

April 24, 2023

To: Santa Rosa Housing Authority
100 Santa Rosa Ave.
Santa Rosa, Ca. 95401

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CITY OF SANTA ROSA
MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Dear Santa Rosa Housing Authority Commissioners,

Please enter this document on "Extended Stay Suites" into the record for the Mon. April 24, 2023 meeting of the Santa Rosa Housing Authority.

Thank you
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Box 3068
Santa Rosa, Ca. 95402

"Extended Stay Suites" are a successful business model throughout California and the United States. Drive on Interstate freeways and state highways in almost any, and every state, and you will see Inns and Extended Stay Suites near on and off ramps. For close to a quarter of a century Santa Rosa in central Sonoma County has had an excellent example of this type of lucrative temporary housing on Corby Ave. near the Hearn Ave. overpass. It has been a busy success story since built in a relatively quick amount of time compared to traditional types of lodgings.

Recently in Santa Rosa two new hotels were built, AC Hotel in Old Railroad Square next to Highway 101, and La Quinta also next to the highway off of Santa Rosa Ave. Both were built quickly using a faster method of construction consisting of using prefabricated modular building components to get work done in almost record time for local projects. Both have been doing good business since their openings last year.

Sonoma County and Santa Rosa public officials have been helping to finance the purchase of existing hotels and motels to shelter houseless unsheltered people. The approach of now building Extended Stay Suites for unsheltered people could be a money saving opportunity for local governments. Some have declared "Homeless Emergencies" for a number of years so an idea of using Extended Stay Suites should be given serious consideration to help house people.

By declaring the housing to be for seniors and Veterans there would be extra funding opportunities for local governments to finance the building of the units. Santa Rosa which works with Veterans by utilizing federal funding from the Housing and

Urban Development Veterans Assistance Subsidized Housing programs gives out "Section 8 housing vouchers". These are known as HUD-VASH Vouchers. One of the things happening in Sonoma County is the Santa Rosa Housing Authority which controls many of the vouchers already uses some to help build housing for veterans. This is done by giving vouchers to construction projects for low income Veterans guaranteeing they will be housed. This type of assistance is termed "project based vouchers" by government officials.

Unfortunately the current approach, though successful in Windsor to help house 55 Veterans recently, is very slow and time consuming. Often it takes many years to get a "subsidized" housing project built. It is not uncommon for the current approach to take over a decade to get "affordable housing" built. Also it is very expensive to build such projects. If projects were combined with other funding from the federal and state government for seniors there may be a way to expedite the process of helping construct more housing units quicker.

Using the business model of the "Extended Stay Suites" there could be "Seniors and Veterans Extended Stay Suites" known as SAVESS housing, built more quickly. This is an important aspect of adopting this business model to provide temporary housing to vulnerable residents of Sonoma County. Key to having faster completion of SAVESS housing is to treat projects as businesses. Build the projects with existing Extended Stay Suites models as the guide. Such housing could be built on land zoned commercial as well as on land owned by churches and religious organizations.

With permitting assistance from cities and county officials lots as small as where a corner gas station once stood could be renovated. An example of housing like this is Dutton Flats at the corner of Dutton Ave. and west Third St. in Santa Rosa. A successful businessman Hugh Futrell in Santa Rosa has converted the Empire Building at Old Courthouse Square into Hotel E. His firm has also built affordable housing on 7th St. in downtown Santa Rosa. Recently his firm completed Art House at the corner of 7th St. and Ripley. Billed as "Sonoma County's new urban retreat, a boutique hotel steps from the downtown action of Santa Rosa's historic Courthouse Square" this building shows how smaller projects can get done quicker than a typical "residential" building.

Now is the time for an innovative approach to building smaller multi-story buildings on lots closer in to downtown areas for SAVESS housing. By taking on the approach of energy efficient transit oriented development which is resilient and sustainable at the same time cities and counties can help solve some of our housing issues here at home.