

RESOLUTION NO.

RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA
MAKING FINDINGS AND DETERMINATIONS AND APPROVING A MAJOR
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW 70-ROOM
STONEHOUSE HOTEL AND ASSOCIATED SITE IMPROVEMENTS - LOCATED AT 3331
AND 3555 HIGHWAY 12- FILE NUMBER PRJ25-001 (CUP25-001)

WHEREAS, an application was submitted requesting the approval of a Conditional Use Permit and Hillside Development Permit for a new 70-room hotel building (Stonehouse Hotel), renovation of the existing Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, and other related site improvements, to be located at 3331 and 3555 Highway 12, also identified as Sonoma County Assessor's Parcel Number(s) 181-120-034 and 181-120-033; and

WHEREAS, a Neighborhood Meeting was held on July 15, 2024, at which project information was presented and members of the public were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns regarding the proposed project; and

WHEREAS, formal project plans and entitlement applications were submitted to the City on January 8, 2025, and a Notice of Application for the proposed project was mailed to surrounding property owners and tenants on April 4, 2025, in accordance with the noticing requirements of the Zoning Code; and

WHEREAS, on May 28, 2026, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the application at which all those wishing to be heard were allowed to speak or present written comments and other materials; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has considered the application, the staff reports, oral and written, the General Plan and zoning on the subject property, the testimony, written comments, and other materials presented at the public hearing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that after consideration of the reports, documents, testimony, and other materials presented, and pursuant to City Code Section 20-52.050 (Conditional Use Permit), the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Rosa finds and determines:

- A. The proposed use is allowed within the applicable zoning district and complies with all other applicable provisions of this Zoning Code. The site is zoned Planned Development District (PD 0441), which is consistent with the Retail and Business Services General Plan land use designation. Pursuant to the approved PD 0441 Policy Statement, hotels, motels and related uses are allowed subject to Conditional Use Permit approval. The Project provides 77 vehicle parking spaces and nine bicycle spaces, meeting parking requirements for the proposed 75 room hotel under Chapter 20-36 of the Zoning Code. The Project is also conditioned to comply with applicable standards related to lighting, tree replacement, public improvements, and other City requirements; and

- B. The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan 2050. The project site is located in an area designated as Retail and Business Services. The Project aligns with the goals and policies of the General Plan by continuing an existing commercial operation and preserving the historic Stonehouse Hotel building in its entirety. The Project will provide an increase in jobs and economic opportunity related to hospitality. The new hotel building is set back from and subordinate to the existing Stonehouse Hotel building on the highway-facing elevation, ensuring the historic structure remains the primary visual anchor of the site. The Project's proposed landscaping along Highway 12 will enhance and strengthen the corridor's visual quality. Additionally, the Project is not located within an adopted specific plan area; and
- C. The design, location, size, and operating characteristics of the proposed activity would be compatible with the existing and future land uses in the vicinity. The Project site provides setbacks, circulation and design features compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. The hotel will be setback 20 feet from the rear property line and setback by more than 20 feet from all other property lines, consistent with setback requirements stated within Chapter 20-32: Hillside Development Standards. The Project proposes 77 vehicle parking spaces and 9 bicycle spaces, which meets the minimum vehicle and bicycle parking requirements set forth in Chapter 20-36 of the Zoning Code. The Traffic Study, conducted by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, (LLG) Engineers, concluded that the Project would not result in significant traffic impacts and that anticipated vehicle trips fall within acceptable thresholds. The new hotel building's three stepped floor levels follow the rising natural grade of the hillside. Pursuant to the property's Policy Statement, the maximum building height is 35 feet. The proposed hotel height is 34 feet, with an architectural tower element extending to a maximum height of 36 feet. The Policy Statement allows towers or other architectural features to extend above 35 feet, subject to Design Review approval. The Project will take advantage of the existing tree groves and the natural hillside topography to screen the development from adjacent residential neighbors. The proposed 5-foot gabion and wood wall along the Highway 12 frontage, combined with proposed street trees and shrubs, further reduces the hotel's visual prominence from the public right-of-way. Additional improvements include enhancements to public facilities along Highway 12, such stormwater management systems and lighting; and
- D. The site is physically suitable for the type, density, and intensity of use being proposed, including access, utilities, and the absence of physical constraints in that the site is located in a developed area with access to City services. The Project has been reviewed by City staff and conditioned to include improvements as necessary to support the Project and its associated uses. The Project includes 70-room hotel building and associated improvements on a partially developed 2-acre site. Pursuant to the Traffic Study, conducted by Linscott, Law & Greenspan, (LLG) Engineers, dated December 4, 2024, the Project is expected to generate approximately 599 daily trips, 35 additional AM peak hour trips and 44 PM peak hour trips. The additional trips associated with the proposed Project will not significantly impact the existing surrounding roadway network. The Traffic Study also evaluated the potential need for a southbound right-turn deceleration lane and a southbound departure acceleration lane at the site driveway and determined

that neither improvement is warranted due to the low volume of forecast peak hour right-turning traffic, confirming that existing access to the site from Highway 12 will be adequate. Further, a new gated entry for emergency vehicles is proposed along Sunridge Drive. All necessary utilities, including water, gas, and electric services, are available for the project site; and

- E. 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. Project plans have been thoroughly reviewed by City staff, including Planning, Building, Engineering Development Services, Traffic, and the Fire Department, to ensure compliance with applicable standards. The Traffic Study, conducted by LLG Engineers, has concluded that the Project will not significantly impact the existing surrounding roadway network. The Environmental Noise Impact Study, prepared by Yorke Engineering, dated October 2024, concluded that both the construction and operations phases of the Project were evaluated at the nearest sensitive receptor for excessive noise and vibration exposure. Temporary construction noise will be limited to daylight hours and would permanently cease upon completion of construction. Project operations would include typical on-site hotel equipment and amenities, such as pool equipment and outdoor guest areas, and would be required to comply with the City's Noise Ordinance. The Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Analysis, conducted by Yorke Engineering LLC., dated October 30, 2024, concluded that the Project would not directly or indirectly generate GHG emissions that would have a significant impact on the environment; and
- F. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15332, the Project qualifies for a Class 32 categorical exemption for infill development.

- 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.

- The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses because the project site is 2 acres in size.
- The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species.

The Biological Resources Assessment, prepared by FirstCarbon Solutions and dated October 31, 2025, concluded that special-status plant and wildlife species documented within the vicinity of the study area are unlikely or have no potential to occur on the Project site. No State or federally protected aquatic features are present on the site. Although mixed oak woodland may provide nesting habitat for common protected birds, the Project has been conditioned to require pre-construction nesting bird surveys and avoidance measures if construction occurs during the nesting season. These measures will ensure compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. Compliance with the Arborist Inventory Report and City Code Chapter 17-24 will also ensure consistency with the City's Tree Ordinance.

- 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 additional trips associated with the proposed Project will not significantly impact the existing surrounding roadway network. 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 of the Zoning Code, one vehicle parking space is required for each guest room. The Project proposes 75 rooms in total and 77 vehicle parking spaces.

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.

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

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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.

The Project also qualifies for streamlining pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 in that the Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and, as evidenced by the special studies prepared for the Project, the Project does not contain conditions, nor would it result in any of the following effects:

- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

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.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Conditional Use Permit is subject to all applicable provisions of the Zoning Code, including Section 20-54.100 (Permit Revocation or Modification).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Conditional Use Permit for the construction of a 70-room hotel building, renovation of the existing Stonehouse building into a five-room boutique hotel, and associated site improvements, to be located at 3331 and 3555 Highway 12, is approved subject to each of the following conditions:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL:

1. Compliance with the latest adopted ordinances, resolutions, policies, and fees adopted by the City Council at the time of building permit review and approval. All fees must be paid prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local codes. Failure to comply may result in issuance of a citation and/or revocation of approval.

EXPIRATION AND EXTENSION:

3. This Conditional Use Permit shall be valid for a two-year period. If construction has not begun or if an approved use has not commenced within two (2) years from date of approval, this approval shall automatically expire and shall be invalid unless an application for extension is filed prior to expiration.
4. If implemented within the initial approval period in accordance with all conditions of approval, this Conditional Use Permit shall be valid for the duration of use.

ENGINEERING DIVISION:

5. Comply with all conditions as specified in the Engineering Development Services Exhibit A, dated April 16, 2026, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

PLANNING DIVISION:

6. Prior to issuance of building permits, the Project shall obtain Major Design Review approval for the proposed building architecture, site design, landscaping, lighting, and related improvements. The building materials, elevations, and appearance submitted for building permit review shall be consistent with the final Design Review approval.

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7. Compliance with City Graffiti Abatement Program Standards for Graffiti Removal (City Code 10-17.080).
8. Compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance: Chapter 17-16.
9. No independently operated restaurant, bar, lounge, or food and beverage establishment open to the general public is approved as part of this Conditional Use Permit. Any expansion of food and beverage service beyond accessory hotel operations shall require additional City review and approval, which may include an amendment to the Conditional Use Permit and/or Planned Development Policy Statement.
10. The Project shall comply with City Code Section 21-08, development requirements relating to public art.
11. PROJECT DETAILS:
 - All project details shall be in accordance with the restrictions and limitations of the City Zoning and Uniform Building Codes, as well as the City's Design Review Guidelines.
 - The design of all fencing, sound walls, carports, trash enclosures, and similar accessory site elements shall be compatible with the architecture of main buildings and shall use similar materials. The design must be approved by the Planning Division prior to issuance of a building permit.
 - All roof appurtenances, accessory equipment, and meters must be totally screened from public view by an architecturally design element approved by the Design Review Board or Planning Division.
 - All outdoor storage of materials or refuse bins/cans shall be maintained within a completely screened structure or area. The design of the screened structure or area shall be approved by the Planning Division prior to issuance of a building permit.
12. TREE PRESERVATION:
 - Tree Preservation notes and protection during construction notes shall be shown on the improvement plans and building plans. The tree driplines shall also be shown on each drawing with the attendant protection instructions.
 - Prior to issuance of a grading or building permit for any clearing, excavation, construction, or other work on the site, a protection zone shall be established to protect natural vegetation and trees from construction activities. The following conditions and restrictions shall apply:
 - i. The zone shall encompass the "protected perimeter" which shall be either the root zone or other limit as established in this approval.

- ii. The zone shall be delineated with a brightly colored construction fence. Such fences shall remain continuously in place for the duration of all work undertaken on the site.
 - iii. No storage or construction activities (including trenching, grading or filling) shall be permitted within the protected zone.
 - iv. No burning or use of equipment with an open flame shall occur near or within the protected perimeter.
 - v. All brush, earth, and other debris shall be removed in a manner which prevents injury to the protected trees and/or shrubs.
 - vi. No oil, gas, chemicals, or other substances that may be harmful to trees shall be stored or dumped within the protected perimeter or any other location from which substances might enter the perimeter of a protected tree.
- The contractor(s) shall be notified in writing by the developer of the "Protection Zone." Copies of the letter shall be provided to the Planning and Building Divisions prior to issuance of a building or grading permit for any site work.
 - The protection zone delineated with the brightly colored construction fence shall be posted with signs which state "Tree/Vegetation Protection Zone -- No Construction or Storage Permitted."
 - Irrigation systems and plant varieties which require regular watering shall not be permitted within the dripline of an Oak tree which is to be preserved.
 - No concrete or asphalt paving or compaction of soil shall be permitted within the root zones of protected trees.
 - Any special work, including mitigation, within the "Protection Zone" must be done under the supervision of a City approved certified arborist.
13. Tree Replacement Program. A person owning or controlling a development project shall be required to replace trees and heritage trees approved for removal as part of the approval of the project. Additionally, each protected tree removed or damaged shall be replaced.
- The Project shall provide 108 replacement trees, through a combination of on-site planting and approved in-lieu payment, consistent with the Arborist Inventory Report and City Code Chapter 17-24.
 - If construction is initiated during the avian nesting season (February 1- August 31), the project applicant shall 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. A qualified Biologist will delineate the avoidance buffer using Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing, pin flags, and/or yellow caution tape. No construction/maintenance activities or other foot traffic is allowed to occur within the avoidance buffer(s). The ESA buffer zone shall be maintained around the active nest site(s) until the qualified Biologist determines that the young have fledged and are foraging independently. 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 have fledged.

14. LANDSCAPING:

- All required landscaping and irrigation must be installed prior to occupancy per the approved final plans.
- Construction drawings submitted for issuance of a building permit shall include final landscape and irrigation plans, except where not required.
- All landscaping must be continuously maintained in a healthy and attractive condition, free of weeds and debris, in accordance with the approved plans. Dead and dying plant materials shall be replaced with healthy specimens as necessary.
- Street trees will be required and shall be planted by the developer. Selection will be made from the City's approved Master Street Tree Plant List in coordination with the City Parks Division. Planting shall be done in accordance with the City "Standards and Specifications for Planting Parkway Trees." Copies of the Street Tree List and the Planting Standards are available at the Parks Division office.

15. LIGHTING:

- All exterior lighting shall be shown and specified on the plans submitted for issuance of a building permit in accordance with the Design Review approval.
- Light sources shall be concealed from public view.
- All lighting shall be directed toward the subject property and away from adjacent properties.
- The mounting height of lighting fixtures in parking and storage areas shall not exceed 16 feet in height. Lower mounting heights are encouraged.

16. PARKING:

- The parking lot shall be constructed to City standards. The parking lot shall be striped according to City standards and all handicapped and compact spaces shall be identified and marked accordingly.
- Bicycle parking shall be provided in accordance with Zoning Code requirements. The location and number of spaces shall be shown on the site plan submitted for issuance of a building permit.

17. SIGNING:

- No exterior signs, banners, or the like are approved with this permit. A planning sign permit application is required for all signs.
- Sign permit approval shall be obtained prior to application for a building permit.
- Building permits for sign installations shall be separate permits from other building permits issued for construction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission finds and determines this approval is granted based on the applicability and validity of the conditions of approval set forth below. If any condition is determined to be invalid, this approval would not have been granted without the imposition of other conditions necessary to achieve the purposes and intent of this approval. The Project shall comply with all conditions of approval and be operated in accordance with the approved plans.

REGULARLY PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of Santa Rosa on the 28th day of May, 2026 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

APPROVED: _____
KAREN WEEKS, CHAIR

ATTEST: _____
JESSICA JONES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Exhibit A – Engineering Development Services Exhibit “A,” dated April 16, 2026.

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