

1650 West Steele Lane Apartments Appeal

APN: 041-042-012

File No. PRJ21-010

**CITY OF SANTA ROSA CITY COUNCIL**  
**MAY 23, 2023**

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## Position Summary

The City Council should **deny** the Appeal and uphold the administrative approvals as completely without merit. The Project is consistent with General Plan, Specific Plan and applicable zoning code standards and provides on-site parking that is **well** above the maximum allowable mandatory standards applicable to the Project under state law.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Per City staff's request, the Project's parking proposal was analyzed under local review requirements as a Specific Area Plan project eligible for reduced parking as justified by a parking study and required findings. The Project applicant has agreed to provide **36** off-street parking spaces.
2. Under state law, because the Project is located within one-half mile of a major transit stop and will provide 15% of base density units as affordable to very low-income residents, Applicant is entitled to request a parking ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit, which would result in only 18 parking spaces.
3. Recent legislation approved under AB 2097 generally prohibits cities from imposing **any** minimum parking requirements on most development projects located within a half-mile radius of a major traffic stop without making specific written findings within 30 days of the receipt of a completed application. The City has not made the required findings, and in fact, the record is replete with evidence that the parking proposal is more than adequate to meet the Project's demands.
4. Accordingly, if anything, the Project is **overparked**. The reduced parking, significantly above what would be required under state law, is entirely appropriate for this transit-oriented development site, which is located within one half mile of mass transit and major retail and business services, parks and cultural institutions, and is located within a housing opportunity district.



## Project Overview

- 36-unit multifamily housing in three three-story buildings in a housing opportunity site within the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Area.
- 11% of total units will be deed restricted to families of very low income.
- 36 parking units (at a ratio of one space per unit) will be provided in a two-story automated structure to the rear of the site.
- Site is ideally situated for low automotive use, in close proximity to SMART station, numerous bus routes, and extensive bicycle connectivity.
- The Project is completely consistent with the General Plan, Specific Plan, the zoning ordinance, and additionally furthers numerous policy goals and objectives of the City's long range Planning documents.

## The Appeal

Argues that approved parking reduction will have an adverse impact on neighborhood circulation and parking availability.



## Project Parking Was Approved under City Ordinance

- Under Santa Rosa Municipal Code Subsection 20-36.050(C)(2), “[p]arking requirements for projects located within the Downtown and North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan boundaries may be reduced by the review authority, as a condition of project approval or Minor Conditional Use Permit, when supported by a parking study.”
- 2020 W-Trans parking study comprehensively demonstrates that, because of its proximity to the SMART station and other transit nodes, as well as the provision of unbundled parking, the Project would generate significantly lowered parking demand.
- The parking study carefully applied parking demand generation from reputable and accepted industry authorities to reach the conclusion that the proposed parking supply of 36 spaces would be adequate to meet Project demands.



## Project is Entitled to Significantly Reduced Parking Under State Density Bonus Law

- Because the Project will provide four units that will be deed restricted as affordable to families of very low income, the Project would actually be entitled to utilize significantly lower parking as of right under state law.
- With provision of 11% very low income units, maximum allowable mandatory parking upon request would be 0.5 spaces per unit, or 18 spaces.

### **AB 2097: Applicant Could Legally Provide NO Parking**

- Assembly Bill 2097 prohibits the City from imposing minimum automobile parking requirements on most development projects located within a half-mile radius of a major transit stop, including the Project.
- May only impose requirements by making certain specified findings that must be made within 30 days of receipt of a completed application, which the City did not do.
- In fact, administrative record demonstrates that the Project is uniquely well situated to take advantage of a dense and interconnected network of local and regional public transportation to reduce automotive travel significantly.



## Conclusion

- The City Council should deny this Appeal and uphold the Zoning Administrator's approvals. Under the City's ordinances, state density bonus law and recent legislation under AB 2097, the City simply has no lawful basis to deny this application on the basis of insufficient parking.
- This Project exemplifies a desirable policy implementation that aims to maximize a symbiotic relationship between dense and proximate urban forms and public transport uses by reducing the use of private cars and promoting sustainable urban growth.
- The Applicant has voluntarily offered a generous parking supply that at least doubles what the City could legally require for the site. The Applicant is not legally required to provide ANY parking on site.