



Consideration of Massage Ordinance Amendments and LiveScan Authorization Resolution

March 10, 2026

Enforcement Overview

Across the country, illicit massage enforcement looks very different:

- Some jurisdictions are still targeting the women working at the IMB's and arresting them for misdemeanor prostitution charges.
- Some jurisdictions are investigating the owner/operators, and bringing charges of Pimping, Pandering, and financial crimes.
- Some jurisdictions simply ignore the problem altogether.

Enforcement Overview

Santa Rosa Police, in coordination with Code Enforcement, are employing a three-prong approach:

Updated City Ordinance to make it more difficult for bad actors to operate

- Joint Code Enforcement/SRPD inspections of Illicit Massage Businesses (IMB)
- Communication between Code Enforcement and SRPD on specific locations and owners
- Denial of Massage Establishment Certification applications

Criminal Enforcement of owners/operators

- Felony arrests for pimping, pandering, wage theft, money laundering, and conspiracy

Landlord Engagement

- Work with non-profit and municipalities in drafting Landlord Engagement Letters
- Seeks voluntary compliance by the landlords to remove the IMB's from their properties

Ordinance Background

- In March of 2025, Ordinance adopted modernizing massage establishment regulations and requiring them to register and receive Massage Establishment Certifications.
- Businesses providing massage services were required to apply by October 18, 2025.
 - 78 applications submitted
 - 36 issued certifications
 - 39 remain in various stages of review. Applications are returned to the applicant for clarifying information, corrections, or incomplete submittal.
 - 28 Inspections have been completed by Code Enforcement staff and passed for full compliance
 - 1 in active denial process, others are pending

Ordinance Amendments

Live Scan

- Formally authorizes the City to apply for "Applicant Agency" status - prerequisite for accessing confidential state and federal records.
- Meets Federal Statute allowing the FBI to share criminal history data with local government for licensing purposes
- Empowers the Code Enforcement "Reviewing Officer" with the data necessary to link background check results directly to permit eligibility.
- Aligns City Code to FBI PL92-544 criteria - prerequisite for sharing criminal records with local governments

Ordinance Amendments

Certificate and Operational Requirements

- Formalizes the link between background checks and permit eligibility while simplifying the application path via Zoning Clearances.
- Establishes transparent, objective criteria for the approval or denial of massage establishment permits.
- Adds specific health and safety requirements for the use and storage of liquids, creams, and preparations.

Ordinance Amendments

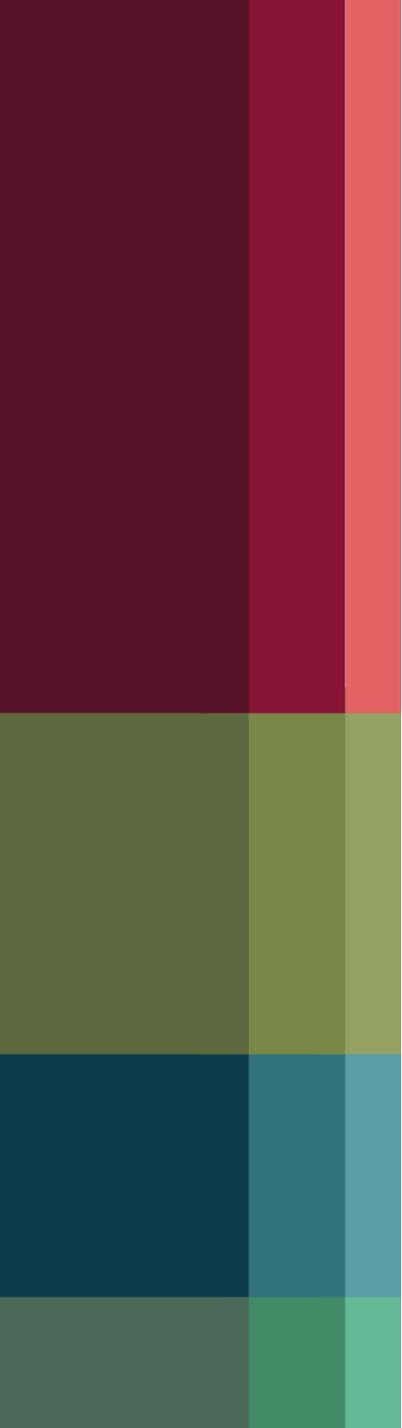
The proposed amendments heard by the Planning Commission on February 26, 2026:

- Adds the following defined terms: “Owner,” “Ownership,” Partner,” and “Partnership”;
- Adds clarifying language pertaining to lease agreements;
- Adds clarifying language pertaining to Zoning Clearances as they apply to cooperative business arrangements;
- Adds clarifying language pertaining to approval, denial and revocation of applications;
- Adds clarifying language pertaining to registration renewal; and
- Adds clarifying language pertaining to General Operational Requirements.

Recommendation

The Planning Commission and Planning and Economic Development Departments recommends that the City Council:

1. Approve the first reading and introduce an ordinance entitled Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Rosa amending title 20 of the Santa Rosa City Code by amending chapter 20-49 entitled Massage Regulation and Massage Establishment Registration, to amend City Code Chapter 20-49 pertaining to Massage Regulation and Massage Establishment Registration.
2. Adopt a resolution to authorize City staff to access summary criminal history information (“Live Scan” requests) for individuals seeking Massage Establishment Certifications by applying for “Applicant Agency” status from the Department of Justice.



Questions?