

RESOLUTION NUMBER: DRPB-RES-2025-_____

RESOLUTION OF THE DESIGN REVIEW AND PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA APPROVING DESIGN REVIEW FOR THE ELM TREE STATION PROJECT, LOCATED AT 874 N WRIGHT ROAD, ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 035-063-001, AND -002, FILE NO. DR21-069 (PRJ21-033)

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2021, an application was submitted requesting the approval of Design Review for the Elm Tree Station project, which includes the construction of a new gas station with extended hours of operation, two general retail uses across two buildings, one apartment unit, and an outdoor amenity (Project) to be located at 874 N Wright Road, also identified as Sonoma County Assessor's Parcel Numbers 035-063-001 & 002 (Project Site);

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2021, the application was deemed complete for processing by City Staff; and

WHEREAS, on September 13, 2022, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. ORD- 2022- 010 (Gas Station Prohibition Ordinance), which amended Title 20 of the Santa Rosa City Code to prohibit new gas station land uses and to prohibit the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure for existing gas station land uses; and

WHEREAS, Section 10 of the Gas Station Ban Ordinance states, "Any application to permit a new gas station land use that has been deemed complete for processing by the effective date of this ordinance is exempt from this Ordinance and may continue to be processed and considered by the appropriate review authority"; the proposed Project meets this criterion because it was deemed complete for processing by City Staff prior to the effective date of the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, on April 10, 2025, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing to review the Conditional Use Permit application and Addendum to an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration, and adopted Resolution No. PC-RES-2025-007 denying the Conditional Use Permit; and

WHEREAS, on April 21, 2025, the applicant appealed the decision of the Planning Commission to deny the Project; and

WHEREAS, on August 19, 2025, the City Council held a duly noticed public hearing to review the appeal of the Planning Commission's denial, and adopted Resolution No. CC-2025-140 adopting the Addendum to the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and Resolution No. CC-2025-141 accepting the appeal and approving the Conditional Use Permit for the Elm Tree Station project; and

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2025, the Design Review and Preservation Board held a duly noticed public hearing on the Design Review application at which all those wishing to be heard were allowed to speak or present written comments and other materials; and

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2025, the Design Review and Preservation Board of the City of Santa Rosa considered a proposal for the construction of a gas station with six gas pumps and four electric charging stations, a 3,448-square-foot general retail space with an 806-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment above, and a 432-square-foot general retail use with park-like amenities; and

WHEREAS, the Design Review and Preservation Board, at the same time considered written and oral reports of staff, testimony, and other evidence presented by all those who wished to be heard on the matter; and

WHEREAS, the Design Review and Preservation Board, after due consideration of all evidence and reports offered for review, does find and determines the following:

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 Project is consistent with General Plan Policy UD-A-5 which requires superior site and architectural design of new development projects to improve the visual quality of the City, which the Project achieves by incorporating a contemporary design that is compatible with surrounding commercial and industrial development while maintaining a clear internal circulation for cars, users of the Joe Rodota Trail, and pedestrian passerby. The Project also includes new landscaping and improvements that will improve the streetscape appearance. The Project complies with all development standards established by the Policy Statement for Planned Development (PD) 435 and the General Commercial (CG) zoning district where the PD is silent. The Project is also consistent with the Design Guidelines, including but not limited to 3.4 – Business & Light Industrial Parks and Buildings, Goal F, which is “to accommodate bicyclists.” The Project includes a connection to the Joe Rodota Trail that allows pedestrians and cyclists alike to traverse the Project site from the north and the south while minimizing conflict with cars accessing the gas station; and
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) in that the proposed gas station will complement the existing light industrial development to the south and west of the Project site in terms of size, design, and materials; and
3. The design and layout of the proposed development will not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments in that the proposed gas station and associated buildings are compatible in scale and appearance with the adjacent commercial and light industrial development to the west and south of the Project site and is consistent with the surrounding commercial and light industrial character of the area. The Project's layout includes the establishment of a 432-square-foot retail space oriented toward park-like amenities on the parcel adjacent to the residentially designated adjacent to the east. This separation allows for compatibility between the gas station with 3,448-

square-foot retail space and any future residential development on the parcel to the east. The Project meets the on-site parking standard established by Zoning Code Chapter 20-36 (Parking & Loading Standards), and no parking is allowed on N Wright Road.

4. The architectural design of the proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood, in that the mass and scale of the gas station and associated buildings are compatible with that of existing structures along N Wright Road other commercial and light industrial uses in the vicinity. The colors and use of exterior materials complement the existing fuel dealer directly to the south of the Project site and enhance the visual character of the environment near a major entry to the City. The proposed project would provide landscaping in accordance with the City's Zoning Code Chapter 20-34 (Landscaping Standards) and Design Guidelines; and
5. The design of the proposed development will provide a desirable environment for its occupants, the visiting public, and its neighbors through the appropriate use of materials, texture, and color, and would remain aesthetically appealing and be appropriately maintained in that the project incorporates durable, low maintenance materials and water-efficient landscaping. The project has been reviewed for consistency with the Design Guidelines; and
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 in that the location of the proposed gas station and associated buildings would serve motorists that are entering and exiting the City via Highway 12 and Sebastopol Road. The Project would also provide park-like amenities and develop a small retail space that would serve pedestrians and cyclists on the Joe Rodota Trail. The proposed development project has been reviewed by City staff, outside agencies, and approval authorities, and has been conditioned to minimize potential impacts; and
7. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). On August 19, 2025, the City Council adopted Resolution No. RES-2025-140 making findings and adopting an Addendum to the Elm Tree Station Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Elm Tree Station project; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Design Review and Preservation Board of the City of Santa Rosa does hereby grant Design Review for the Elm Tree Station Project subject to each of the following conditions:

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL:

1. Compliance with all conditions as specified in City Council Resolution Nos. RES-2025-140 and RES-2025-141, adopting the Addendum to the MND and approving the Conditional Use Permit, approved by the City Council on August 19, 2025.

2. 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 the issuance of a building permit.
3. All work shall be done according to the final approved plans dated September 25, 2025.
4. The address shall be displayed in a prominent location on the street side of the property. The numbers shall be no less than 6-inches in height and shall be of a contrasting color to the background to which they are attached. The address shall be illuminated during hours of darkness per City "Premises Identification" requirements.
5. Construction hours shall be limited to 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday. No construction is permitted on Sundays and holidays.

ENGINEERING DIVISION:

6. Compliance with all conditions as specified in the City Council Resolution No. RES-2025-141 Exhibit A, prepared by Engineering Development Services, dated September 4, 2024, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

PLANNING DIVISION:

7. Compliance with all conditions as specified in the Conditional Use Permit, City Council Resolution No. RES-2025-141, approved by the City Council on August 19, 2025.
8. The building materials, elevations, and appearance of this project, as presented for issuance of a building permit, shall be the same as that approved by the Design Review and Preservation Board. Any future additions, expansions, remodeling, etc., will be subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
9. Compliance with City Graffiti Abatement Program Standards for Graffiti Removal (City Code 10-17.080),

10. PROJECT DETAILS:

- A. All project details shall be in accordance with the restrictions and limitations of the City Zoning and California Building Codes, as well as the City's Design Review Guidelines.
- B. 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.
- C. All roof appurtenances, accessory equipment, and meters must be totally screened from public view by an architectural design consistent with the building architecture element approved by the Design Review and Preservation Board or Planning Division.

- D. All outdoor storage of materials and/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.

11. TREE PRESERVATION:

- A. 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.
- B. Prior to the 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.
- C. 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 the issuance of a building or grading permit for any site work.
- D. 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."
- E. 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.

- F. No concrete or asphalt paving or compaction of soil shall be permitted within the root zones of protected trees.
- G. Any special work, including mitigation, within the "Protection Zone" must be done under the supervision of a City approved certified arborist.

12. LANDSCAPING:

- A. All required landscaping and irrigation must be installed prior to occupancy per the approved final plans.
- B. Construction drawings submitted for issuance of a building permit shall include final landscape and irrigation plans, except where not required.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

13. LIGHTING:

- A. 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.
- B. Light sources shall be concealed from public view.
- C. All lighting shall be directed toward the subject property and away from adjacent properties.
- D. The mounting height of lighting fixtures in parking and storage areas shall not exceed 16 feet in height. Lower mounting heights are encouraged.

14. SIGNING:

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

15. NATURAL RESOURCES:

- A. Advisement. The applicant, its successors, heirs, assigns or transferees are advised in writing that this approval or permit prior to the start of any construction may be subject to certain other clearances, approvals, permits, or authorizations by state and/or federal agencies. The applicant shall acknowledge in writing receipt of the above advisement.
- B. Mitigation requirement. The City's approval or permit is valid only if the applicant, its successors, heirs, assigns or transferees, comply with the terms, conditions and mitigations set forth in any clearance, permit or approval except that any permit condition or mitigation that requires project redesign shall trigger a review by the City of Santa Rosa Director of Planning & Economic Development to determine if the project as redesigned is consistent with the original approval. A project that the City determines is not consistent with the City approval shall not be granted subsequent entitlements, such as approval of improvement plans and final maps, but excluding grading or building permits of any type. Such a project would have to be resubmitted to the City and reviewed by the City as a new project, including the submittal of a new application and fees.
- C. Power to stop work if violation occurs. Nothing in this approval shall prevent the City of Santa Rosa from exercising its power to stop work in instances where a violation of state or federal law is brought to the City's attention.
- D. No building or grading permit of any type shall be issued by the City until a required federal or state, as applicable, clearance or authorization, with or without conditions, has been filed with the City.

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED by the Design Review and Preservation Board of the City of Santa Rosa on this 6th day of November, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Approved: _____
Melanie Jones-Carter, Chair

Attest: _____
Kristinae Toomians, Executive Secretary