

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT FINDINGS OF FACT AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MONTALDO APARTMENTS PROJECT

1. Introduction

The purpose of these findings is to satisfy the requirements of Sections 15091, 15092, and 15093 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The City of Sonoma (City) as lead agency has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Montaldo Apartments Project (proposed project or project) (State Clearinghouse No. 2024070476). Refer to Chapter II of the Draft EIR, “Project Description,” for more detail.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21000, et seq. and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Sections 15000, et seq.) require an EIR where a project may or will have significant impacts on the environment. Prior to approval of the project, the EIR must be certified pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15090. When an EIR is certified which identifies one or more significant environmental impacts, the approving agency must make one or more of the following findings, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091, for each identified significant impact:

1. Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, such project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final environmental impact report.
2. Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency, or can and should be adopted by such other agency.
3. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15092 states that, after consideration of an EIR, and in conjunction with making the Section 15091 findings identified above, the lead agency may decide whether or how to approve or carry out the project. A project that would result in a significant environmental impact cannot be approved if feasible mitigation measures or feasible alternatives can avoid or substantially lessen the impact.

However, in the absence of feasible mitigation, an agency may approve a project with significant and unavoidable impacts, if there are specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations that outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects. CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires the lead agency to document and substantiate any such determination in a “statement of overriding considerations” as a part of the record.

The requirements of CEQA Guidelines sections 15091, 15092, and 15093 are all addressed herein. This document summarizes the findings of fact and statement of overriding considerations authorized by those provisions of the CEQA Guidelines for the proposed project.

2. Project Objectives

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15124, the EIR must identify the objectives sought by the project. The stated objectives of the project applicant are to:

- Redevelop an underutilized site in an urban infill location with dwelling units and open space amenities.
- Contribute to the General Plan's Housing Element goals and the Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG's) Regional Housing Needs Allocation for the City of Sonoma.
- Contribute to the City's goals for providing affordable housing units in the City of Sonoma.
- Produce a high-quality architectural and landscape design that encourages variety, is compatible with its surrounding context, and promotes sustainability through environmentally sensitive design features that meet the requirements of the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) and the California Energy Code.
- Develop the project site to encompass ample open space amenities for building residents and encourage use of common residential open space.
- Address the comments provided by the City's Planning Commission by preserving the large valley oak tree along the project frontage and developing the site with a modern Spanish architecture in tribute to the existing home.
- Provide off-street vehicle parking that is adequate for the occupancy proposed pursuant to Section 19.48.040 of the Sonoma Municipal Code.
- Construct a sufficient number of dwelling units to make redevelopment of the site economically feasible by producing a reasonable return on investment for the project, attracting investment capital and construction financing, and generating sufficient revenue to provide onsite affordable housing units

3. Procedural Findings

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR on July 12, 2024. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15023 and 15087(f), the State Clearinghouse in the Governor's Office of Planning Research (OPR) was responsible for distributing environmental documents to State agencies for review and comments. The City followed required procedures with regard to distribution of the appropriate notices and environmental documents to the State Clearinghouse. The State Clearinghouse was obligated to make and did make that information available to interested agencies for review and comment. Section 1.4, CEQA Environmental Review Process, of the Draft EIR includes comments received on the NOP.

The Draft EIR was circulated for a 45-day public review period beginning on May 12, 2025 and concluding on June 25, 2025, during which agencies and the public submitted public comments and input. After the close of the public review period, the City prepared a Final EIR including copies of comments submitted on the Draft EIR, responses to the comments, and minor changes to the text of the Draft EIR.

A response to comments was prepared and made available to public agencies and individuals commenting on the EIR more than 10-days prior to the Planning Commission meeting of August 19, 2025. It consisted of Comments and Responses to Comments on the Draft EIR; Errata to the Draft EIR; and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

4. Record of Proceedings

In accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21167.6, subdivision (e), the record of proceedings for the City Council's decision on the project includes the following documents, which are incorporated by reference and made part of the record supporting these findings:

- ▶ The NOP, comments received on the NOP and all other public notices issued by the City Council in relation to the Draft EIR (e.g., Notice of Availability);
- ▶ The Draft EIR and all appendices to the Draft EIR and technical materials cited in the Draft EIR;
- ▶ The Response to Comments document that together with the Draft EIR form the Final EIR;
- ▶ All presentation materials related to the project;
- ▶ All comments submitted by agencies or members of the public during the comment period on the Draft EIR;
- ▶ The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project; and
- ▶ Any additional items not included above if otherwise required by law.

The documents constituting the record of proceedings are available upon request for review by responsible agencies and interested members of the public, at the Planning Department Public

Counter at City Hall, City of Sonoma, No. 1 The Plaza, Sonoma, CA 95476 from Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am – Noon and 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm. The custodian of these documents is Diane Levine, Associate Planner.

5. Findings Required Under CEQA

Public Resources Code Section 21002 provides that “public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects.” The same statute states that the procedures required by CEQA “are intended to assist public agencies in systematically identifying both the significant effects of proposed projects and the feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures which will avoid or substantially lessen such significant effects.” Section 21002 of the Public Resources Code goes on to state that “in the event [that] specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or such mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects thereof.”

The mandate and principles in Public Resources Code Section 21002 are implemented, in part, through the requirement that agencies must adopt findings before approving projects for which EIRs are required. For each significant environmental effect identified in an EIR for a proposed project, the approving agency must issue a written finding reaching one or more of three permissible conclusions.

The first such finding is that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091[a][1]). For purposes of these findings, the term “avoid” refers to the effectiveness of one or more mitigation measures to reduce an otherwise significant effect to a less-than-significant level. In contrast, the term “substantially lessen” refers to the effectiveness of such measure or measures to substantially reduce the severity of a significant effect, but not to reduce that effect to a less-than-significant level.

The second permissible finding is that such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding, and that such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency (CEQA Guidelines Section 15091[a][2]).

The third potential conclusion is that specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the Final EIR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15091[a][3]). “Feasible” means capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors (CEQA Guidelines Section 15364). The concept of “feasibility” also encompasses the question of whether a particular alternative or mitigation measure promotes the underlying goals and objectives of a project. Moreover, “‘feasibility’ under CEQA encompasses ‘desirability’ to the extent that desirability is based on a reasonable balancing of the relevant economic, environmental, social, legal, and technological factors” (*City of Del Mar v. City*

of San Diego (1982) 133 Cal.App.3d 410, 417).

With respect to a project for which significant impacts are not avoided or substantially lessened, a lead agency, after adopting proper findings, may nevertheless approve the project if the agency first adopts a statement of overriding considerations setting forth the specific reasons in support of the finding that the project benefits outweigh its unavoidable adverse environmental effects. In the process of considering the project EIR for certification, the City has recognized that impact avoidance is not possible in all instances. To the extent that significant adverse environmental impacts will not be reduced to a less-than-significant level with the adopted mitigation, the City has found that specific economic, social, and other considerations support approval of the proposed project. Those findings are reflected herein in Section 5, "Findings Required under CEQA," and in Section 7, "Statement of Overriding Considerations," below.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The Draft EIR identified a number of less-than-significant impacts associated with the proposed project that do not require mitigation. The Draft EIR also identified significant and potentially significant environmental effects (or impacts) that may be caused in whole or in part by the proposed project. Most of these significant effects can be fully avoided or substantially lessened through the adoption of feasible mitigation measures. One effect cannot be, and thus is determined to be significant and unavoidable. For reasons set forth in Section 7, "Statement of Overriding Considerations," however, the City has determined that overriding economic, social, technological, and other considerations outweigh the significant, unavoidable environmental effect of the proposed project.

The findings of the City with respect to the project's significant effects and mitigation measures are set forth in the Draft EIR, Final EIR, and these Findings of Fact. The Summary of Findings does not attempt to regurgitate the full analysis of each environmental impact contained in the Draft EIR and Final EIR. Please refer to the Draft EIR and the Final EIR for more detail – both documents are on file with the City of Sonoma at the Planning Department Public Counter at City Hall, City of Sonoma, No. 1 The Plaza, Sonoma, CA 95476 from Monday through Thursday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm and also on the City's project website at: <https://www.sonomacity.org/montaldo-apartments/>.

The Final EIR, including the Draft EIR, is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety and the conclusions of the Final EIR are summarized in this document.

The Summary of Findings provides a summary description of each potentially significant and significant impact, describes the applicable mitigation measures identified in the EIR and adopted by the City, and states the findings of the City regarding the significance of each impact after imposition of the adopted mitigation measures. A full explanation of these environmental findings and conclusions can be found in the Final EIR and the associated administrative record (described herein).

The City hereby ratifies, adopts, and incorporates the analysis and explanation in the record into these findings, and ratifies, adopts, and incorporates in these findings the determinations and conclusions of the Draft EIR and Final EIR relating to environmental impacts and mitigation measures, except to the extent any such determinations and conclusions are specifically and expressly modified by these findings.

In adopting these Findings, the City finds that the EIR was presented to the decision-making body, that the City reviewed and considered the information in the EIR prior to approving the proposed project, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the City.

5.2 Findings Regarding EIR Errata

CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 requires a lead agency to recirculate an EIR when “significant new information” is added to the EIR, after the lead agency gives public notice of the availability of the EIR, but before certification. “Information” may include project changes, changes to the environmental setting, or additional data or other information. The CEQA Guidelines do not consider new information to be significant unless the lead agency changes the EIR in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment on a substantial adverse environmental effect or a feasible way to mitigate the impact that the agency or project proponent has declined to implement.

Section 15088.5 states “significant new information” requiring recirculation may include:

1. A new significant environmental impact that had not previously been disclosed in the Draft EIR would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure;
2. A substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact that had already been identified unless mitigation measures would be adopted to reduce the impact to a level of insignificance;
3. A feasible project alternative or mitigation measure would considerably lessen the significant environmental impacts of the project, but the proponents will not adopt it; or
4. The Draft EIR was so inadequate and conclusory that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.

5.2.1 Revision to the EIR and Errata to FEIR

In response to comments from the public and other public agencies on the Draft EIR, the project has incorporated changes into the Final EIR, which are described in Chapter 3, “Errata,” of the Final EIR. The changes to the Draft EIR make factual and typographical corrections and do not substantively change the analysis or alternatives presented in the Draft EIR. The changes to the cultural resource mitigation measures and one new tribal cultural resource mitigation measure strengthen existing mitigation measures for protection of potential tribal cultural resources as requested during tribal consultation do not substantially change the analysis or findings. No significant new information has been added to the EIR since public notice was given of the availability of the Draft EIR. Therefore, recirculation of the EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5 is not required.

5.3 Findings Regarding Less Than Significant Impacts (No Mitigation Required)

Under CEQA, no mitigation measures are required for impacts that are less than significant. (Public Resources Code, § 21002; CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15126.4, subd. (a)(3), 15091.) The City of Sonoma finds that the project will not result in any significant impact in the following areas and that these impacts areas do not require mitigation.

These Findings are based on the analyses conducted for the project as described in Chapter III and Appendix A (Initial Study) of the Draft EIR, which are incorporated by reference herein to these Findings.

Aesthetics

- Substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista (Impact AE-1)
- Substantial damage to scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway (Impact AE-2)
- Substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality (Impact AE-3)
- New source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area (Impact AE-4)
- Significant cumulative impact related to aesthetics (C-AE-1)

Agriculture and Forestry Resources

- Conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use (Impact AG-1)
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract (Impact AG-2)
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g)), or result in the loss of forest resources (Impact AG-3)
- Other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use (Impact AG-4)

Air Quality

- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan (Impact AIR-1)

Biologic Resources

- Adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Impact BIO-2)
- Adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means (Impact BIO-3)

- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites (Impact BIO-4)
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan (Impact BIO-6)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in significant cumulative impacts on biological resources (Impact C-BIO-1)

Cultural Resources

- In combination with cumulative projects, result in significant cumulative impacts to archaeological resources or human remains (Impact C-CR-2)

Energy

- Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation (Impact EN-1)
- Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency (Impact EN-2)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in significant cumulative impacts related to the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources or conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency (Impact C-EN-1)

Geology and Soils

- Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault (Impact GEO-1)
- Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving strong seismic ground shaking (Impact GEO-2)
- Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction or landslide (Impact GEO-3)
- Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil (Impact GEO-4)
- Require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems (Impact GEO-5)
- In combination with cumulative projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts on geology, soils, or paleontological resources (Impact C-GEO-1)

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy

- Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment (Impact GHG-1)
- Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases (Impact GHG-2)

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials (Impact HAZ-1)
- Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment (Impact HAZ-2)
- Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school (Impact HAZ-3)
- Located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment (Impact HAZ-4)
- Located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport (Impact HAZ-5)
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan (Impact HAZ-6)
- Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires (Impact HAZ-7)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact related to hazards and hazardous materials (Impact C-HAZ-1)

Hydrology and Water Quality

- Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality (Impact HYD-1)
- Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin (Impact HYD-2)
- Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site, substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or impede or redirect flood flows (Impact HYD-3)

- Result in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation (Impact HYD-4)
- Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan (Impact HYD-5)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact on hydrology and water quality (Impact C-HYD-1)

Land Use

- Physically divide an established community (Impact LU-1)
- Cause a significant physical environmental impact due to a conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect (Impact LU-2)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact related to land use and planning (Impact C-LU-1)

Mineral Resources

- Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and the residents of the state, or locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan (Impact MIN-1)

Noise and Vibration

- Generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels (Impact NOI-2)
- Located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport (Impact NOI-3)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact on noise (Impact C-NOI-1)

Population and Housing

- Induce substantial unplanned population growth, either directly or indirectly (Impact POP-1)
- Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing units, necessitating the construction of replacement housing outside (Impact POP-2)
- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact related to population and housing (Impact C-POP-1)

Public Services

- Result in an increase in demand for fire protection, police protection, schools, or other services to an extent that would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the construction or alteration of governmental facilities (Impact PS-1)
- Combined with cumulative projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts on police, fire, and school district services such that new or physically altered facilities, the

construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, would be required in order to maintain acceptable levels of service (Impact C-PS-1)

Recreation

- 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, or such that the project would require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment (Impact REC-1)
- Combined with cumulative projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts related to recreation (Impact C-REC-1)

Transportation

- Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities (Impact TR-1)
- Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b) (Impact TR-2)
- Result in inadequate emergency access (Impact TR-4)
- In combination with cumulative projects, would not result in a significant construction-related cumulative impact on transportation and circulation (Impact C-TR-1)

Utilities and Service Systems

- Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded, water, wastewater treatment, or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects (Impact UT-1)
- Project and reasonably foreseeable future development would have sufficient water supplies available during normal, dry, and multiple dry years (Impact UT-2)
- Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments (Impact UT-3)
- Result in significant impact related to the generation of solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals (Impact UT-4)
- Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste (Impact UT-5)
- In combination with cumulative projects, would not result in significant cumulative impacts on utilities and service systems (Impact C-UT-1)

Tribal Cultural Resources

- In combination with cumulative projects, result in a significant cumulative impact on tribal cultural resources (Impact C-TCR-1)

Wildfire

- Impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan (Impact WD-1)
- Exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire (Impact WD-2)
- Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment (Impact WD-3)
- Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes (Impact WD-4)
- Contribute to significant cumulative wildfire impact (Impact C-WD-1)

5.4 Findings Regarding Significant Environmental Impacts Mitigated to a Level of Less than Significant

The City, having reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR, hereby finds pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21081(a)(1) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(a)(1) that the following potentially significant impacts would be less than significant after implementation of the specified mitigation measures. These findings are based on the discussion of impacts in the Draft EIR, Chapter III – Environmental Settings, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures and Appendix A (Initial Study) of the Draft EIR, incorporated by reference herein, and as more fully described below.

The City, as the Lead Agency, prepared the Draft EIR and found that the project would result in less than significant environmental impacts with implementation of mitigation measures with regard to:

Air Quality

Impact AIR-2: Cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure AIR-2 on page 6 of the Draft EIR and page 26 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.3 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), the project would comply with the Bay Area Air District's (BAAD) best management

practices to control dust during construction. Mitigation Measure AIR-2 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the impacts associated with construction-related fugitive emissions.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-2, the impact would be less than significant.

Impact AIR-3: Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure AIR-3 on page 6 of the Draft EIR and page 27 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.3 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), the project would use construction equipment that meet Tier 4 final engine standards of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which would reduce cancer risk below the significance threshold.

Mitigation Measure AIR-3 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the health risk impacts associated with the project construction.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-3, the impact would be less than significant.

Impact C-AIR-1: In combination with reasonably foreseeable future development, result in a significant cumulative air quality impact

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure AIR-3 on page 6 of the Draft EIR and page 26 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.3 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), the project would use construction equipment that meet Tier 4 final engine standards of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which would reduce the project contribution to significant cumulative air quality impacts.

Mitigation Measure AIR-3 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the air quality impacts associated with the project construction.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure AIR-3, the impact would be less than significant.

Biological Resources

Impact BIO-1: Substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a, BIO-1b, and BIO-1c on page 9 of the Draft EIR and page 31 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.4 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), the project would conduct biological surveys prior to demolition and trees removal, which would reduce the potential project impact on pallid bat, crotch's bumble bee, as well as special-status birds and other nesting birds.

Mitigation Measures BIO-1a, 1b, and 1c has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the project impacts on biological resources.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1a, 1b, and 1c, the impact would be less than significant.

Impact BIO-5: Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure BIO-5 on page 12 of the Draft EIR and page 33 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.4 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), the project would include the preparation of a Tree Protection Plan that would include specific tree protection measures near grading, construction, and landscaping improvements, which would prevent wounding of tree trunks and major roots during construction.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the project impacts on biological resources.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-5, the impact would be less than significant.

Cultural Resources (Archaeological Resources and Human Remains)

Impact CR-2: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological

resource pursuant to § 15064.5

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measures CR-2a and CR-2b on page 16 of the Draft EIR and page 38 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.5 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR) and updated in the Responses to Comments document, to reduce potential project impacts on archaeological and tribal cultural resources the Project Applicant or their contractor would retain an archaeologist who meets or exceeds the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology to conduct a Worker's Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction personnel on archaeological sensitivity prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activities, in coordination with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). In addition, construction activities would be halted if archaeological resources are encountered during construction; if archaeological and/or tribal cultural resources are discovered, the City, in coordination with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria THPO, will oversee the preparation of an evaluation of materials to determine the appropriate avoidance measures or other appropriate mitigation.

Mitigation Measures CR-2a and CR-2b has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the potential project impacts on archaeological resources.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-2a and CR-2b, the impact would be less than significant.

Impact CR-3: Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure CR-3 on page 17 of the Draft EIR and page 38 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.5 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR) and updated in the Responses to Comments document, to reduce potential project impacts on the inadvertent discovery of human remains during construction, Mitigation Measure CR-3 calls for compliance with applicable regulations, halting construction or excavation in vicinity of discovered human remains, and contacting the County coroner, a professional archaeologist, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria THPO.

Mitigation Measure CR-3 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the potential project impacts on human remains.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which

mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-3, the impact would be less than significant.

Geology and Soils

Impact GEO-6: Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure GEO-6 on page 20 of the Draft EIR and page 45 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.7 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), to reduce potential project impacts of encountering previously unknown paleontological resources during construction, Mitigation Measure GEO-6 calls for retaining a qualified paleontologist during earthmoving and excavation activities, ceasing all work in the event of a discovery of paleontological resources, and following the recommendations of the City of Sonoma that would be outlined in a recovery plan.

Mitigation Measure GEO-6 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the potential project impacts on paleontological resources.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-6, the impact would be less than significant.

Noise and Vibration

Impact NOI-1: Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1 on page 24 of the Draft EIR and page 66 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.13 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), to reduce project noise levels during construction, Mitigation Measure NOI-1 calls for the preparation of a construction mitigation plan.

Mitigation Measure NOI-1 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the project noise impact.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which

mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure NOI-1, the impact would be less than significant.

Transportation

Impact TR-3: Increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measure TR-3 on page 28 of the Draft EIR and page 79 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.17 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), to reduce hazards associated with line of sight at the project's driveway access, Mitigation Measure TR-3 calls for maintaining roadside structures or landscape out of the line of sight.

Mitigation Measure TR-3 has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the project transportation impact.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measure TR-3, the impact would be less than significant.

Tribal Cultural Resources

Impact TCR-1: Result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measures CR-2a, CR-2b, and CR-3 on page 28 of the Draft EIR and page 83 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), and Mitigation Measure TCR-1 on page 32 of the Response to Comments, which will substantially lessen the potentially significant environmental impact.

Facts in Support of Finding: As discussed in Section B.18 of the Initial Study (Appendix A of the Draft EIR), and updated in the Responses to Comments document the project would include the implementation of Mitigation Measure CR-2a, CR-2b, CR-3, and TCR-1 to reduce potential project impact on previously undiscovered historic or archaeological resources, and human remains which are considered tribal cultural resources. Mitigation Measures CR-2a and CR-2b, requires retaining an archaeologist who meets or exceeds the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for archaeology to conduct a Worker's Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all construction personnel on archaeological sensitivity prior to the commencement of any ground-disturbing activities, in coordination with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria THPO. In addition, construction activities would be halted if archaeological resources are encountered during construction; if archaeological and/or tribal cultural resources are discovered, the City, in coordination with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria THPO,

will oversee the preparation of an evaluation of materials to determine the appropriate avoidance measures or other appropriate mitigation.

Mitigation Measure CR-3 calls for compliance with applicable regulations, halting construction or excavation in vicinity of discovered human remains, and contacting the County coroner, a professional archaeologist, and the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria THPO. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 calls for retain a tribal monitor from the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria to monitor all initial ground disturbing and grading work and halting construction activities at the location of a discovery to review possible archaeological or tribal cultural resource material and to protect the resource while the materials are being assessed.

Mitigation Measures CR-2a, CR-2b, and CR-3 have been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to reduce potential impact on tribal cultural resources. Mitigation Measure TCR-1 has been added during the preparation of the Responses to Comments document and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to reduce potential impact on tribal cultural resources.

Therefore, changes or alterations have been required in or incorporated into the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment. Following the implementation of Mitigation Measures CR-2a, CR-2b, CR-3, and TCR-1, the impact would be less than significant.

5.5 Findings Regarding Environmental Impacts Not Fully Mitigated to a Level of Less than Significant

The following significant and potentially significant environmental impact of the proposed project is unavoidable and cannot be mitigated in a manner that would reduce the environmental impact to a less-than-significant level.

The City finds that the project's environmental, economic, social, and other benefits outweigh and override the significant adverse impact related to change in the environment. The City hereby elects to approve the project due to overriding considerations as set forth in Section 7 of this document, "Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Cultural Resources (Historical Resources)

Impact CR-1: Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 15064.5.

Finding: Based on the Record, the City finds that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, including the incorporation of Mitigation Measures CR-1a, CR-1b, and CR-1c on pages 14 through 16 and pages 73 and 74 of the Draft EIR, would lessen the significant environmental impact on historical resources. However, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make additional mitigation measures or alternatives infeasible.

Facts in Support of Finding: Section III.4 of the Draft EIR evaluates the project with respect to historical resources. The single-family house at the project site was determined to be eligible

for listing in the California Register for its architecture and its association with the Ranch and “Spanish Colonial Revival” architectural styles. The house was also found to retain its integrity.

The demolition of the single-family home would remove historic materials, features, and spaces that characterize the property and would result in physical destruction such that the significance of the individual historical resource would be materially impaired.

Mitigation Measures CR-1a, CR-1b, and CR-1c has been proposed in the Draft EIR and incorporated into the conditions of approval for the project to address the impact on historical resources (Draft EIR pages 73 and 74). Measures include documentation of the historical resource, designing and undertaking appropriate interpellation of the historical resource, and giving local historical societies or local architectural salvage companies the opportunity to salvage character-defining features from the historical architectural resource for public information to reuse in other locations.

The Draft EIR concludes that the proposed project impact on historical resources would remain significant and unavoidable, and there is no additional feasible mitigation to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level. Please see Statement of Overriding Considerations below.

5.6 Findings Regarding Mitigation Monitoring

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) was prepared for the proposed project (see Public Resources Code Section 21081.6, subd. (a)(1); CEQA Guidelines section 15097). To the extent any of the mitigation measures are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of other agencies, the City finds those agencies can and should implement those measures within their responsibility and jurisdiction. The City will use the MMRP to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures. The MMRP will remain available for public review during the compliance period.

Pursuant to Section 15091 (a)(1) of the CEQA Guidelines, the City finds that implementation of the mitigation measures specified in the Final EIR would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects resulting from the implementation of the project. In accordance with Section 15091(d), and Section 15097 of the CEQA Guidelines, which require a public agency to adopt a program for reporting or monitoring required changes or conditions of approval to substantially lessen significant environmental effects, the MMRP provided in the Final EIR is hereby adopted as the MMRP for this project. Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 7, even with implementation of the mitigations as presented in the Draft EIR and the MMRP, impacts related to historical resources would remain significant and unavoidable.

6. Findings Regarding Alternatives

Public Resources Code Section 21002 provides that “public agencies should not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects.” Although an EIR must evaluate a range of potentially feasible alternatives, an agency decision-making body may ultimately conclude that a potentially feasible alternative is actually infeasible (*City of Santa Cruz, supra*, 177 Cal. Ap. 4th at p. 981, 999). The failure of an alternative to fully satisfy project objectives determined to be important by decision-makers, or the fact that an alternative fails to

promote policy objectives of concern to such decision makers, are grounds for finding an alternative to be infeasible. Thus, even if a project alternative will avoid or substantially less any of the significant environmental effects of a proposed project as mitigated, the decision-makers may reject the alternative for such reasons.

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 (a), the alternatives to be discussed in an EIR should be able to “feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project [.]” For this reason, the Project Objectives described in Section 2 of these Findings provided the framework for defining possible alternatives.

6.1 Alternatives Considered But Ultimately Rejected

Facade Preservation: The City of Sonoma considered partially demolishing the historical house and preserving the facade along SR 12. This alternative was found not feasible because of a combination of technical and design-related challenges.

North Access to the Project Site: The City of Sonoma considered the possibility of providing access to the site from the Olde Bowl Center and preserving both the single-family home and the large valley oak tree. This alternative was found not feasible because it would result in impacts related to traffic congestion, reduced parking availability, safety, maintenance and liability, privacy and security concerns, as well as noise.

South Access to the Project Site: The City considered providing access to the site from the parking of the multiple-unit residential complex located to the south of the project site. This alternative was found not feasible because it would result in impacts related to traffic congestion, reduced parking availability, safety, maintenance and liability, privacy and security concerns, as well as noise.

Alternative Project Location: The City evaluated the availability of alternative sites for a 50-unit project. However, the project site has been specifically identified for housing in the City’s Housing Element to meet the City’s regional housing needs allocation for multiple cycles. There are no available sites of this size available for multifamily housing. In addition, the project site is already owned by the developer who does not have another similarly-sized site in the City for this project. This alternative was found not feasible because it would result in impacts related to traffic congestion, reduced parking availability, safety, maintenance and liability, privacy and security concerns, as well as noise.

Alternatives Considered in the EIR

Alternatives were selected that would reduce the project’s significant impacts while still meeting most of the Project Objectives. Pursuant to the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, and in light of the Project Objectives, the following alternatives to the project were identified:

- No Project Alternative
- Southwest Site Access (Full Preservation Alternative)
- Onsite Relocation (Full Preservation Alternative)

- Partial Preservation Alternative

The City finds that a good faith effort was made to evaluate a range of potentially feasible alternatives in the Draft EIR that are reasonable alternatives to the project and could feasibly obtain most of the project objectives, even when the alternatives might affect the attainment of some of the objectives and might be more costly (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 (b)). As a result, the City finds that the scope of alternatives analyzed in the Draft EIR represents a reasonable range (see Draft EIR pages 80 through 112).

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B), the No Project Alternative is the "circumstance under which the project does not proceed." Under the No Project Alternative, construction of the project would not occur. No changes to the existing site would occur under the No Project Alternative.

There would be no significant impacts associated with the No Project Alternative, as described in Section V.8 of the Draft EIR. No impacts related to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, archaeological resources and human remains, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire would occur under this alternative.

While the No Project Alternative would eliminate the significant and unavoidable impacts related to historical resources, it would not meet any of the project objectives. The No Project Alternative would not achieve the project's basic objectives related to redeveloping an underutilized site in an urban infill location, meeting the City's Housing Element goals, providing affordable housing, producing a high-quality architectural and landscape design, providing ample open space amenities to future site residents, providing off-street parking for future site residents, developing the site to be economically feasible allowing sufficient revenue to provide onsite affordable housing.

Based on impacts identified in the Draft EIR and throughout this findings document, the City finds that the proposed project is the most desirable, feasible, and appropriate and rejects the other alternatives, including the No Project Alternative, and other combinations and/or variations of alternatives as infeasible.

Alternative 2: Southwest Site Access (Full Preservation Alternative)

The Southwest Site Access Alternative would preserve the existing single-family residence. Access to the project site would be provided south of the existing home along Sonoma Highway 12. This alternative would remove the large valley oak tree located at the southwest corner of the site to provide a 20-foot-wide drive aisle to the site. In addition, to construct 50 apartment units, the common open space provided under the proposed project would be replaced by one of the residential buildings.

The Southwest Site Access alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable impact of the project on the historic resource, as described Section V.9 of the Draft EIR. However, while it would remain below the significance level, impact of this alternative on biological resources would be

comparatively higher than that of the project because of the removal of the large valley oak tree. Potentially significant impacts related to air quality, cultural resources (archaeological resources and human remains, geology, soils, noise, as well as transportation would still occur and require mitigation, similar to the proposed project.

This alternative would reduce impacts compared to the project, as well as meet most of the Project Objectives, including contributing the City's goals of the Housing Element goals and the provision of affordable housing; developing the project site with a high-quality architectural and landscape design; and providing off-street parking for future residents. However, this alternative would result in the removal of large valley oak tree. In addition, this alternative would not meet the Project Objectives of developing a multi-unit residential complex with ample open space at an economically viable scale that could attract investment capital and generate sufficient revenue to provide affordable housing. Retaining the existing single-family home would introduce additional costs related to preservation, including structural reinforcement, foundation repair, seismic retrofitting, and asbestos and lead abatement. These additional costs would render the project financially infeasible and ineligible for construction financing.¹

Based on impacts identified in the Draft EIR and throughout this findings document, the City finds that the proposed project is the most desirable, feasible, and appropriate and rejects the other alternatives, including the Southwest Site Access Alternatives, and other combinations and/or variations of alternatives as infeasible.

Alternative 3: Onsite Relocation (Full Preservation Alternative)

Under the Onsite Relocation Alternative, the existing building would be relocated southward on the site to allow access from the north. This alternative would preserve the single-family residence as well as the valley oak tree. Similar to Southwest Site Access Alternative, to construct 50 apartment units, the common open space provided under the proposed project would be replaced by one of the residential buildings.

The Onsite Relocation Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative among the project alternatives. The Onsite Relocation Alternative would avoid the significant historical resource impact and would not cause any other significant impacts. The Onsite Relocation Alternative would result in impacts comparable to or less significant than those of the proposed project. The Onsite Relocation Alternative also meets or partially meets some of the project objectives.

The Onsite Relocation Alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable impact of the project on the historic house at the site because it would relocate the house on the same site to the south, as described in Section V.10 of the Draft EIR. Mitigation Measures CR-1a and CR-1b, identified for the proposed project would still apply to this alternative to document the historical property in the event of any damage during the relocation process. Mitigation Measure CR-1c would not apply to this alternative because the Onsite Relocation Alternative would preserve the character defining features of the single-family residence. Therefore, impacts of the Onsite Relocation Alternative on historic architectural resources would be less than significant with mitigation

¹ DeNova Homes. 2025. Letter from: Dana Tsubota, Chief Legal Officer. Re: Montaldo Apartments. July 14.

Similar to the project, potentially significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources (archaeological resources and human remains, geology, soils, noise, as well as transportation would also still occur under this alternative and require mitigation.

This alternative would reduce impacts compared to the project, as well as meet most of the Project Objectives, including contributing the City's goals of the Housing Element goals and the provision of affordable housing; developing the project site with a high-quality architectural and landscape design; and providing off-street parking for future residents. However, this alternative would not develop a multi-unit residential complex with ample open space. It would also not meet the project objective of developing the site an economically viable scale that could attract investment capital and generate sufficient revenue to provide affordable housing. In addition to the cost of retrofitting the single-family house described under the Southwest Site Access Alternative above, this alternative would require additional budget to disassemble and reconstruct the historical resources. These additional costs would render the project financially infeasible and ineligible for construction financing.²

Based on impacts identified in the Draft EIR and throughout this findings document, the City finds that the proposed project is the most desirable, feasible, and appropriate and rejects the other alternatives, including the Onsite Relocation Alternative, and other combinations and/or variations of alternatives as infeasible.

Alternative 4: Partial Preservation Alternative

Under the Partial Preservation Alternative, the small extension of the historical house along its south side would be demolished and the rest of the house would be preserved. This alternative would preserve the valley oak tree near SR 12. Similar to Southwest Site Access Alternative and the Onsite Relocation Alternative, to construct 50 apartment units, the common open space provided under the proposed project would be replaced by one of the residential buildings.

The Partial Preservation Alternative would avoid the significant and unavoidable impact of the project on the historical resource, as described in Section V.11 of the Draft EIR. However, this alternative would result in increased transportation impact compared to the proposed project. The site access would be constrained due to the limited width of the alley, which would result in restricted maneuvering space for cars and emergency vehicles. Similar to the project, potentially significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources (archaeological resources and human remains, geology, soils, and noise would still occur under this alternative and require mitigation.

This alternative would reduce impacts compared to the project, as well as meet most of the Project Objectives, including contributing the City's goals of the Housing Element goals and the provision of affordable housing; developing the project site with a high-quality architectural and landscape design; and providing off-street parking for future residents. However, this alternative would not develop a multi-unit residential complex with ample open space. It would also not meet the object of developing the site at an economically viable scale that could attract investment capital and generate sufficient revenue to provide affordable housing. This alternative would require demolition of the historical house extension from the south and similar retrofitting activities to

² DeNova Homes. 2025. Letter from: Dana Tsubota, Chief Legal Officer. Re: Montaldo Apartments. July 14.

those described under the Southwest Side Access Alternative, described above. These additional costs would render the project financially infeasible and ineligible for construction financing.³

Based on impacts identified in the Draft EIR and throughout this findings document, the City finds that the proposed project is the most desirable, feasible, and appropriate and rejects the other alternatives, including the Partial Preservation Alternative, and other combinations and/or variations of alternatives as infeasible.

7. Statement of Overriding Considerations

Pursuant to Section 21081 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines, the City adopts and makes the following statement of overriding considerations regarding the remaining significant unavoidable impacts of the project, as discussed above, and the anticipated economic, social, and other benefits of the proposed project.

The City finds and determines that (1) the majority of the significant impacts of the project will be reduced to less than significant levels by implementation of the mitigation measures recommended in these findings; (2) the City's approval of the project, as proposed, will result in a significant adverse environmental effect that cannot be avoided or reduced to a less-than-significant level even with the incorporation of all feasible mitigation measures into the project; and (3) there are no other feasible mitigation measures or feasible project alternatives that will further mitigate, avoid, or reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

In light of the environmental, social, economic, and other considerations identified in the findings for the project, and the considerations set forth below related to this project, the City chooses to approve the project because the economic, social, environmental, and other benefits resulting from the project substantially outweigh the project's significant and unavoidable adverse environmental effects.

The following statements identify the reasons why, in the City's judgment, the benefits of the project outweigh the significant and unavoidable effects. The substantial evidence supporting the enumerated benefits of the project can be found in the record of proceedings, as defined in Section 4 of this document. Each of the overriding considerations set forth below constitutes a separate and independent ground for finding that the benefits of the project outweigh its significant adverse environmental effects and is an overriding consideration warranting approval.

The City concludes that the project's relative benefits outweigh its residual environmental effects for the following reasons:

1. General Plan Consistency and Provision of affordable housing. The project as proposed and analyzed in the Draft EIR is consistent with the City's General Plan and Development Code with implementation of conditions of approval. The City's General Plan designates the entire site as "Housing Opportunity" that identifies sites suitable for higher density and affordable development, especially close to commercial centers and mixed-use areas, and is intended to provide opportunities for low and very low-income households. In addition, the proposed project

³ DeNova Homes. 2025. Letter from: Dana Tsubota, Chief Legal Officer. Re: Montaldo Apartments. July 14.

would be consistent with the City's Housing Element, which designates the project site as a pending residential project that will contribute toward addressing the 6th Cycle of the City's regional housing needs allocation.

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's Housing Element, as described in the General Plan, which is to (1) encourage diversity in the type, density, size, affordability, and tenure of residential development in Sonoma, while maintaining quality of life goals for the community (Policy H-1.1); (2) facilitate the development of affordable housing through regulatory incentives and concessions, and available financial assistance (Policy H-1.2); (3) use inclusionary zoning as a tool to integrate affordable units within market rate developments, and increase access to resources, amenities, and affordable housing opportunities throughout the community (Policy H-1.6); (4) provide regulatory incentives and concessions to offset the costs of affordable housing development while protecting quality of life goals (Policy H-4.1); (5) promote the use of sustainable construction techniques and environmentally sensitive design for all housing to include best practices in water conservation, low-impact drainage, and greenhouse gas reduction (Policy H-6.3); and (6) promote the use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy, cogeneration, and non-fossil fuels (Policy H-6.4).

The project proposal responds directly to the uses allowed and envisioned in the City's General Plan and would be consistent with the applicable General Plan policies, including applicable policies of the Community Development Element, Environmental Resources Element, Circulation Element, Public Safety Element, and Noise Element.

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's vision for community development as described in the General Plan, which is to: (1) Coordinate development on small contiguous lots to the extent possible (Policy CD-4.3); (2) include pedestrian and bicycle access and amenities in all development (Policy CD 4.4); (3) promote higher density, infill development, while ensuring that building mass, scale, and form are compatible with neighborhood and town character (Policy CD 5.5); and (4) pursue design consistency, improved pedestrian and bicycle access, and right-of-way beautification along the Highway 12 corridor (Policy CD 5.6).

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's plans for the environmental resources as described in the General Plan, which is to: (1) require new development to provide adequate private and, where appropriate, public open space (Policy ER 1.4); (2) preserve existing trees and plant new trees (Policy ER 2.6); and (3) encourage construction, building maintenance, landscaping, and transportation practices that promote energy and water conservation and reduce green-house gas emissions (Policy ER 3.2).

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's plans for circulation development as described in the General Plan, which is to: (1) eliminate gaps and obstructions in the sidewalk system (Policy CE 1.2); (2) promote bicycling as an efficient alternative to driving (Policy CE 2.1); (3) extend the bike path system, with a focus on establishing safe routes to popular destinations (Policy CE 2.2); (4) expand the availability of sheltered bicycle parking and other bicycle facilities (Policy CE 2.3); (5) incorporate bicycle facilities and amenities in new development (Policy CE 2.5); and (6) Encourage a mixture of uses and higher densities where appropriate to improve the viability of transit and pedestrian and bicycle travel (Policy CE-3.2).

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's plans for public safety as described in the General Plan, which is to: (1) require development to be designed and constructed in a manner that reduces the potential for damage and injury from natural and human causes to the extent possible (Policy PS1.1) and (2) ensure that all development projects provide adequate fire protection (Policy PS 1.3)

The proposed project would be consistent with the City's Plan to reduce noise as described in the General Plan, which is to apply the standard of 45 Night Average Sound Level (Ldn) for indoor environments in all residential units (Policy NE 1.1).

2. Housing Benefits to the City of Sonoma. The project would provide housing opportunities for current and future residents. Implementation of the project would increase and diversify the housing supply in the City. The proposed project would provide 50 residential units, including 13 affordable housing units consisting of two extremely low, three very low, and eight low income. All units would provide a minimum of two bedrooms and two bathrooms and ample open space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Pedestrian safety would increase due to public improvements with the provision of sidewalk installation proposed as part of the project. The proposed project would provide an increase in the availability of housing, including affordable housing and would contribute toward addressing the 6th Cycle of the City's regional housing needs allocation.

8. Conclusion

The City has independently prepared and circulated the draft EIR and appendices and those documents, which reflect the City's independent review, analysis, and judgment pursuant to CEQA.

As part of the certification of the Final EIR, the City finds that the Final EIR reflects the independent judgment of the City, acting in its capacity as the Lead Agency. As required by CEQA, the City in adopting these Findings, also adopts the MMRP. The City hereby finds that the MMRP meets the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 by providing for the implementation and monitoring of the project mitigation measures set forth herein, which mitigate significant impacts associated with the project and are fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, these findings, and other measures.