

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT FOR DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

**June 3, 2021**

**PROJECT TITLE**

The Santa Rosa Farm Group, LLC  
Cannabis Facility

**APPLICANT**

The Santa Rosa Farm Group, LLC

**ADDRESS/LOCATION**

800 Yolanda Ave.

**PROPERTY OWNER**

800 Yolanda LLC

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER**

044-091-063

**FILE NUMBER**

PRJ17-068 (CUP17-123, DR17-078)

**APPLICATION DATE**

11/01/2017

**APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE**

March 23, 2021

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS**

Preliminary Design Review

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Final Design Review

**PROJECT SITE ZONING**

IL (Light Industrial)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION**

Light Industry

**PROJECT PLANNER**

Andrew Trippel

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approval

Agenda Item #8.1  
For Design Review Board Meeting of June 3, 2021

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

TO: CHAIR WEIGL AND MEMBERS OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

FROM: ANDREW TRIPPEL, ACTING SUPERVISING PLANNER  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: THE SANTA ROSA FARM GROUP, LLC

AGENDA ACTION: Resolution

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Design Review Board, by resolution, approve Preliminary Design Review for development of a proposed commercial Cannabis facility that includes demolition of existing structures and construction of a 3-story, ± 116,700 square-foot (sf) industrial building with onsite improvements including hardscape for vehicle and pedestrian uses, and landscaping, including tree plantings as mitigation for removal of existing trees. Cannabis Cultivation (86,050 sf), Manufacturing Level 1 (non-volatile) and Level 2 (volatile) (21,505 sf), and Distribution (Type 11) (8,070 sf), with Testing laboratory (1,085 sf) land uses approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 12052 on April 8, 2021, on an approximately 5.5-acre project site, located at 800 Yolanda Ave., also identified as Sonoma County Assessor's Parcel Number 044-091-063.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa Farm Group, LLC Cannabis Facility, requests Preliminary Design Review of a project consisting of demolition of existing structures and construction of a new three-story, ± 116,700 square foot (sf) industrial building with onsite improvements including hardscape for vehicle and pedestrian uses, and landscaping, including tree plantings as mitigation for removal of existing trees. Cannabis Cultivation (86,050 sf), Manufacturing Level 1 (non-volatile) and Level 2 (volatile) (21,505 sf), and Distribution (Type 11) (8,070 sf), with Testing laboratory (1,085 sf) land uses approved by Planning Commission Resolution No. 12052 on April 8, 2021, on an approximately 5.5-acre project site. The proposed project would redevelop an existing industrially-zone site that has evolved from small-scale agricultural and residential uses.

## BACKGROUND

### 1. Project Description

The Santa Rosa Farm Group, LLC would redevelop an IL (Light Industrial)-zoned parcel for a ± 116,700-square-foot cannabis facility (“the Project”). The Project includes removal of the existing residential building and ancillary buildings (i.e., sheds and garage) on the Project site. Proposed industrial development would support operation of the following approved Cannabis land uses at the facility (see also Attachment 6):

<b>Approved Cannabis Land Use</b>	<b>Sq. Ft.</b>
Cultivation > 5,0001 SF	86,050
Manufacturing Level 1 (non-volatile) and Manufacturing Level 2 (volatile)	21,505
Distribution (Type 11)	8,070
Testing laboratory*	1,085

\* Testing laboratory is a permitted use in IL zoning districts.

The Project site is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Yolanda Avenue and Petaluma Hill Road (Attachment 2 and Attachment 7). The eastern half of the parcel includes undeveloped land, which is regularly disked, and a gravel access driveway from Petaluma Hill Road. The western portion of the parcel is currently improved with the developed residence and ancillary buildings, as well as approximately 3 acres of gravel cover.

The Project would be limited to the developed areas of the Project site. Proposed site modifications would include construction of the building, perimeter wall installation, small tree and shrub removal, and grading and utility trenching.

**Image 1: Project Site**



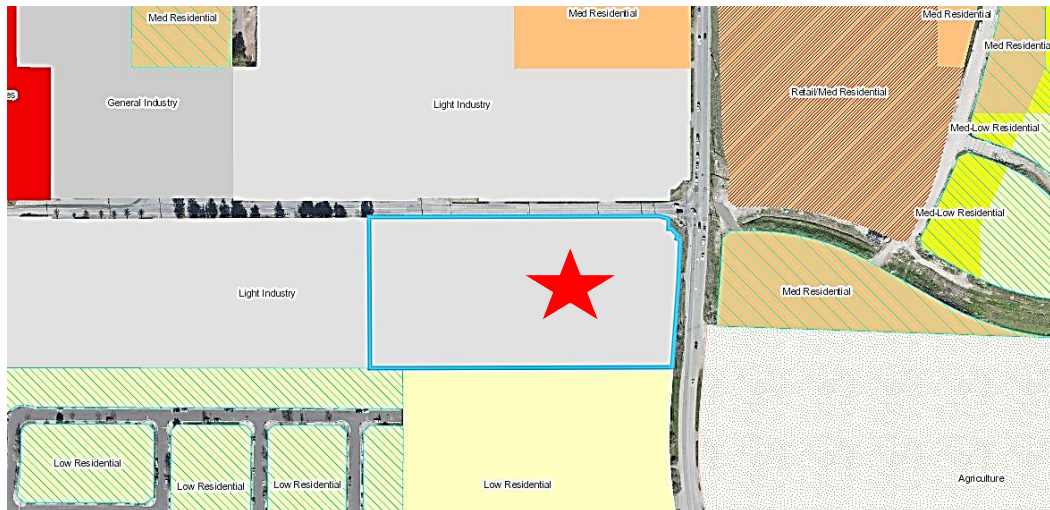
Source: City GIS, February 2021

## 2. Existing and Surrounding Land Uses

Existing	Light Industry
North	Light Industry, Retail and Business Services
South	Low Density Residential
East	Retail and Business Services, Residential, Agriculture
West	Light Industry

The project site is currently used for residential purposes. It is developed with a primary single-family dwelling unit and multiple accessory structures. Prior to 2005, the site supported both residential and light industrial shipping and outdoor storage uses. It was originally developed and used for agriculture. Surrounding the site are a mix of land uses ranging from light industrial and commercial services to the west and north, to low- and medium-residential uses to the east and south. Undeveloped land in these areas is either approved for residential development or zoned for residential development with some commercially zoned vacant land to the east.

**Image 1: Existing and Surrounding Land Use**



Source: City GIS, February 2021

## 3. Project History

May 3, 2017	Pre-application Neighborhood Meeting was held.
May 4, 2017	Concept Design Review conducted.
November 1, 2017	Project applications submitted.
June 29, 2020	Notice of Public Review and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Santa Rosa Farm Group – Cannabis Cultivation, Manufacture, and Distribution Facility Project was circulated.
April 8, 2021	Planning Commission approves Mitigated Negative Declaration, MMRP, and CUP Resolution No. 12052.
May 21, 2021	Design Review Board public hearing noticing distributed.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

ANALYSIS

Consistency with the City's [2035 General Plan](#) and applicable Design Guidelines, and compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance ([Title 17, Ch. 17-16](#)), Tree Ordinance ([Title 17, Ch. 17-24](#)), and applicable regulations contained in [Title 20 – Zoning](#), are required.

1. General Plan

The project site's General Plan Land Use designation is Light Industry, which accommodates light industrial land uses including manufacturing with minor nuisances. IL (Light Industrial) zoning districts implement the Light Industry land use designation.

The proposed project would implement these key General Plan goals:

LAND USE AND LIVABILITY	
<b>LUL-A</b>	<b>Goal</b> – Foster a compact rather than a scattered development pattern in order to reduce travel, energy, land, and materials consumption while promoting greenhouse gas emission reductions citywide.
<b>LUL-K</b>	<b>Goal</b> – Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.
ECONOMIC VITALITY	
<b>EV-B</b>	<b>Goal</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.
<b>EV-D</b>	<b>Goal</b> – Maintain the economic vitality of the downtown, business parks, offices and industrial areas.

2. Zoning

Redevelopment of the project site is regulated by Zoning Code development standards and must be consistent with Design Guidelines 3.4 for Business and Light Industrial Parks and Buildings.

<u>DIVISION 2: ZONING DISTRICTS AND ALLOWABLE LAND USES</u>	
<a href="#">§ 20-24.030</a> – IL Zoning District Allowable Land Uses	CUP and MUP approvals granted
<a href="#">§ 20-24.040</a> – Setbacks	Complies
<a href="#">§ 20-24.040</a> – Lot Coverage	CUP approval granted
<a href="#">§ 20-24.040</a> – Building Height	Complies
<u>DIVISION 3: SITE PLANNING AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS</u>	
<a href="#">§ 20-30.060</a> – Fences, walls, and screening	Requires Design Review approval
<a href="#">§ 20-30.080</a> – Outdoor lighting	Requires Design Review approval

<a href="#">§ 20-30.110</a> – Vision triangle	Complies
<a href="#">§ 20-30.120</a> – Solid waste/recycling facilities	Complies
<a href="#">§ 20-34.030</a> – Landscape plans	Requires Design Review approval
<a href="#">CH 20-36</a> – Parking and Loading Standards	CUP approval granted for 47% parking reduction (85 spaces provided)

### Analysis

[§ 20-30.060 – Fences, walls, and screening](#). The project proposes wall and fence systems, as well as landscape screening, to enhance site security and support the project's overall compatibility with residential land uses to the south.

[§ 20-30.080 – Outdoor lighting](#). Proposed exterior lighting installations are shown on the Exterior Lighting Plan and a photovoltaic study is provided. The project's approved CUP resolution does require that the project comply with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and that 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.

[§ 20-34.030 – Landscape plans](#). Proposed landscaping includes tree replantings and installation of various shrubs and groundcovers to fully landscape setback areas, buildings, and vehicular and pedestrian paths of travel. The project's approved CUP resolution does require submittal of a Tree Mitigation Plan proposing a replanting of 225 15-gallon trees, of which 138 must be Coast Redwood native trees, as mitigation for the approved tree removal.

### Design Guidelines

Concept Design Review by the Design Review Board was completed on May 4, 2017. Recommendations included:

1. ensure that design encompasses all sides of building;
2. create more attractive perimeter wall design and tie to building elevations;
3. use of materials is important and aluminum is a nice choice;
4. does not need to be overparked, be sure to include bike parking;
5. reconsider windowless facility to ensure light for employees and include an outdoor break area; and
6. building size is appropriate – articulation and materials can help reduce the massing.

The applicant responded to these comments (Attachment 13) by updating the building design to include four-sided development and improving the perimeter wall design. The building continues to incorporate aluminum materials, and it incorporates 85 parking spaces, including required short- and long-term bicycle parking spaces and change facilities. The applicant has chosen to not incorporate windows in order to avoid light pollution due to overnight cultivation activities, visual exposure to neighbors and surrounding businesses, as well as to support security



protocols and improve security outcomes. The project will continue to incorporate articulation and materials to reduce massing per DRB direction.

The project's design concept should promote superior design by reflecting thoughtful considerations and responses to the parameters outlined in the Framework of Design Review. The project should demonstrate consistency with applicable design guidelines. The table below summarizes the design concept's consistency with the Framework and applicable design guidelines (Sections [3.4-Business and Light Industrial Parks](#), [4.1-Landscaping](#), and [4.2-Off-street Parking](#)).

<b>Site: Natural and Built Environment</b>	Section 3.4: II.A.1-3, II.B.3-5
Retains ± 50% of site as undeveloped area. Develops areas where prior development occurred. Mitigates tree removal associated with development.	
<b>Architecture</b>	Section 3.4: III.A.1, III.B.1-4, III.C.1-2, III.D.1, D.3, D.5-6
Design concept generates visual interest in large-scale industrial building and is appropriate for the proposed land uses. Building form and massing provide an identifiable expression of proposed Light Industrial uses.	
<b>Landscaping</b>	Section 3.4: II.D.2, II.E.1-4; Section 4.1: II.1-14
Proposed landscaping provides visual enhancement of site and visual screening where appropriate. Drought-tolerant, low-water plantings are introduced, removal of existing trees is mitigated in part with replanting of 70+ trees of different species. Retention of undeveloped areas preserves overall site characteristics and relationship to existing context.	
<b>Placemaking/Livability</b>	Section 3.4: II.C.1, C.4, C.6
Site plan, landscaping, building design, and placement contribute to existing Yolanda Avenue light industrial development, anchor this light industrial district's endpoint at Petaluma Hill Road, and employ site and design concepts to strengthen a sense of place at this juncture of industrial, residential, and commercial land uses.	
<b>Sustainability</b>	(No specific Design Guidelines)
Site landscaping and the constrained development pattern contribute to sustainability goals, which operational characteristics would employ water and energy conservation strategies to enhance sustainability.	
<b>Overall Design Concept</b>	Section 3.4: I.A-F, I.H, I.I
The proposed design integrates site characteristics, proposed land uses, and surrounding light industrial and commercial land development and uses, while protecting adjacent residential land uses to the maximum extent feasible. Building and landscape designs create visually interesting development.	

## 1. Neighborhood Comments

A required pre-application Neighborhood Meeting was held on May 3, 2017. At least 22 people attended the meeting and provided comment. A petition entitled "Harvest Park Neighbors Against Commercial Medical Cannabis Cultivation and Processing Plant Known as 800 Yolanda LLC" signed by 23 people was also submitted to

Planning Staff (Attachment 11). Concerns expressed at the Neighborhood Meeting and in the petition include:

- Loss of neighborhood tranquility
- Increased risk of crime and violence due to cannabis land use
- Loss of privacy and aesthetics from implementation of security measures
- Odor, groundwater contamination, and increased fire risk
- Potential decrease in property values
- Preference for 2-story development, as opposed to 3-story

Planning staff understands the concerns expressed by neighborhood residents. In response, it notes that (1) the proposed uses are allowable land uses in the IL zoning district with conditional use approval; (2) the project has been subject to environmental review under CEQA and a Mitigated Negative Declaration has been adopted; and (3) the project has been reviewed for compliance with all applicable regulations and is appropriately conditioned to ensure compliance.

In addition to the Neighborhood Meeting, the applicant hosted a community meeting at the project site in August 2017 to discuss the project, design revisions, and neighbor concerns. And the project's Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was published for public review on June 29, 2020. Noticing was mailed to property owners located more than 600 feet from the project site, and onsite signage was posted. Comments were received from nearby property owners in response to this review opportunity (see Environmental Impact section.)

## 2. Public Improvements/On-Site Improvements

Required off-site public improvements would include an expansion of Yolanda Avenue to allow for installation of an additional eastbound lane and a bike lane, curb and gutter, landscape strip and sidewalk. A Public Utility Easement would be granted and overhead utilities would be undergrounded. *In lieu* fees may be accepted for portions of required public improvements. Onsite improvements include construction of a new industrial building, hardscape for vehicle and pedestrian uses, and landscaping, including tree plantings as mitigation for removal of existing trees.

## FISCAL IMPACT

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Energy, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, and Wildfire. These impacts would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through implementation of recommended mitigation measures contained in the adopted Mitigated Negative



Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which identifies the timing of, and the agency or agencies responsible for, enforcement and monitoring of each mitigation measure to be implemented to reduce potentially significant impacts to less than significant levels, or through compliance with existing Municipal Code requirements or City standards (see Attachments 3 and 4).

#### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable

#### 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.

#### ISSUES

At the conclusion of Planning review, there are no issues remaining that have not been mitigated or conditioned by project approvals.

#### REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL

Pursuant to Section 20-52.030(J), the Design Review Board must make certain findings to approve Preliminary Design Review. Staff analyses of required findings are provided below.

1. The design and layout of the proposed development is of superior quality, and is consistent with the General Plan, and applicable specific plan, applicable Zoning Code standards and requirements, the City's Design Guidelines, architectural criteria for special areas, and other applicable City requirements (e.g., City policy statements and development plans).

The site and building designs reflect the project's location in an area designated as Light Industry on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, which is intended to accommodate light industrial, warehousing and heavy commercial uses; the property is not located with the boundary of a specific plan area; the proposed development is in compliance with development standards pursuant to Zoning Code Chapters 20-24 and 20-46; and the building design is unique to Santa Rosa with materials wrapped on all sides of the structure and visually interesting elevations fronting both Petaluma Hill Road and Yolanda Avenue.

2. The design is appropriate for the use and location of the proposed development and achieves the goals, review criteria and findings for approval as set forth in the Framework of Design Review (Design Guidelines, Introduction, Subsection C).

The modern design of the industrial building is unique to Santa Rosa. The site plan includes two entry points from Yolanda Avenue and 85 parking spaces.

3. The design and layout of the proposed development will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments.

The site plan includes two entry points on Yolanda Avenue that will avoid unnecessary vehicle stacking for employees entering from the east. A parking analysis, prepared by Fehr & Peers, dated August 23, 2019, concluded that, while the Zoning Code requires 120 parking spaces for the use, the 85 spaces provided on the site plan would be adequate to accommodate the estimated peak parking demand for the project of 75 spaces. A parking reduction was approved by the Planning Commission on April 8, 2021.

4. The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The modern industrial design will enhance the design aesthetic of existing commercial/industrial development in the Yolanda Avenue light industrial district, while the building setback, rear wall design with limited fenestration, and boundary wall with landscaping ensure compatibility with residential uses adjacent to the project site.

5. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, visiting public, and its neighbors through the appropriate use of materials, texture, and color, and would remain aesthetically appealing and be appropriately maintained.

6. The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

The site is in an area that is designated for light industrial and commercial uses; the site is surrounded to the north and west by similar commercial/industrial uses, and to the east and south by undeveloped land designated for residential uses; the project is required to comply with the City's Noise and Outdoor Lighting ordinances; and all utilities and emergency services are available in the area.

7. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

On April 8, 2021, the Planning Commission adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration that considered the full scope of the project.

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Disclosure Form
Attachment 2	Vicinity and Neighborhood Context Maps
Attachment 3	The Santa Rosa Farm Group Cannabis Cultivation, Manufacture, and Distribution Facility, 800 Yolanda Avenue, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California, Mitigated Negative Declaration / Initial Study dated June 2020 with Errata Sheet and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)
Attachment 4	The Santa Rosa Farm Group Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) dated received February 1, 2021 with Errata Sheet
Attachment 5	The Santa Rosa Farm Group – Responses to Comments on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration dated September 10, 2020
Attachment 6	Revised Project Description dated received March 23, 2021
Attachment 7	Revised Project Site Plan dated received March 27, 2021
Attachment 8	Revised Parking Analysis, Fehr & Peers, dated March 22, 2021
Attachment 9	Certified Odor Mitigation Plan, TEP Engineering, dated November 30, 2020
Attachment 10	Tree Preservation and Mitigation Report prepared by Horticultural Associates dated December 1, 2017
Attachment 11	Harvest Park Neighbors Against Commercial Cannabis Cultivation and Processing Plant Known at 800 Yolanda LLC received during Neighborhood Meeting held on May 3, 2017
Attachment 12	Santa Rosa Farm Group Entitlement Terms letter dated March 17, 2021
Attachment 13	Applicant response to DRB comments dated received April 1, 2021
Attachment 14	Planning Commission Resolutions 12051 and 12052 dated April 8, 2021
Resolution 1	Preliminary Design Review

### CONTACT

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