustainable undoing of the human race, everything about growth has acted to ruin the planet we depend on and to abuse people's and nation's fundamental human rights. It's a Greek tragedy, it's Fate; it's inevitable; we see the problems but our nature drives us to the negative outcome anyway.

IMHO, the above growth meme runs on unprovable faith-based assumptions. We're dealing with socially constructed faith here, not facts. If our paradigm is not sustainable nor inclusive, why don't we try another way? All growth needs to do is to account for the current population's needs, shoot for an S-curve carrying capacity. Offer taking less up front but a sustainable future as super-adaptive benefit...

Past population was not accounted for so now there is a major affordable housing deficit that can't be addressed by merely increasing market rate supply. Why? Because only the uber wealthy can afford median and market rate homes.

The current situation of boosting growth but not full cost accounting, triple, bottom line sustainability guarantees displacement of the 40% of city residents with DAC-level MHI and who are rent and cost burdened. Yet, the city is focused not on achieving a sustainable, S-curve carrying capacity future for all residents and staff but on seeking the unproven effects of trickle down from growth which has a built-in J-curve crash risk.

The city has a growth Ponzi scheme plan going, keep stoking growth to pay for employee retirement, 911, fire, and fill potholes that the surveys say we need. If growth stops, then all goes down the tubes, but if growth keeps going and does not succeed, J-curve crash. This is like running government by gambling or by stock market primitive faith in animal spirits.

City priorities appear to come from city-backed surveys; however, gov't-run-by-survey-response is a poor way to accurately assess local needs. The city needs demographic analysis where it is plain to see that 40% of the population is cost burdened. For residents the core issue here is systemic inequity and super high rent and goods costs. This core issue will not be solved or be addressed by stoking growth, on faith, for an elusive trickle-down payout that never comes, like a cargo cult.

Unfortunately, the primary survey responders and the primary voters want fire, 911 (safety and fear motivations), and potholes filled and if politicians want to be re-elected they need to cater to what will keep them in power, and once people get a draft of power, they want more.

IMO, the city seems to be on a particular track as to who is being served and what the overall goals of local government are. The sense of city will and inevitability to approve projects or to respond to safety fears is not matched by city will to address the needs of the bottom 40% where city decisions often enough get to no instead of yes. This Stone House hotel project fits that pattern, more of a faith in market capitalism than an intentional steering of the ship to a place of the greatest good for the greatest number.

Everybody is a sitting duck for a system that is not working for the greatest good and even as we have to power to change and direct to a more adaptive future, we feel we can't. Greek Tragedy 102.

What if every equity idea had such strong city backing as economic development projects like this hotel? What a wonderful world this would be.

### \*\*\*What is driving increased city costs? Let's see what AI says....

"The main cost drivers for cities fall into four primary categories: **Labor & Benefits, Legacy Costs, Infrastructure & Maintenance, and Public Safety**. Because municipal governments are fundamentally service-based, their operating budgets are heavily tied to people, aging assets, and contractual obligations.

#### 1. Personnel (Labor, Wages, and Healthcare)

Municipalities are massive employers. Payroll and employee-related expenses typically consume the largest chunk of a city's general fund—often accounting for 50% to 70% of total operating budgets.

- **Salaries:** Keeping pace with regional inflation and competitive labor markets.
- **Healthcare Costs:** Escalating premiums for active employees and dependents.

#### 2. Legacy Costs (Pensions and Debt)

Long-term obligations and accumulated debt eat up significant portions of a city's annual budget, with some major cities spending a quarter or more of their expenditures just servicing these legacy liabilities.

- **Pension Contributions:** Required payments to employee retirement systems, which fluctuate based on market performance and demographic changes.
- **Debt Service:** Principal and interest payments on bonds sold to finance previous capital projects, such as schools, parks, and civic buildings.

#### 3. Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance

Cities are responsible for vast, physical networks of built environments. Failing to budget for the life-cycle costs of these assets often results in compounding financial strain. [1]

- **Roads and Transit:** Routine paving, pothole repair, and maintaining bridges or public transit fleets.
- **Water and Sewer:** Upgrading or replacing aging, underground utility networks.
- **Public Buildings:** Roof replacements, HVAC upgrades, and general upkeep of libraries

and recreation centers.

#### **4. Public Safety and Emergency Services**

Police, fire, and emergency medical services are the most significant operational line items for the vast majority of local governments.

- **Workforce Expansion:** Adding new officers or firefighters to respond to population growth.
- **Equipment and Gear:** High capital costs for patrol vehicles, fire engines, and protective gear.

#### **5. Unfunded Mandates and External Pressures**

Cities are also bound by external cost pressures:

- **Unfunded Mandates:** Requirements imposed by state or federal governments that require local implementation without providing adequate funding to cover the costs.
- **Social and Demographic Shifts:** Rising demand for human services, such as homeless outreach, mental health resources, and public assistance programs, which disproportionately impact city budgets during economic downturns.”

"We don't know where we're going but we have to stick together in case somebody gets there."  
Ken Kesey