



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) Hotel Project Sonoma

**Date:** August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
**To:** Responsible Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations  
**Subject:** NOP of a Recirculated Environmental Impact Report for the Hotel Project Sonoma  
**Location:** City of Sonoma, California  
**Project Proponent:** Kenwood Investments, LLC

**Project Location:** City of Sonoma. One-half block southwest of Sonoma Plaza, bounded by State Route (SR) 12 (West Napa Street) to the north, First Street West to the east, the Best Western Sonoma Valley Inn and Krug Event Center to the south, and the Sonoma Grille Restaurant to the west.

**Proposed Project:** Hotel Project Sonoma (the proposed project) includes the development of a 62-guestroom hotel, 80-seat restaurant and bar, a spa with 6 treatment rooms, raised swimming pool veranda, 130 on-site parking spaces (consisting of a 113-stall basement parking garage, 9 surface parking spaces, and 8 covered residential parking spaces), an 8-unit residential condominium building, and the designation of 7 existing on-site dwelling units as affordable housing. Attached are the project description, location maps, and preliminary identification of the potential environmental issues to be explored.

**Environmental Determination:** The City is preparing a Recirculated Draft EIR in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The entire EIR will be recirculated and there is no need to review any previous materials in order to participate in public review and input for this Recirculated EIR. Pursuant to CEQA, the City of Sonoma will be the lead agency and is responsible for preparing the EIR for the proposed project. Because the City has determined that a Recirculated EIR should be circulated, an Initial Study will not be prepared.

**Requested Input:** In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, this Notice of Preparation (NOP) describes the project location and the proposed project that will be analyzed in the EIR, and identifies areas of probable environmental impacts of the project. Agencies and interested members of the public are invited to provide input on the scope of the environmental analysis. The City welcomes the views of responsible or trustee agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. In accordance with the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, responses must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than 30 days after the date of this notice.

Please send your written response, with the name, address, phone number, and email address of your agency contact person, to the following address by or before 5:00 p.m. on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021:

Kristina Tierney, Associate Planner  
Planning Department  
City of Sonoma  
No. 1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476  
ktierney@sonomacity.org

**Public Scoping Meeting:** A scoping meeting will be conducted at the Planning Commission meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 12 to collect comments from agencies and the public. The meeting will be held in the Community Meeting Room, located at 177 First Street West, Sonoma, CA. If you have questions regarding this NOP or the scoping meeting, please contact Kristina Tierney at (707) 933-2202 or via email at [ktierney@sonomacity.org](mailto:ktierney@sonomacity.org).

**Background:** This proposed project has been undergoing City review since 2012. The following provides a timeline of previous actions:

- Hotel application was submitted in **June 2012**
- Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released for public and public agency review and comment on **June 15, 2015**
- A public scoping meeting to receive comments on topics and issues to be evaluated in the Draft EIR was held by the City on **June 25, 2015**.
- The City distributed a Notice of Availability (NOA) and the Draft EIR was submitted to the State Clearinghouse for State agency review (State Clearinghouse No. 2015032041) on **January 26, 2016**, which started a 45-day public review period, ending on **March 10, 2016**.
- The Planning Commission held a public meeting on **February 25, 2016** to receive public comments on the Draft EIR.
- The Planning Commission held a public hearing on **April 13, 2017** to review the Final EIR and at that meeting Certified the Final EIR, without taking action on the project itself.
- Before the Project could return to the Planning Commission for consideration of the Project entitlements, the City Council received an appeal regarding the action of the Planning Commission to certifying the FEIR on **April 25, 2017**.
- On **June 22, 2017**, the City Council held a public hearing on the appeal and continued the item to the July 19, 2017 meeting.
- On **July 19, 2017**, the City Council supported the appeal and Kenwood Investments also agreed to amend the EIR.
- On **August 14, 2017**, the City Council adopted Resolution #43-2017 directing revisions to the EIR and for the document to be recirculated.
- The City recirculated the revised Draft EIR and distributed a Notice of Availability for the revised Draft EIR on **July 20, 2018**, which started a 45-day public review period, ending on **September 13, 2018**.
- The Planning Commission held a public hearing to receive comments on the revised Draft EIR on **September 4, 2018**.
- A revised Final EIR was prepared that responded to comments on the revised Draft EIR and was provided to public agencies on **November 8, 2019**.
- The Planning Commission hearing on November 21<sup>st</sup> was continued to **December 12, 2019**. The City Council did not take action on the project.

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David A. Storer, AICP,  
Planning & Community Services Director  
City of Sonoma

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Date



## 1. Project Information

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**Title:**

Hotel Project Sonoma

**Lead Agency Name and Address:**

City of Sonoma Planning Department  
No. 1 The Plaza  
Sonoma, CA 95476

**Contact Person and Information:**

Kristina Tierney  
Phone: (707) 933-2202  
Email: ktierney@sonomacity.org

## 2. Location and Regional Setting

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The project site is in southeastern Sonoma County, within the City of Sonoma. The City is situated in the center of the approximately 17-mile-long Sonoma Valley, which is bounded by the Sonoma Mountains to the west, the Mayacamas Mountains to the east, San Pablo Bay to the south, and Santa Rosa to the north.

## 3. Project Site

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The project site comprises approximately 1.24 acres of land area in Downtown Sonoma. The project site is approximately one-half block southwest of the historic Sonoma Plaza, and is bounded by SR 12 (West Napa Street) to the north, First Street West to the east, the Best Western Sonoma Valley Inn and Krug Event Center to the south, and the Sonoma Grille Restaurant to the west.

The project site comprises the following four parcels and Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN), all owned by the project applicant:

- APN 018-250-017: 153 West Napa Street, Sonoma, CA, former Chateau Sonoma Building

- APN 018-250-068: 135 West Napa Street, Sonoma, CA, Lynch Building (western portions of this parcel)
- APN 018-250-051: 135 West Napa Street, Sonoma, CA, metal office and warehouse (southern parking lot)
- APN 018-250-067: 117 West Napa Street, Sonoma, CA, Sonoma Index Tribune Building (L-shaped parcel fronting First Street West)

The project applicant would provide for all lot line adjustments and utility connections necessary to form a single parcel for the hotel component and a single parcel for the residential condominium component of the project site.

## 4. Surrounding Land Uses

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The project site is immediately surrounded by commercial land uses on all sides. The project vicinity consists of boutique shops, a hotel (the Best Western Sonoma Valley Inn and Krug Event Center), a variety of restaurants, wine tasting rooms, The Marketplace shopping center (which includes a Whole Foods Market), and other commercial uses, including a 76® gas station and convenience store. The nearest residential uses are approximately 100 feet to the southwest of the project site and consist of two-story, multi-family units. The nearest single-family residences are approximately 500 feet north of the project site on Church Street. The project site is approximately 350 feet southwest of the historic Sonoma Plaza, a 8-acre park in the center of the downtown area, which includes the City of Sonoma City Hall, several historic buildings, picnic and play areas, and large expanses of public lawns and green space. The Sonoma State Historic Park is approximately 1,000 feet northeast of the project site, and Vallejo Home State Park is approximately 2,000 feet northwest of the project site. The Sonoma Valley Fire Station No. 1 is approximately 350 feet southwest of the project site.

## 5. Proposed Project

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Hotel Project Sonoma (the proposed project) includes the development of two new buildings: one building housing a 62-guestroom hotel, 80-seat restaurant and bar, a spa with 6 treatment rooms, raised swimming pool veranda, 130 on-site parking spaces (consisting of a 113-stall basement parking garage and 9 surface parking spaces); a separate 8-unit residential condominium building with 8 covered residential parking spaces; and the designation of 7 existing on-site dwelling units as affordable housing. The project will comply with the City's updated inclusionary housing ordinance and the newly designated affordable housing units will be marketed to employees at the project, once operational.

The project site encompasses 1.24 acres of land area and consists of four parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 018-250-017, 018-250-068, 018-250-051, and 018-250-067) all owned by the applicant, which would be developed as a single parcel for the hotel component and a parcel for the residential condominium component following lot line adjustments. Several

existing buildings are located on these parcels. The former Chateau Sonoma Building located at 153 West Napa Street would be demolished. The surface parking lot adjacent to the Lynch Building located at 135 West Napa Street would be used part of the proposed project; the Lynch Building itself would not be modified. A two-story metal warehouse and office building previously used for newspaper production, also located at 135 West Napa Street, would be demolished. Finally, a one-story metal warehouse building at 117 West Napa Street would also be demolished.

The project site is zoned Commercial (C) with a Historic District Overlay, and is designated in the City of Sonoma General Plan for commercial uses. Although the site includes a Historic District Overlay, historic resource studies have been prepared, and no historic buildings or structures would be demolished or modified as part of the proposed project.

The hotel would include a basement parking garage, managed by a 24-hour valet service. The hotel would consist of three floors. The first floor would include an 80-seat restaurant and bar, 6-room treatment spa, lobby, and support spaces. The second and third floors would consist of guest rooms and support spaces.

The separate condominium building would also include three floors. The first floor would consist of 8 covered parking spaces, elevator, stair cores, and circulation. The second floor would consist of three, 2-bedroom units and two, 1-bedroom units. The third floor would consist of two, 2-bedroom units and one, 3-bedroom unit.

The total combined building area would be 131,748 square feet, of which 46,356 square feet would consist of the below-grade hotel parking garage and 8,205 square feet would consist of the covered residential first-floor surface parking.

The hotel would be constructed around three exterior courtyards, including the hotel Plaza Courtyard, an open interior lobby courtyard, and the raised swimming pool veranda area. The courtyards would be landscaped with raised planting beds and tree wells partially irrigated with captured, stored, and recycled rainwater. The hotel's Plaza Courtyard would be open to the public, would provide public circulation, and would be faced by a public-serving restaurant and bar, spa, and hotel guest-serving uses. Existing trees, which are growing primarily around the project site perimeter, that require removal would be replaced on a two-for-one basis for oak trees, and on a one-for-one basis for all other trees.

The hotel would provide a fleet of 12 bicycles or more for its guests, and use of bicycles by the hotel's employees would also be encouraged. Guest vehicles would enter from SR 12 (West Napa Street) into the Hotel's Plaza Courtyard. Guest arrival and departure would take place adjacent to the public lobby, deep in the site to avoid a traffic back-up on SR 12 (West Napa Street). During non-peak traffic periods, departing guests would exit right onto SR 12 (West Napa Street). During peak traffic periods, departing guests would pick up their vehicles in the basement parking garage and exit directly onto First Street West. Exiting of hotel guests at peak times would be managed by the valet service.

For smaller delivery vehicles such as vans, the hotel's loading zone would be located in the basement garage receiving area which would be accessed from the SR 12 (West Napa Street) auto court. For larger delivery vehicles such as box trucks, deliveries would be received at the entry to the First Street West vehicle ramp on First Street West, where deliveries would be met by a hotel forklift and transferred into the hotel basement receiving area. The proposed project includes a request for designation of a truck loading zone on First Street West located adjacent to the hotel garage entry as part of its Use Permit Application. Deliveries would be scheduled to occur before 11:00 a.m. or other off-peak times.

The hotel would have an employee population of approximately 60 full-time employees and 30 part-time employees, with approximately 40 employees working at a time during the primary daytime shift.

To help improve energy efficiency, the proposed project would be designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification.

## **6. Required Permits and Approvals**

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The proposed project would require a number of permits and approvals, which may include, but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- City of Sonoma certification of the EIR, adoption of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and adoption of the Hotel Project Sonoma
- Conditional Use Permit to operate a hotel and restaurant
- Approval of the tentative and final subdivision map for 8 unit residential units
- Designation of a truck loading zone on First Street West located adjacent to the hotel garage entry (as part of the Conditional Use Permit)
- Approval by the City of Sonoma Planning Commission of the proposed site modifications (improvement plans)
- Encroachment Permits for any work within the City right-of-way, i.e., curb cuts and sidewalk improvements
- Approval of building demolitions by the Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission
- Design review for proposed buildings and landscape by the Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission
- Grading and Building Permits for construction of the project buildings
- Tree removal, relocation, and/or alteration permit
- Caltrans Encroachment Permit
- County of Sonoma Department of Public Health Environmental Health Division approval of construction in a closed and remediated hazardous materials site
- Bay Area Air Quality Management District approval of authority to construct
- Sonoma County Water Agency approval of proposed water supply improvements

- Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District approval of proposed wastewater improvements
- PG&E approval of electrical and natural gas facilities
- Other local, State, or federal approvals or permits as may be necessary pursuant to applicable laws and regulations.

## 7. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

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This proposed project is subject to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it would require the City of Sonoma to take several discretionary actions to grant the requested land use entitlements. CEQA requires the City, as the CEQA Lead Agency, to identify and document the potential significant environmental effects of the project prior to making a decision to approve the project.

This Notice of Preparation has been prepared under the direction of the City accordance with the requirements of CEQA (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.), and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq). Specifically, this Notice of Preparation identifies those environmental resource areas where the project has a potential to result in a significant impact and those environmental resource areas where impacts would remain less than significant. Based on the conclusions reached in this Notice of Preparation, the City of Sonoma will prepare a Recirculated Draft EIR to evaluate the project's potentially significant environmental effects.

## 8. Public Comment

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**Notice to Agencies:** The City of Sonoma requests that public agencies provide comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR as it relates to an agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project in accordance with California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15082(b).

**Notice to Organizations and Interested Parties:** The City of Sonoma requests comments and concerns from organizations and interested parties regarding the environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the proposed project.

## 9. Potential Environmental Impacts to be Considered

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**Topics not evaluated in the EIR:** As discussed further below, the project is expected to result in no impact or less than significant impacts in the following resource areas:

- **Agricultural and Forestry Resources:** The project site is located in the urbanized area of Downtown Sonoma and has no farmland or forestry resources.
- **Mineral Resources:** The City of Sonoma, including the project site, is not located in a regionally important area of known mineral resources.
- **Population and Housing:** The project site would be redeveloped with an eight-unit residential condominium building estimated to accommodate approximately 17 people and would not involve extension of roads or other infrastructure with the potential to induce population growth. Project implementation would not displace existing people or housing that would require the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- **Recreation:** Although hotel guests could use parks in the area during their stay, any increases in demand to parks would be minor given the hotel proposes 62 guestrooms and 8 residential units. The proposed project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
- **Wildfire:** The project site is located in the urbanized area of Downtown Sonoma, in a Local Responsibility Area. The site is currently developed with, and is surrounded by, commercial land uses. Fire protection services to the project site are currently provided by and would continue to be provided after the site is redeveloped, by the Sonoma Valley Fire District. Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site would not exacerbate existing conditions related to urban or wildland fires, would not impair emergency evacuation routes, and would not be located in or near areas designated as State Responsibility Areas or very high fire hazard severity zones.

**Topics subject to analysis in the EIR:** The EIR will describe the reasonably foreseeable and potentially significant adverse effects of the proposed project (both direct and indirect). The EIR also will evaluate the cumulative impacts of the project when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The City anticipates that the proposed project could result in potentially significant environmental impacts in the following topic areas, which will be fully be evaluated in the EIR:

- **Aesthetics:** The EIR will describe the existing visual setting and describe visual changes resulting from the project.
- **Air Quality:** The EIR will describe the existing regional air quality conditions and the potential for the proposed project to result in local and regional air quality impacts during both construction and operation will be evaluated in consideration of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines.



- **Biological Resources:** The project site has been previously disturbed. The EIR will describe the impacts for potential impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife habitats resulting from the demolition and clearing of the existing buildings and construction of the proposed project in accordance with State and federal law.
- **Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources:** The potential to impact cultural resources will be described in the EIR, including Tribal Cultural Resources. The EIR will analyze the potential historic significance of existing buildings on the site and determine if the project would have the potential to impact the Plaza historic district or other historic resources in the area.
- **Energy:** The EIR will describe current electricity and natural gas utility providers and evaluate whether the proposed project would have any potentially significant effects related to energy demand, energy resources, transportation energy use, or compliance with energy standards.
- **Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources:** The EIR will evaluate whether the project could result in the exposure of people, structures, and/or property to seismic ground shaking, impacts related to soils constraints, or impacts to unique paleontological (fossil) resources.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** Net new greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the project will contribute incrementally to climate change. Project GHG emissions will be evaluated pursuant to current BAAQMD methodologies that quantify construction and operational GHG emissions. The EIR will evaluate the types of energy that could be consumed during construction and operation of the proposed project. Mitigation measures will be identified, if needed.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** The EIR will describe the potential for the proposed construction to result in hazardous material impacts based on the past uses of the site, and for the redeveloped project to expose people to hazards. The project site is on the Cortese list as a result of multiple leaking underground storage tanks from a former Chevron service station. The hazardous materials case for the project site was closed in 2014, assuming continuation of the existing land uses and no new excavation or earthmoving activities. The project applicant and its construction contractor will be required by the Sonoma County Department of Health Services to implement the requirements of a Soil and Groundwater Management Plan that is designed to protect human health and the environment.
- **Hydrology and Water Quality:** Stormwater runoff from the site would be collected onsite in bioretention swales, then conveyed to underground stormwater pipes that would connect to the City's drainage network, using the same point of connection as the

existing stormwater drainage infrastructure within the project site. The EIR will examine the impacts from redeveloping the site with the proposed project on hydrology and water quality during construction and operational phases of the proposed project.

- **Land Use and Planning:** The EIR will describe the existing land uses within and/or adjacent to the proposed project site and evaluate consistency of the project with relevant policies and plans enacted to reduce adverse physical environmental effects.
- **Noise and Vibration:** The EIR will describe the anticipated noise level exposure and vibration during construction and operation of the proposed project, with a focus on noise- and vibration-sensitive uses.
- **Public Services:** The EIR will evaluate the potential for adverse physical environmental effects that could result from physical improvements needed to accommodate increased demand for police, fire, or school services attributable to the project.
- **Transportation:** The EIR will summarize an analysis of vehicular travel demand (vehicle miles traveled or "VMT") and evaluate hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use; inadequate emergency access; and conflicts with adopted plans, policies, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities that could create a potentially significant adverse environmental effect.
- **Utilities and Service Systems:** The EIR will evaluate physical environmental impacts related to the expansion and extension of utility systems, such as those that are required for water supply, stormwater drainage, wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal.

As required by the CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a), the EIR will evaluate a "range of reasonable alternatives to the project" that would attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant impacts.