



City of Petaluma
Notice of Preparation – Environmental Impact Report
Downtown Housing and Economic Opportunity Overlay and
EKN Appellation Hotel Project

Date: April 12, 2024

To: California State Clearinghouse
Responsible and Trustee Agencies
Interested Parties and Organizations

Subject: **Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Downtown Housing and Economic Opportunity Overlay and EKN Appellation Hotel Project and Scheduling of Scoping Meeting**

Lead Agency: **City of Petaluma**

NOP Availability: A copy of the NOP and Initial Study is available for review at the Petaluma Community Development Department, and on the City of Petaluma website: [ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY OVERLAY & EKN APPELLATION Projects - Petaluma \(cityofpetaluma.org\)](https://www.cityofpetaluma.org/projects/economic-opportunity-overlay-ekn-appellation-hotels).

Comment Period: **April 12, 2024, through May 13, 2024**
Written comments should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 pm on May 13, 2024.

NOP Scoping Mtg: **May 1, 2024, 5:15 pm -6:15**
Petaluma Community Center
In addition to the opportunity to submit written comments, a scoping meeting will be held to inform interested parties about the project, and to provide agencies and the public with an opportunity to comment on the scope and content of the EIR. Information on the date and time of the scoping meeting is provided below.

EIR Scoping Meeting

May 1, 2024 | 5:15 PM – 6:15 PM
Petaluma Community Center, Conference Room #2
320 North McDowell Boulevard
Petaluma, CA 94954

To Provide Comments or Obtain More Information: If you wish to comment during the NOP comment period, the City is accepting written comments beginning **April 12, 2024**, until 5:00 p.m. on **May 13, 2024**. Please send all written comments to Greg Powell, Principal Planner at gpowell@cityofpetaluma.org or

Olivia Ervin, Principal Environmental Planner at oervin@cityofpetaluma.org with the subject “**DHEO + Hotel NOP Comment.**” Comments can also be mailed to the Community Development Department, Planning Division, City of Petaluma, 11 English Street, Petaluma, California 94952. For more information regarding the project, please direct questions to Greg Powell or Olivia Ervin.

Notice of Preparation

Notice is hereby given that the City of Petaluma (City), as the Lead Agency, is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed Downtown Housing and Economic Overlay and ENK Appellation Hotel project (proposed project) pursuant to and in accordance with Title 14, Section 15060(d) of the California Code of Regulations, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the State of California CEQA Guidelines.

The purpose of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit input and feedback from the public and regulatory agencies on the project, including project alternatives, and environmental impacts. The intent of the NOP is to provide sufficient information in order to enable meaningful comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR. An Initial Study is included as Attachment A to this NOP.

The purpose of an EIR is to inform decision-makers and the public of the environmental effects of a project that an agency may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment, to examine methods of reducing adverse impacts, and to consider alternatives to the project. In accordance with the requirements of CEQA, the EIR will include the following:

- Project summary;
- Project description;
- Description of the existing environmental setting and potential environmental impacts for each environmental topic, except for effects not found to be significant (CEQA Guidelines Section 15128);
- Mitigation measures proposed to minimize significant effects;
- Alternatives to the proposed project; and
- Environmental consequences, including any significant environmental effects which cannot be avoided if the project is implemented; significant irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources; growth inducing impacts of the proposed project; and cumulative impacts.

Project Location: City of Petaluma, Sonoma County, California. The project site consists of multiple parcels within the Downtown Housing and Economic Overlay including the 3 parcels for the EKN Hotel as detailed in the following (see Figures in Initial Study):

Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay, Downtown Petaluma.

Area A: Boundary: B St. (north); D St. (south); Petaluma Blvd. S (east); 4th St.(west)

APNs: 008-063-005; 008-063-006; 008-063-007; 008-063-008; 008-063-009; 008-063-011; 008-063-012; 008-064-002; 008-064-004; 008-064-005; 008-064-007; 008-064-008; 008-064-010

Area B: Boundary: South side of Western Ave. between Kentucky St. (east) and Keller St. (west)

APNs: 008-051-024; 008-051-025

Area C: Boundary: Washington St. (north); Western Ave. (south); Telephone Aly. (east); Liberty St./Court St. (west)

APNs: 006-361-028; 006-361-030; 006-361-033; 006-361-039; 006-361-040; 006-362-001; 006-362-002; 006-362-003; 006-362-009; 006-362-010; 006-362-012; 006-362-014; 006-362-015; 006-362-021; 006-362-022; 006-362-023; 006-362-024; 006-362-025; 006-363-001; 006-363-004; 006-363-005; 006-363-007; 006-363-023; 006-363-025; 006-363-026

EKN Appellation Hotel, Downtown Petaluma.

2 Petaluma Blvd South, City of Petaluma, Sonoma County, California

APNs: 008-063-008; -009; -011

Project Description: The proposed Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay (Overlay) and EKN Appellation Hotel project, is a two-part project comprised of the Overlay component and the Hotel component.

The Overlay component of the project represents a programmatic change to the existing Implementing Zoning Ordinance and the EKN Appellation Hotel component of the project represents physical modifications to an existing property. Adoption of a Zoning Text Amendment to establish the Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay component of the project is required to accommodate development of the EKN Appellation Hotel component of the project, as proposed. A range of development types and forms would be allowed under the proposed Overlay, as such, the proposed Hotel represents one type of development that may be allowed under the Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay.

Implementation of the Overlay would require a General Plan Amendment (GPA) to increase the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) from 2.5 to 6.0, a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to increase the allowable building height from 45 feet to 75 feet with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), increase lot coverage from 80% to 100% with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), allow ground floor residential uses, and establish development and design controls for properties that would be subject to the proposed Overlay. The Overlay includes a Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) to zone applicable parcels to the Downtown Housing & Economic Opportunity Overlay.

The EKN Appellation Hotel component of the project proposes the construction of a 6-story hotel over a below-grade parking garage, comprising 93 hotel rooms, an event space, and food service uses at 2 Petaluma Blvd. South. The below-grade parking garage will provide valet parking for up to 58 vehicles using mechanical parking lifts (no self-parking is proposed). A restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating for up to 150 guests is proposed on the ground floor. Floors 2 through 5 comprise 93 hotel rooms and a fitness room for hotel guests. Floor 6 includes a 1,444 square foot event space, and a 5,514 square foot exterior bar/event space with seating for 60 guests. The project proposes modifications to the public right-of-way including removal and replacement of three street trees, removal of two existing driveways along the Petaluma Boulevard South frontage, removal of one curb-parking space along B Street and reconfiguration of two curb-parking spaces along Petaluma Boulevard South. The project also includes installation of a bus stop and shelter along Petaluma Boulevard North adjacent to Center Park, which will result in the loss of three on-street parking spaces.

Potential Environmental Effects: The EIR will evaluate the project for potential impacts on the environment and analyze the potential environmental consequences of project implementation. The attached Initial Study prepared for the project identifies the following resource areas where potentially significant environmental impacts could occur and will be addressed in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Based on the analysis contained in the attached Initial Study, the following environmental factors are expected to be less than significant and will not require additional evaluation in the EIR:

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|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Air Quality | • Land Use and Planning |
| • Agricultural and Forestry Resources | • Mineral Resources |
| • Biological Resources | • Noise |
| • Geology and Water Quality | • Population and Housing |
| • Greenhouse Gases | • Public Services |
| • Energy | • Transportation and Circulation |

- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Recreation
- Wildfire

The EIR will also include a discussion of cumulative impacts in and around the project area combined with those of the project. An evaluation of project alternatives that could reduce significant impacts will also be evaluated in the EIR, including identification of an environmentally superior alternative consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

To ensure that the EIR for the project is thorough and adequate and to ensure that the issues of concern to the public and public agencies are addressed, the City is requesting comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from interested public agencies, organizations, and individuals. Public comments on the scope of environmental issues to be evaluated in the EIR are encouraged and should be focused on environmental concerns rather than the merits of the project. With respect to the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to significant environmental issues, the City is seeking information related to reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures that are relevant to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project.

Attachment

A: Downtown Housing and Economic Opportunity Overlay and EKN Appellation Hotel Initial Study and Appendices

<https://cityofpetaluma.org/ekn-appellation/>