



## Sonoma County Planning Commission STAFF REPORT

**FILE:** PLP19-0044  
**DATE:** July 15, 2021  
**TIME:** At or after 1:05 pm  
**STAFF:** Eric Gage, Project Planner

**A Board of Supervisors hearing on the project will be held at a later date and will be noticed at that time.**

### SUMMARY

**Property Owner:** Springs Investors Group LP  
**Applicant:** Springs Investors Group LP  
**Address:** 175 East Verano Avenue  
155 West Verano Avenue  
135 West Verano Avenue  
**Supervisory District(s):** District 1  
**APN:** 127-071-005  
127-071-012  
127-071-013  
**Description:** Development of a 72-unit multi-family housing development; density bonus with four requested incentives. A use permit allowing a 120-room hotel, allowing the hotel to exceed 35 feet in height, and walls over 3 feet in height in the front setback. General Plan Amendment for land use designations from RVSC to Residential and rezoning to R-3 for affordable housing; General Plan map amendments to conform the land use designations to recently created parcels;  
**CEQA Review:** Mitigated Negative Declaration  
**General Plan Land Use:** 127-071-012 and -013: RVSC  
127-071-005: UR 8  
**Specific/Area Plan:** None  
**Ordinance Reference:** 26-24-010(k), 26-42-010(q), 26-82-060, 26-89-030  
**Zoning:** 127-071-012: K, F2, RC50/25  
127-071-013: K  
127-071-005: R2 B6 8 DU, F2 RC 50/25



## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Permit Resource and Management Department (Permit Sonoma) recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the use permit, the Mitigated Negative Declaration, and the General Plan Amendment and the Rezoning to the Board of Supervisors.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The applicant proposes to construct a three-story, 120-room hotel with a fourth story rooftop observation deck and garden on the southern portion of the 5.9 acre property. The hotel also includes a café/bar, and swimming pool for guests. A publicly accessible landscaped parklet on an adjacent Regional Parks property and maintained by the applicant will extend west from the hotel driveway in front of the hotel parcel, and will include passive recreation amenities such as benches and water fountains. The housing project is located on the northern portion of the property and consists of a 100 percent affordable rental apartment complex of 71 units and a manager's unit, in six buildings, with community rooms, landscaped courtyards and pedestrian paths. The proposed project has a residential density of 22 units per acre and will utilize the Rental Housing Opportunity Density Bonus Program, to exceed the maximum residential density of the proposed R3 zoning district of 20 units per acre. Fifteen percent of the units will be restricted to very low income renters through an affordability agreement with the County. The remaining 85% with the exception of the manager's unit will be deed-restricted for affordable rents to very low, low, or moderate income levels as determined by funding source.

Portions of the site are currently zoned Recreational and Visitor Serving Commercial and Medium Density Residential. The project includes a rezoning and General Plan Amendment to establish multifamily residential use on the site. The construction of the housing will begin in advance of the hotel. The combined construction timeframe will exceed a year. The majority of the site will be graded for parking and structures, but the area adjacent to the creek will be minimally disturbed. Cut and fill is concentrated around the structures, with preliminary grading quantities of 4,400 cubic yards of cut and 6,725 cubic yards of fill with the balance imported from offsite. Staff is recommending approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and all requested entitlements as outlined below:

1. General Plan Amendment from Recreation Visitor-serving Commercial to Urban Residential 20.
2. Rezone from Recreation Visitor-serving Commercial to High Density Residential
3. Design Review for new residential and commercial buildings and related signage
4. Use Permit for new hotel use, building height increase, and walls within the front setback



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**PROJECT SITE AND CONTEXT**

***Background***

The ± 5.9-acre project site is located on Verano Avenue, approximately 650 feet west of the intersection of Verano Avenue and Highway 12, and about 1.3 miles northwest of central Sonoma. The site is mostly level with gentle sloping from east to west, and a defined creek bank at Agua Caliente Creek along the northern boundary of the parcel. The site contains remnants of former structure along the northern and eastern portions of the site that were destroyed by fire or recent demolition. The northern portion of the property also contains several trees. The southern portion of the site contained a baseball field and an unpaved parking area. Existing well and septic facilities onsite will be removed as part of site clearing.

***Area Context and Surrounding Land Uses***

The project site is located in the Sonoma Valley, across from Maxwell Farms Regional Park, near The Vineyard Shopping Center. The project is located on West Verano Avenue on two parcels that are the former site of Paul’s Resort. The site is located in Zone 1 groundwater availability area, but the proposed project will be served by Valley of the Moon Water District, and sewer provided by Sonoma County Water Agency. Verano Family Housing will be bordered to the north by Agua Caliente Creek, to the east by Lazzarotto Mobile Home Park, to the south by the proposed Verano Hotel, and to the west by the Finnish American Home Association Apartments (“FAHA”). The site is in the Urban Service Boundary. Between Verano Avenue and the southern property line is an undeveloped right-of-way and a parcel of land owned by the County Regional Parks.

<b>Direction</b>	<b>Land Uses</b>
<b>North</b>	Agua Caliente Creek, single-family residential homes
<b>South</b>	Verano Avenue, Maxwell Farms Regional Park
<b>East</b>	Lazzarotto Mobile Home Park, Highway 12
<b>West</b>	Finnish American Home Association Apartments

***Significant Applications Nearby***

The County recently approved an application for a mixed-use affordable housing project at the intersection of Highway 12 and Calle del Monte, file PLP18-0013. The current site includes seven detached single family dwellings and one two story mixed use building containing accommodations for five residential tenants and the Boyes Springs Food Center, a small market and deli. The project includes remodeling of the previously the existing mixed use building, demolish the existing detached residences, construct two new townhouse buildings with eight dwellings total, and construct a new detached mixed use building with ground floor commercial uses and residences on the second and third floor. The Boyes Springs Food Center project is approximately ¼ mile south of this project site.



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**Access**

The project has two access points, one at the southeast corner of the project serves as the primary entrance and exit for the apartment component of the project. The roundabout driveway in front of the hotel entrance would be an entrance and exit primarily used by hotel patrons.

**Wildfire Risk**

The project parcel is located in an urbanized area, and not located in State Responsibility Area. The proposed project would add population to the site in the form of residents, employees and guests. However, the project is connected to the Valley of the Moon Water District, and includes 6 fire hydrants for fire suppression. The internal project streets are 26 feet wide providing adequate width and access for emergency vehicles. The site is roughly half a mile from Sonoma Valley Fire Station #3, ensuring rapid response times in the event of an emergency. Fire risk is further reduced by ongoing landscape maintenance and tree trimming to reduce fire fuel. The project will comply with all Fire Code requirements.

**Water/Wastewater/Utilities**

The project will connect to Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District via an expanded sewer line under Old Maple Road. The project will also feature a private shared looped water system. The line will connect to an existing water main in Verano or Old Maple and come down the common access thru the Verano Family Housing site and then return to the existing main in Verano or Old Maple. This looped system will have fire hydrants serving both the Verano Family Housing and the Verano Hotel sites. The Hotel and housing sites will each have its own domestic and irrigation meters. Dry utilities including gas, electric, cable, and telephone will be installed along the internal access drive.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The applicant proposes to construct a three-story, 120-room hotel with a fourth story rooftop observation deck and garden on the southern portion of the 5.9 acre property. The hotel also includes a café/bar, and swimming pool for guests. The housing project is located on the northern portion of the property and consists of a 100 percent affordable rental apartment complex of 71 units and a manager’s unit, in six buildings, with community rooms, landscaped courtyards and pedestrian paths. The proposed project has a residential density of 22 units per acre and will utilize the Rental Housing Opportunity Density Bonus Program, to exceed the maximum residential density of the proposed R3 zoning district of 20 units per acre. Fifteen percent of the units will be restricted to very low income renters through an affordability agreement with the County. The remaining 85% with the exception of the manager’s unit will be affordable but the affordability level will be determined by funding sources. Also proposed is a landscaped parklet on land owned by County Parks Department, but maintained by the applicant. The property is located at the southwest corner of the project and will contain



passive recreation amenities such as benches, water fountains, historical and educational markers. The parklet will extend offsite to the west to the entrance of the adjacent residential complex.

Portions of the site are currently zoned Recreational and Visitor Serving Commercial and Medium Density Residential. The project includes a rezoning and General Plan Amendment to establish multifamily residential use on the site.

Proposed Buildings and Uses: The project consists of two components, the hotel and the residential property:

1. Hotel building: a four-story, 120-room structure with a footprint of approximately 30,609 square feet in size, and a total square footage of 92,411 square feet. The hotel includes a swimming pool, gym, and meeting rooms on the ground floor, and a roof deck on the fourth floor.

Employees: 40 full time employees, 15 part time/seasonal employees

Hours of Operation: The check-in desk will operate 24 hours, 7 days a week. No more than 25 employees will be onsite at any one time. The peak hours for staffing would occur after check-out when rooms are being changed.

Parking: The hotel has a dedicated parking lot with 138 spaces.

2. Residential Apartment buildings: The residential component of the project is divided across six three-story apartment buildings. The unit mix will include 32 one-bedroom units, 22 two-bedroom, 18 three-bedroom units.

Employees: 4 full time employees

Parking: The apartment complex has a dedicated parking lot with 97 spaces.

Design Style: The project consists of two separate developments designed by different architects. The residential project consists of six buildings arranged around a central courtyard. The residential site emphasizes the connection to the creek-adjacent wooded areas, through preservation of existing trees in courtyard and transitional areas. Emphasis on the natural environment is also achieved through the use of natural wood materials and earth tone colors. The hotel portion of the site evokes Spanish mission elements, such as stucco exteriors, decorative screens, dome and arch design elements.

Access: All access and egress for vehicles and trucks would be from Verano Avenue through a primary shared entrance and exit at the southeast corner of the property. The hotel access includes a secondary entrance and exit onto Verano Avenue from the circular driveway in front of the hotel main entrance.

Construction: Construction of the proposed project is anticipated to occur over 18–24 months. It is anticipated that both project components will be constructed within one year of each other, beginning sometime in 2021.



Due to impacts of the COVID19 pandemic on the tourism industry, it is anticipated that the residential component will be the first to break ground pending funding disbursements.

**PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING LANDS:**

The ± 5.9-acre project site is located on Verano Avenue, approximately 650 feet west of the intersection of Verano Avenue and Highway 12, and about 1.3 miles from central Sonoma. The site is mostly level with gentle sloping from east to west, and a defined creek bank at Agua Caliente Creek along the northern boundary of the parcel. The property is bordered to the west and east by a multifamily residential and to the north by single family residences. Maxwell Farms Regional Park is located to the south of the property across Verano Avenue.

The site contains foundations and other remnants of former structures along the northern and eastern portions of the site that were destroyed by fire or recent demolition. The northern portion of the property also contains mostly non-native ornamental trees to be removed. A total of 97 trees are proposed for removal, and 105 replacement trees will be planted. The southern portion of the site contained a baseball field and an unpaved parking area. The site is located in Zone 1 groundwater availability area, but the proposed project will be served by Valley of the Moon Water District, and sewer provided by Sonoma County Water Agency. Existing well and septic facilities onsite will be removed as part of site clearing.

Existing Uses: The property is currently vacant. Formerly the site of a cottage-style resort use, all structures on the property have been demolished or destroyed by fire though some foundations remain. The southern portion of the site was recently used as a baseball playing field served by an unpaved parking area.

Topography and Drainage: The site is relatively level with slopes less than 10% generally falling from the northeast to southwest. There is a high point near the northern property boundary where runoff on the north drains to Agua Caliente Creek. Runoff from the rest of the site currently drains to a roadside ditch along Verano Avenue. The nearest water feature is the Agua Caliente Creek which has a defined bank that runs along the northern property boundary that flows into the Sonoma Creek approximately 950-feet, west of the project.

Vegetation: The norther portion of the site has substantial tree cover which becomes denser in the direction of Agua Caliente Creek. Several trees were planted on the site as ornamentals, including fig, palm, plum, ash, and gum trees. Native trees include Coast Live Oak, Valley Oak, Bay Laurel, and Coast Redwood and are concentrated along the creek bank. The site contains 136 trees with 38 protected trees proposed for removal to construct the project.

***Project History***

The table below summarizes key project milestones and events.

Date	Project Event/Milestone
04/22/2019	Pre-application Meeting



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<b>07/17/2019</b>	Design Review Committee - Conceptual review, comments only
<b>11/04/2019</b>	Application Submittal
<b>11/06/2019</b>	Begin Tribal Consultation
<b>02/26/2020</b>	Sonoma Valley Citizen Advisory Committee - Unanimous Approval
<b>06/03/2020</b>	Design Review Committee - Preliminary Approval
<b>08/17/2020</b>	Tribal Consultation Complete
<b>06/15/2021</b>	Mitigated Negative Declaration Circulated
<b>06/21/2021</b>	Notice of Planning Commission Hearing was posted on the project site, a 300 foot notice was mailed, and a legal notice was posted in the Press Democrat.
<b>07/14/2021</b>	Mitigated Negative Declaration Comment Period Closed
<b>07/15/2021</b>	Planning Commission Hearing

Final review and decision by the Board of Supervisors and the Design Review Board will occur at separate hearings yet to be scheduled.

**General Plan and Area Plans**

The existing General Plan Land Use Designations for this site do not conform to the existing lot lines. The current designations include Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial on the western portion of the property and Urban Residential 8 on the eastern portion of the property. The project proposes General Plan Amendments to change the housing portion of the site from Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial to Urban Residential 20, and the area designated Urban Residential 8 to Urban Residential 20. The proposed land use designations would conform to the lot lines that would be established under the approved Minor Subdivision. The Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial designation would remain on the hotel parcel, while the remainder of the site used for apartment residential would be designated Urban Residential 20, as depicted in the attached zone change map exhibit.

**Zoning**

Like the application of the Land Use Designations described above, the zoning designations also do not conform to the existing parcel boundaries. The western portions of the site is zoned Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial (K) and the eastern portion of the site is zoned Medium Density Residential (R2). The Riparian Corridor (RC) and Floodplain (F2) Combining Districts apply in the creek channel of Agua Caliente Creek. The project proposes to rezone the housing portion of the site from Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial (K) to High Density Residential (R3), and the area designated Medium Density Residential (R2) to High Density Residential (R3).

Conditionally Permitted Uses vary depending upon the underlying zoning designation. Where the zoning is Recreational and Visitor-serving Commercial (K), the following proposed uses are all Conditional Uses: the hotel,



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building height exceeding 35 feet, and walls exceeding three feet in height within the front setback. Where the zoning designation is High Density Residential (R3), multifamily housing is allowed by right.

The table below summarizes the development standards that apply to the site as outlined in the Sonoma County Zoning Ordinance, the existing and proposed development, and whether the project is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance. Inconsistencies with the Zoning Ordinance are discussed below.

**Hotel Standards**

Standard	Ordinance	Existing Condition	Proposed Project
Land Use	Recreation/Visitor-serving Commercial (K)	Vacant	Hotel
Front Setback	45 ft	NA	51'-0"
Side Setback	5 ft	NA	67'-1", 52'-1"
Rear Setback	10 ft	NA	50'-8"
Height	35 ft	NA	52'-10"
Lot Coverage %	50%	NA	28%
Parking Spaces	121	NA	138

**Housing Standards**

Standard	Ordinance	Existing Condition	Proposed Project
Land Use	Recreation/Visitor-serving Commercial (K)	Vacant	High Density Residential (R-3)
Residential Density	16 units/acre	NA	23.5 units/acre
Front Setback	15 ft	NA	77 ft
Side Setback	5 ft	NA	5 ft
Rear Setback	10 ft	NA	70 ft
Height	40 ft	NA	43.5 ft
Lot Coverage %	60%	NA	19%
Parking Spaces	112	NA	97

The applicant is requesting relief from standards for the maximum by-right height limit of a structure in the K zoning district, which is 35 feet. The applicant is requesting a roof height of 40 feet and tower elements with a maximum height of 52 feet and 10 inches. The permitted structure height may be increased up to 55 feet with the approval of a use permit, if lot coverage for buildings is proportionally reduced. The proposed hotel will



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reduce lot coverage from the 50% maximum allowed to 28% to obtain the increased structure height. An existing 6-foot block wall along the eastern property line and within the front yard setback is proposed to remain with the approval of the use permit. The wall will comply with standards and requirements for sight distance for vehicles exiting the site.

The housing component of the project benefits from the State Density Bonus Law with the provision of 15% of the units restricted for very low income residents. The density bonus law grants several concessions from standards. The first is the increase in residential density from 20 units per acre to 23 units per acre. Another concession is the increase in structure height from 40 feet to a maximum of 43.5 feet for the residential structures. Parking concessions were also provided to the project in the form of reduced number of spaces from 112 to 97 spaces, an allowance for 44 of the spaces to be compact spaces, and waiver of covered parking and landscaping requirements in parking areas.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **ISSUE 1: GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The following General Plan policies are applicable to the project:

#### **Land Use**

The project is consistent with the policies and objectives of the Land Use Element because it provides affordable housing, locates high density residential in an Urban Service Area with adequate water and sewer services, improves pedestrian access and roadways through construction of new sidewalks and improvement of roadways adjacent to the site, offers ample bicycle parking, provides mixed use development including commercial and residential uses on a transit corridor, and redevelops existing commercial land. The project requires a General Plan Amendment for the distribution of proposed uses on the site, and the project is consistent with the following goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan Land Use Element:

- *Objective LU 2-2: Allocate the largest portion of unincorporated area growth to communities with public sewer and water services.*
- *Objective LU-2.5: Provide sufficient opportunities for higher density housing within the Urban Service Areas to accommodate the population growth quantified in the Housing Element Objectives for lower and moderate income units.*
- *Policy LU-2c: Encourage the retention and production of diverse types of housing within Urban Service Areas in order to provide adequate housing choices for current and future residents.*



- *Policy LU-4q: Require pedestrian access infrastructure and streetlights in new development proposed within the Urban Service Area of a Community Opportunity Area where compatible with community character.*
- *Goal LU 6: Diversify new residential development types and densities. Include a range of urban densities and housing types in some unincorporated communities, and lower density in rural communities. In rural areas, housing types and densities should meet the needs of agricultural and resource users and provide limited residential development on large parcels.*
- *Objective LU 6.1: Provide opportunities for a range of urban housing types and densities in unincorporated communities, while retaining the character of these communities.*
- *Policy LU-11a: Encourage reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, including alternatives to use of gas-powered vehicles. Such alternatives include public transit, alternatively fueled vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian routes, and bicycle and pedestrian friendly development design.*
- *Policy LU-11e: Encourage use of compact and mixed use development that minimizes the need to drive, re-uses existing infill and brownfield sites that have been reclaimed and remediated before using open land, and avoids sprawl.*

## Housing

The project is consistent with the policies and objectives of the Housing Element. The proposed housing project will add up to 72 new units to the County’s housing stock, all of which will be affordable. The project meets “Type A Rental Housing Opportunity Program” requirements with 40% of the units as affordable to low or very-low income households, as is set forth in Sonoma County’s Housing Element and Zoning Code.

The project meets the following Housing Element objectives and policies:

- *Objective HE-1.1: Continue existing County and Community Development Commission efforts and programs with the objective of producing at least 507 new affordable units between 2015 and 2023.*
- *Policy HE-1f: Encourage retention and further construction of small rental units such as granny units, rental studios, and SRO units, as well as large rental units with more than 3 bedrooms.*
- *Objective HE-2.3: Enhance opportunities for affordable housing production on all appropriate sites with adequate infrastructure and proximity to services.*
- *Objective HE-3.3: Increase opportunities for the production of affordable housing.*



- *Policy HE-3j: Continue to encourage affordable "infill" projects on underutilized sites within Urban Service Areas by allowing flexibility in development standards pursuant to state density bonus law (Government Code 65915).*
- *Policy HE-3k: Continue to apply the minimum residential density policy to all Urban Residential parcels.*
- *Policy HE-3n: Continue to use indoor noise standards for mixed use and urban infill residential development, including but not limited to Single Room Occupancy, Work-Live, Mixed Use Projects, and Caretaker Units in compliance with Noise Element Policy NE-1b.*
- *Policy HE-2f: Consider a variety of sites for higher-density and affordable housing when the following criteria are met:*
  - *site is located within or adjacent to an Urban Service Area (USA);*
  - *adequate utilities are available;*
  - *site is located within 1/2 mile to goods, services and transit; and*
  - *project is consistent with the land use policies of the General Plan.*
- *Policy HE-6c: Encourage residents and developers to increase energy conservation and improve energy efficiency.*
- *Policy HE-6d: Support project applicants in incorporating cost-effective energy efficiency that exceeds State standards.*

The Verano Hotel is estimated to generate more than \$1 million in Transient Occupancy Tax ("TOT") in the hotel's first year, and \$2 million annually for the next 10 years.

- *Policy HE-4i: Strive to increase opportunities for recreational and visitor-serving uses, thus increasing County Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues.*

## **ISSUE 2: ZONING CONSISTENCY**

The project proposes to rezone portions of the site to High Density Residential District zoning. The purpose of the R3 District is to implement provisions of the General Plan Land Use Element which provides for high density affordable housing where utility infrastructure is available.

### **Development Standards**

The proposed project is consistent with the development standards of the Recreation and Visitor Serving Commercial as well as the High Density Residential zoning districts, as shown in the zoning table provided in the above project description.



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Residential uses would comprise 80% of the total gross floor area of the mixed-use buildings, which is the limit established by the mixed-use standards contained in Municipal Code Section 26-88-12(b)(1). Where at least 20% of the residential floor area is provided as housing affordable to lower-income households, a 15% increase in maximum lot coverage and a 15 foot increase in maximum building height shall be granted over that otherwise allowed in the underlying zoning district.

#### Combining Zones

Two combining zones apply to the site including Floodplain and Riparian Corridor. The project complies with the requirements of these combining districts by not encroaching into the riparian buffer along Agua Caliente Creek which also includes the designated floodplain.

### **ISSUE 3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMPONENT**

Unless exempt, any residential or non-residential development project is required to provide affordable housing through either on-site construction of affordable units, payment of an affordable housing fee, or through an alternative equivalent action.

#### Required Affordable Housing

Per Section 26-89-040.C.3 to meet the minimum requirement for construction of affordable units on-site within a rental housing project, at least 15% of the units must be provided as affordable rental units, with at least one-half of the total number of required affordable units provided as affordable to very-low income households. The remaining affordable units may be provided as affordable to low or very-low income households. Based on this requirement, the project would be required to provide 11 low income, and 5 very low income rental units.

Workforce Housing requirements for non-exempt hotel development requires .05 dwelling units per 1000 square feet of commercial use. At least one-half of the total number of required affordable units must be provided as affordable to very low-income households. The remaining affordable units may be provided as affordable to households with low incomes. Based on this requirement, with 94,853 feet of new commercial space, the project is required to provide 5 low income units and 2 very-low income units.

The housing project is proposed to be all affordable units with at least 15% of them at the very low income level. Thus, the residential component would fulfill affordable housing requirements with 11 very low income units, and 61 low income units provided onsite.

### **ISSUE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

Pursuant to Section 15071 of the State CEQA Guidelines, an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for the proposal. Staff determined that the proposed use would not have an adverse impact on the environment with the incorporation of mitigation measures for the following areas:



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Biological Resources. The property is an infill site with substantial development on all sides, which limits the habitat value for wildlife. However, Agua Caliente Creek borders the site on the north side adjacent riparian oaks could provide habitat for birds during nesting seasons which have federal protections. If work is planned during nesting season, a qualified biologist is required to conduct a bird-nesting survey consistent with the biological mitigation measure. The project is also subject to the Tree Protection Ordinance of Sonoma County.

Greenhouse Gases. The BAAQMD project-level thresholds of significance for greenhouse gases were based on 2020 targets and require modification in light of 2030 targets. The impact analysis derived a service population efficiency metric based on local 2030 targets, State 2030 targets, and case law to evaluate the GHG impacts of the project. Mitigation measures in the form of GHG offset credits are applied to reduce GHG impact to a less than significant level.

Noise. The proposed project would include primarily noise sensitive uses. Mitigation measures would be required to minimize noise impacts on the interior of the proposed residences and commercial spaces. Additional mitigations including hours of operation are applied to minimize noise during construction.

#### **ISSUE 5: IMPROVEMENTS IN PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY**

The north, project-side of Verano Avenue currently features a Class I multi-use bicycle pathway. The south side of Verano Avenue features a Class II bike lane. There are no pedestrian facilities on the south side of Verano Avenue fronting Maxwell Farms Regional Park. An uncontrolled, mid-segment crosswalk is provided on Verano Avenue, in front of the project site, approximately 150 feet west of the proposed hotel’s circular driveway entrance. The crosswalk provides street lighting, curb ramps, and ladder-style striping. It serves as a connection between the multi-use pathway on Verano Avenue and Maxwell Farms Regional Park, and is identifiable with flashing pedestrian beacons which may be activated via push buttons. The County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan does not identify additional bicycle improvements fronting the project site.

In addition to the project’s two driveway access points, development in the public right of way includes the landscaping and installation of a parklet on undeveloped right of way of Old Maple Lane and a parcel of land owned by County Regional Parks between Old Maple Lane and Verano Avenue. The landscaping and pedestrian amenities will be developed and maintained by the applicant by agreement with County Parks.

The parklet will have a meandering path that connects to the existing multi-purpose path. The parklet will be landscaped with drought resistant native grasses and groundcovers as well as a variety of small shrubs, perennials and trees. Existing trees in healthy condition will be preserved and incorporated into the overall design of the site. Amenities will include benches, drinking fountain with pet drinking fountain, dog waste bag station, bicycle repair station and historical and education markers, celebrating the history of the site and the Springs area. The parklet development will comply with Sonoma County Parks’ adopted standards.



## **NEIGHBORHOOD/PUBLIC COMMENTS**

All letters received in response to public notices for this project, including the Notice of Intent for the environmental document, and notice for the Planning Commission are included in Attachment 4. A total of three written comments were received, two in support of the project.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Preceding Recommendations***

The Design Review Committee reviewed the project in June of 2020 and granted preliminary approval, making recommendations for minor design improvements. The application will go back to the Committee for final review following approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The plans have been reviewed by County Departments and agencies. Recommended conditions have been incorporated into the Draft Conditions of Approval in Attachment 1 Exhibit A.

### ***Staff Recommendation***

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors adoption of a Mitigated Negative Declaration and approval of the project subject to the findings contained in the Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution  
Exhibit A. Draft Conditions of Approval
2. SVCAC Meeting Minutes
3. Preliminary Design Review Action Summary
4. Public Comments
5. Architectural Plans
6. Mitigated Negative Declaration
7. Zone Change Map

