

# SONOMA LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

111 SANTA ROSA AVENUE, SUITE 240, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

(707) 565-2577

[www.sonomalafco.org](http://www.sonomalafco.org)

## Staff Report

---

Meeting Date: August 7, 2024

Agenda No: Item 5.1

Agenda Item Title: Northwest Santa Rosa Reorganization 22-01 (Lance Drive)

LAFCO File No: 2024-02

Applicant(s): PR II/Wood Santa Rosa LLC

Proposal: Request for a reorganization consisting of annexation of six parcels, totaling approximately 39 acres to the City of Santa Rosa and detachment from County Service Areas No. 40 (Fire Services) and No. 41 (Multi-Services)

Location: Generally, north of Guerneville Road, west of Lance Drive, south of Pawnee Street and east of Ridley Ave in unincorporated Sonoma County  
APNs 036-091-061, 036-111-009, -010, -011, -016, and -002

General Plan: County Zoning – Agriculture and Residential, Retail Business and Service District, Medium and High Density Residential  
City – High Density Residential

Environmental: City of Santa Rosa North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan EIR

Staff Contact: Cynthia Olson

## Analysis

---

### Background

PR II/Wood Santa Rosa LLC (“Applicant”), the proposed developer of the affected territory, is requesting, on behalf of the owners of six parcels totaling approximately 39 acres, annexation of these parcels to the City of Santa Rosa (“City”). The affected territory is generally north of Guerneville Road, west of Lance Drive, south of Pawnee Street and east of Ridley Ave in the northwest section of the City. Upon annexation, the territory would be detached from County Service Areas No 40 (Fire Services) and No. 41 (Multi-Services).

The parcels are located within the City’s Sphere of Influence, the voter-approved Urban Growth Boundary and the Sonoma County General Plan Urban Service Area Boundary. Three of the parcels are vacant, two are developed with a single-family residence and one is a PGE substation. There is no further development proposed for the PGE parcel and it will not be included in the discussion of the proposed development.

The undeveloped parcels are primarily open grassland with native and ornamental plants including a few heritage trees and the remnants of a previous fruit and nut orchard. Portions of these parcels were formerly used as pasture for a small dairy and an orchard but have not been used for agricultural purposes for over 20 years. The affected territory does not contain any Prime, Statewide or Unique Farmland agricultural land as defined in Government Code Section 56016 which defines agricultural lands as land currently used for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes, land left fallow under a crop rotational program, or land enrolled in an agricultural subsidy or set-aside program.

The land is generally flat, sloping to the west in the western portion and to the east in the eastern portion. There are no significant existing natural drainage features on the site.

The subject territory is bounded to the north by single-family residences, to the east by single-family residences and condominiums, to the west by a public school and single-family residences and to the south by Guerneville Road. The area surrounding the subject territory is mostly developed to the densities currently allowed by City of Santa Rosa (“City”) zoning. The existing and proposed zoning for the parcels is shown in the following table.

| Parcel No | APN         | Address          | Parcel Description         | County Zoning Designation              | City Zoning Designation       | Approximate Assessed Acreage | Assessed Land value |
|-----------|-------------|------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1         | 036-111-009 | 0 Lance Dr       | Vacant                     | R2 B6 11 DU,<br>R3 B6 20 DU,<br>LG/LAN | R-3-18SA<br>and R-3-30-<br>SA | 14                           | \$ 91,855           |
| 2         | 036-111-010 | 1696<br>Lance Dr | Vacant                     | R2 B6 11 DU,<br>LG/LAN VOH             | R-3-18                        | 5                            | \$ 64,175           |
| 3         | 036-111-011 | 1705<br>Lance Dr | Single Family<br>Residence | R3 B6 20 DU,<br>LG/LAN VOH             | R-3-30-SA                     | 1                            | \$101,159           |

| Parcel No | APN         | Address             | Parcel Description      | County Zoning Designation      | City Zoning Designation | Approximate Assessed Acreage | Assessed Land value |
|-----------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 4         | 036-111-016 | 1601 Lance Dr       | Vacant Unused           | C2, R3 B6 20 DU, LG/LAN VOH WH | R-3-30-SA and CN-SA     | 13                           | \$169,005           |
| 5         | 036-111-002 | 1680 Lance Dr       | Single Family Residence | R3 B6 20 DU, LG/LAN VOH        | R-3-30-SA               | 1                            | \$226,567           |
| 6         | 036-091-061 | 1550 Guerneville Rd | PGE Substation          | AR B6 5, VOH                   | R-3-30-SA               | 2                            | \$376,880           |

## Reason for Proposal

The applicant is requesting annexation to allow for the development of the affected territory within the City. Five of the parcels are under contract for sale to the applicant upon the completion of annexation.

The proposed phased development (“Project”) is a mixed-use community with residential and retails uses including 772 dwelling units consisting of 672 apartments, 100 single family residences, two residential clubhouses and 5000 square feet of retail space. It is within the Santa Rosa North Station Area Priority Development Area centered around the Santa Rosa North Smart Station. Development within this area is guided by the City’s North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan (“Specific Plan”), adopted in 2012. The goals of the Specific Plan are to create a transit supportive environment through increasing residential density, promoting economic development, improving pedestrian bicycle, auto, and transit connections between the station and adjacent destinations and enhancing the esthetics of the area.

The City has stated that it has the capacity to serve the affected territory and proposed development.

Annexation of the territory is a logical extension of the City boundary and eliminates a large unincorporated island.

A map of the annexation boundary is attached (Attachment 1).

## City Actions and Environmental Consideration:

### *North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan*

Regional efforts to develop a commuter rail service came to fruition with the establishment of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) agency, which planned 14 train stations along the Northwestern Pacific railroad corridor in Marin and Sonoma counties. In 2010, the City began preparing the Specific Plan consistent with the City’s 2035 General Plan, to guide future development of a large area surrounding a potential SMART station, to be located west of U.S. Highway 101 at the southeast corner of Guerneville Road at the railroad.

The objectives of the Specific Plan were:

- Establish a land use plan, zoning, and a design framework that will guide future development and redevelopment activities.
- Intensify land uses and increase residential densities in the project area to support future transit improvements and ridership and to exceed the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) residential unit thresholds.
- Improve pedestrian, bicycle, auto, and transit access in the project area.
- Enhance connectivity between the station site and adjacent commercial, residential, educational, and governmental areas.
- Improve aesthetics and public safety through physical design and streetscape improvements.
- Develop and implement urban design standards that promote a walkable environment.
- Enhance quality of life in the project area by providing parks, trails, and recreational opportunities
- Transform the project area into a vibrant and distinct place that people want to visit.
- Catalyze economic development and promote economic competitiveness in the project area by providing employment opportunities.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting sustainable transit-oriented development and practical alternative modes of transport to the automobile.
- Inform the community about transit-oriented design concepts.
- Maximize public participation in the specific plan process through a comprehensive community involvement strategy.

The Specific Plan addresses potential land uses; station access, circulation, and infrastructure; land-use regulations; infrastructure development and financing implementation strategies; and design guidelines to encourage transit-oriented development within the project area.

On September 18, 2012, the Council approved a General Plan amendment to allow adoption of the Specific Plan and adopted the Specific Plan as part of Resolution No. 28188. (Attachment 2).

The City Council pre-zoned the unincorporated County territory located within the Station Area Specific Plan consistent with the land-use designations of its General Plan and the Specific Plan as part of Ordinance 3993 (Attachment 2). The pre-zoning for the six parcels is presented in the previous table.

### **Environmental Determination:**

*Environmental Impact Report for North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan*

The City, as lead agency, prepared a program Final Environmental Report (EIR) for the Specific Plan pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168. The City Council certified the EIR in September 2012 in Resolution No. 28187 (Attachment 2).

The EIR determined that many of the potential impacts on the environment found with approval of the Specific Plan could be mitigated to minimize or reduce those impacts and adopted a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. These impacts included Aesthetics and Visual Resources (light glare), Air Quality, Biological Resources, Hazardous Materials and Human Health, Land Use, Noise, Public Services and Utilities, Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases.

The Council also determined that even with specified mitigation, cumulatively considerable and significant effects of the implementation of the Specific Plan would remain in two areas:

- Air Quality. Implementation of the Station Area Specific Plan, in combination with cumulative development in the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin, would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone and coarse and fine particulate matter. This impact was considered cumulatively considerable and significant and unavoidable.
- Traffic and circulation. The three Highway 101 freeway segments from downtown Santa Rosa to College Avenue, College Avenue to Steele Lane, and Steele Lane to Bicentennial Avenue were projected to operate below CalTrans' LOS standard of the LOS C/D threshold in the future, both with and without the Station Area Specific Plan. The incremental increase in traffic associated with the Station Area Specific Plan that would be added to Highway 101 was considered to be cumulatively considerable and significant and unavoidable.

As a result, the Council weighed the economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project and the significant unavoidable impacts, determined that the benefits outweighed the risks and adverse environmental impacts, determined that the significant unavoidable impacts were acceptable, and adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the project. The City's actions are included in Resolution No. 28188 (Attachment 2).

### ***Environmental Checklist***

The Applicant's consultant has prepared an Environmental Checklist (Checklist) using CEQA Guidelines Section 15182 implementing California Government Code Section 65457 which provides exemptions for certain residential commercial and mixed-use projects that are consistent with an adopted specific plan for which an EIR was certified. These exemptions are facially not applicable to reorganizations. However, additionally, the Checklist uses CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c) which specifies that program EIRs can be used for later activities provided that those "later activities are examined in light of the program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared... and where the later activities involve site specific operations, the

agency should use a written checklist or similar device to document the evaluation of the site and the activity to determine whether the environmental effects of the operation were within the scope of the program EIR.”

Pursuant to Guidelines section 15168, the City reviewed the project to determine whether it could result in substantial changes in circumstances or new information of substantial importance that result in new or more substantially more significant effects or new feasible mitigation measures or alternatives. It determined that:

1. The project was consistent with the Specific Plan and the Specific Plan EIR.
2. No substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the project would be undertaken that would require major revisions to the Specific Plan EIR.
3. No new information that has become available since the plan EIR was certified.

Sonoma LAFCO is a responsible agency for the proposal. As a responsible agency, should the Commission approve the proposal, it must consider the information in the City of Santa Rosa North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan EIR, adopt a statement of overriding considerations for the project, and concur with the findings in the checklist that the Project is within the scope of the EIR.

### **Waiver of Notice of Hearing and Protest Proceedings**

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 56662, as the affected territory is uninhabited as defined in Section 56079.5, no affected local agency has submitted a written demand for notice and hearing, and all owners of properties within the annexation boundary have given their written consent to the proposed reorganization, the Commission may make determinations upon the proposal without notice and hearing and waive protest proceedings.

### **Individual Factors for Consideration**

California Government Code §56668 describes 17 factors to be considered in the Commission’s review of a proposal. The review must include, but is not limited to, consideration of these factors that are outlined and addressed in Attachment 3.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

---

Adopt the proposed resolution (Attachment 4) taking the following actions:

1. Approve the reorganization, pursuant to the following findings and determinations:
  - a. The affected territory is contiguous to the City boundary and within the City’s sphere of influence, the City’s Urban Growth Boundary and the urban service area boundary of the Sonoma County General Plan.

- b. The reasons for the reorganization are to provide access to City services and support development for needed housing. The City has determined that it can provide services to the affected territory upon annexation.
  - c. The proposal is consistent with the Sonoma County General Plan.
2. Certify review and consideration of information contained in the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report and the Environmental Checklist prepared by the City of Santa Rosa.
    - a. Make findings required of a responsible agency in accordance with the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.
    - b. Make a Statement of Overriding Considerations for Air Quality and Transportation and Circulation.
    - c. Direct staff to file a notice of determination in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.
  3. Waive protest proceedings pursuant to Section 56662 of the California Government Code, in that the affected territory is uninhabited pursuant to Section 56079.5; no affected local agency has submitted a written demand for notice and hearing; and all owner of land have given written consent to the proposal.

### **Alternatives to Recommendation**

---

None. Annexation of the territory is a logical extension of the City boundary and eliminates a large unincorporated island. The developer has submitted a development plan that has been found by the City to be consistent with its policies and General Plan. The project will provide much needed housing for the County.

### **Attachments**

---

1. Preliminary Map and Boundary Description
2. Factors for Consideration
3. Draft Resolution
4. Due to file size, links to the documents listed below were sent to commissioners by email and made available on the website.
  - A. City Resolutions and Ordinance
  - B. North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan
  - C. North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan Draft EIR and Appendices
  - D. North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan Final EIR
  - E. North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan EIR Mitigation and Monitoring Program
  - F. Environmental Checklist Lance Drive Project
  - G. North Santa Rosa Station Specific Plan Water Supply Assessment
  - H. City 2020 Water Urban Management Plan