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Recommended Findings

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – AUGUST 6, 2025
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**Gateway 24 New Winery Use Permit Application Number P24-00134
Located at the Terminus of Gateway Road East Bordered by Hwy 29 to the East, and
Sheehy Creek to the North
APN 057-200-039**

ENVIRONMENTAL:

The Planning Commission (Commission) has received and reviewed the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and finds that:

1. The Commission has read and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration prior to taking action on said Negative Declaration and the proposed project.
2. The Mitigated Negative Declaration is based on independent judgment exercised by the Commission.
3. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
4. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole, that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
5. The Secretary of the Commission is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. The records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, California.
6. Considering the record as a whole there is no evidence that the proposed project will have a potential adverse effect on wildlife resources or habitat upon which the wildlife depends.

PLANNING AND ZONING ANALYSIS:

USE PERMIT: The following findings must be made in order to approve the use permit:

The Commission has reviewed the use permit request in accordance with the requirements of the Napa County Code §18.124.070 and makes the following findings:

7. The Commission has the power to issue a Use Permit under the Zoning Regulations in effect as applied to property.

Analysis: The project is consistent with the 1986 Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan and is consistent with the Industrial Park: Airport Compatibility Combining (IP:AC) zoning district regulations which permit wineries, warehousing/storage and office uses

upon grant of a use permit. The project site is located in Zone D1 of the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan which also allows the proposed uses.

8. The procedural requirements for a Use Permit set forth in Chapter 18.124 of the Napa County Code (zoning regulations) have been met.

Analysis: The use permit application has been filed and noticed and public hearing requirements have been met. The hearing notice and intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration were posted on July 3, 2025, and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property and all other interested parties. The public comment period ran from July 6, 2025, through August 5, 2025.

9. The grant of the Use Permit, as conditioned, will not adversely affect the public health, safety or welfare of the County of Napa.

Analysis: Granting the Use Permit for the project as proposed and conditioned will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of the County. Various County divisions and departments have reviewed the project and commented regarding grading, drainage, access, parking, building permits, and fire protection. The City of American Canyon and the Napa Sanitation District have agreed to provide public water and sewer service, respectively. Conditions are recommended which will incorporate these comments into the project to assure the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

10. The proposed use complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan and the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan.

Analysis: Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance

The proposed use is consistent with the Industrial Park: Airport Compatibility Combination (IP:AC) zoning district regulations, as conditioned, including setbacks, landscaping, parking requirements, lot coverage and floor area ratio.

Analysis: Compliance with the General Plan and Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan

The General Plan designates the airport area for industrial development. The project site is located within the General Plan land use designation Industrial and within the Business/Industrial Park designation of the 1986 Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan (NVBPSP) which allow the proposed use. The project site is also within Compatibility Zone D1 of the Napa County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, which also allows the proposed use.

The goals and objectives of the NVBPSP are to provide a specific plan which recognizes the economic importance to the County and region of the business park and responds to the area's identification in the General Plan as the principal County location for industrial development. The area is intended to provide for a mix of industrial development which is responsive to County desires, anticipated market demands, and landowner intentions.

According to the NVBPSP land use policies, the Business/Industrial Park designation is intended to provide exclusively for modern, well-planned, non-nuisance light industrial and business park uses which are compatible with each other, the airport, the S.R. 29 corridor, and surrounding open space uses.

The goals established by the General Plan are to plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land use in Napa County and to plan for industrial land uses in locations that are compatible with adjacent uses and agriculture. Overall, the project was evaluated and found to be consistent with General Plan policies concerning industrial land uses (listed separately below at the conclusion of these findings). The proposal was reviewed for consistency with the NVBPSP. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, requirements, standards and policies in the General Plan, the NVBPSP, and the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

11. The proposed use will not require a new water system or improvement causing significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on an affected groundwater basin in Napa County.

Analysis: The City of American Canyon will provide water service and the Napa Sanitation District will provide sewer service. "Will serve" letters have been issued by both jurisdictions indicating that they have adequate capacity to serve the project.

VARIATION TO DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

The Commission has reviewed the request for a variation request to development standards to increase the building height from 35-feet to a maximum of 45-feet in accordance with the requirements of Napa County Code Section 18.40.250, and makes the following findings:

12. The proposed modifications comply with the variation procedure requirements of Napa County Code Section 18.40.250.

Analysis: Since this project site is located within the Industrial Park zoning district and Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan area, Section 18.40.250 of the Napa County Code applies. The proposed use permit has been processed in accordance with the requirements of that section, and the proposed variation meets the following findings specified in the Zoning Ordinance:

- a. The development plan results in a project that is superior in terms of design and environmental impacts when compared to a project processed under the development standards specified by this chapter.

The Industrial Park zoning district allows a wide variety of warehousing, light industrial, manufacturing, and office uses. This project consists of a wine production facility with warehousing/distribution and ancillary office areas conducted within the building. The Land Use Element of the NVBPSP includes standards for the development of industrially zoned land in the airport area including landscaping, setbacks, parking requirements, and numerous other regulations. The NVBPSP also states that, "where appropriate, these guidelines may be modified... where the proposed modification... will provide superior

overall aesthetic, environmental, and/or economic benefit (sic) than the minimum development standards."

This application includes a request to increase the building height from 35-feet to a maximum height of 45-feet. The intention of asking for a height variance is to create a more economically viable building. Additional height allows the building to service a greater number of tenants, ensuring the building remains occupied and avoids issues that come with building vacancy.

The uses proposed here (wine production facility) would not be detrimental to workers in the area and will be conducted generally within the building.

- b. The development plan results in a cohesive design and treatment of the site, including architecture, landscaping, signage and lighting.

The project has a high-quality design indicative of Business Park standards with high quality architecture, landscaping, signage and lighting.

- c. The orientation and location of buildings, structures, open space and other features of the site plan protect and enhance existing natural resources or site features including significant existing vegetation and maintain and enhance existing views from and through the site.

The site is visible from both Gateway Road East and S.R. 29. As mentioned above, the architecture of the buildings is consistent with the more stringent design criteria of the business park as opposed to lessor design criteria for development on General Industrially zoned land. Outside of Sheehy Creek the site has no other natural features and is located in a predominately developed portion of the business park. The project will be adding new landscaping to the site which will enhance the appearance of the property.

- d. The overall project is consistent with the intent, purpose and applicable standards of the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan seeks to promote business park and light industrial uses and has designated this area for development for since the 1980's. Except for the requested variation to development standards, the proposed project is consistent with the NVBPSP.

- e. The site plan minimizes the effect of traffic on abutting streets through careful layout of the site with respect to location, dimensions of vehicular and pedestrian entrances, exit drives and walkways; through the adequate provision of off-street parking and loading facilities; through an adequate circulation pattern within the boundaries of the development; and through the surfacing and lighting of off-street parking facilities.

The project is generally a low traffic generator when compared to other allowed business park/light industrial uses such as office complexes, research and development facilities, and other high employee-based businesses. The parking proposed for the development is more than adequate based on the parking requirement of the NVBPSP as well as the expected number of employees. The proposed on-site circulation drive provides access to

all points of the building. Access points/curb cuts have been provided to the property as part of the improvements for this area of the NVBPSP.

- f. The site plan shall encourage alternatives to travel by automobile where appropriate, through the provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists including covered parking for bicycles and motorcycles where appropriate. Public transit stops and facilities shall be accommodated as appropriate and other incentive provisions considered which encourage non-automotive travel.

The project complies with all standards for alternative transportation. There is an existing walking path along the south side of Sheehy Creek that was constructed as part of the creek restoration project that includes the planted riparian corridor and provisions for on-site bicycle parking are required as a standard condition of approval. New public sidewalks will connect to existing sidewalks along the street frontage.

- g. The site shall provide open space and landscaping which complement buildings and structures. Said open space shall be provided in a manner so as to be useful to residents, employees, or other visitors to the site. Landscaping shall be used to separate and/or screen service and storage areas, separate and/or screen parking areas from other areas, break up expanses of paved area, and define open space for usability and privacy.

The project has landscaping that meets minimum requirements and is indicative of other upscale development in the business park. The increase the building height from 35-feet to a maximum height of 45-feet is offset by the protection of the Sheehy Creek conservation easement. The riparian area along the creek provides vegetation that provides critical natural habitat. New landscape materials have been proposed that complement the design of the building and the surrounding environs along the 64-foot front setback to Gateway Road East.

- h. Design of the site plan and proposed structures shall respect design principles in terms of maintaining a balance of scale, form and proportion, using design components which are harmonious and materials and colors which blend with elements of the site plan and surrounding areas. Location of structures shall take into account maintenance of view. Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be incorporated into the roof design or screened from adjacent properties. Utility installations such as trash enclosures, storage units, traffic control devices, transformer vaults and electrical meters shall be accessible and screened.

The design of the project generally exceeds the design standards of the Industrial Park zoning district and represents an example of high-quality development for the business park area.

- i. Signs, lighting fixtures, landscape improvements and similar common area features shall complement the site plan and avoid dominating the site and/or existing buildings on the site or overwhelming the building or structures to which they are attached. Multiple signs on a given site shall be of a consistent design theme.

Signage, landscaping and lighting for the project will be consistent with the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan requirements and in keeping with County expectations of such improvements established in the business park area.

- j. Provisions have been made for the permanent use and maintenance of parking areas and other common area fixtures used jointly by owners of the parcels included within the development plan. (Ord. 1234 §10, 2004)

Although there are no common areas, the property owner will be responsible and will be expected to meet all obligations related to maintenance of features such as landscaping, parking and other improvements.

- 13. The proposed modifications, considered together with the site specific mitigation measures and restoration where necessary, will provide superior overall aesthetic, environmental, and/or economic benefit that the minimum development standards set forth in the Specific Plan.

Analysis: County staff believes the variation request holds merit and supports the request. All potential environmental impacts have been addressed in the initial study/mitigated negative declaration and have been appropriately mitigated. The design of the project meets or exceeds the design requirements of the Napa Valley Business Park Specific Plan resulting in an aesthetically superior and economically viable project than could be required if the height increase was not sought.

- 14. The proposed modifications are consistent with applicable airport safety regulations.

Analysis: The proposed modification pertains to an increase in building height requirements. A Federal Aviation Administration Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation has been provided (Attachment B), which revealed that the structure does not exceed obstruction standards and would not be a hazard to air navigation provided that a FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration, be e-filed any time the project is abandoned or within 5 days after the construction reaches its greatest height.

General Plan policies:

Policy AG/LU-37: The County will locate industrial areas adjacent to major transportation facilities. Necessary utilities and services, including child care centers, will be planned to meet the needs of the industrially zoned areas.

Policy AG/LU-38: The Airport Industrial Area Specific Plan (AIASP) was adopted in 1986 to set forth detailed land use and circulation standards, capital improvement requirements, associated financing, and improvement sequencing measures, as well as necessary supporting policies and regulatory procedures for the industrial area near Napa County Airport. The AIASP, as amended, implements the General Plan in the Airport Industrial Area.

Policy AG/LU-39: The County will plan for the reservation of sufficient industrial property to satisfy future demands for orderly growth and economic development of

the County Non-agriculturally oriented industry shall not be located on productive agricultural lands, but should be located in areas more suitable for industrial purposes.

- Policy AG/LU-93: The County supports the continued concentration of industrial uses in the South County area as an alternative to the conversion of agricultural land for industrial use elsewhere in the county.
- Policy AG/LU-95: New land uses in the South County Industrial Areas shall be compatible with or buffered from adjacent industrial uses and consistent with the Land Use Compatibility Plan for Napa Airport.
- Policy AG/LU-96: The Airport Industrial Area is planned for industrial and business/industrial park uses that support agriculture and meet industrial and business park needs consistent with the 1986 AIASP. In 2004, the AIASP was amended to recognize two hotels which were subsequently approved for construction. Further commercial uses in the area shall be limited to local-serving uses that support or serve the industrial and business park uses.
- Policy CON-13: The County shall require that all discretionary residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, agricultural, and water development projects consider and address impacts to wildlife habitat and avoid impacts to fisheries and habitat supporting special-status species to the extent feasible. Where impacts to wildlife and special-status species cannot be avoided, projects shall include effective mitigation measures and management plans.
- Policy CON-60.5: All aspects of landscaping from the selection of plants to soil preparation and the installation of irrigation systems should be designed to reduce water demand, retain runoff, decrease flooding, and recharge groundwater.
- Policy CON-72: The County shall seek to reduce the energy impacts from new buildings by applying Title 24 energy standards as required by law and providing information to the public and builders on available energy conservation techniques, products, and methods available to exceed those standards by 15 percent or more.
- Policy CON-77: All new discretionary projects shall be evaluated to determine potential significant project-specific air quality impacts and shall be required to incorporate appropriate design, construction, and operational features to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants regulated by the state and federal governments below the applicable significance standard(s) or implement alternate and equally effective mitigation strategies consistent with the Bay Area Air District (BAAD) air quality improvement programs to reduce emissions. In addition to these policies, the County's land use policies discourage scattered development which contributes to continued dependence on the private automobile as the only means of convenient

transportation. The County's land use policies also contribute to efforts to reduce air pollution.

Policy CON-81: The County shall require dust control measures to be applied to construction projects consistent with measures recommended for use by the BAAD.

Policy E-10: Ancillary uses in the Airport Industrial Area shall be limited to locally-serving (i.e., business park supporting) uses, with regard to both nature and extent, as specified in the AIASP.

Policy SAF-20: All new development shall comply with established fire safety standards. Design plans shall be referred to the appropriate fire agency for comment as to:

- 1) Adequacy of water supply.
- 2) Site design for fire department access in and around structures.
- 3) Ability for a safe and efficient fire department response.
- 4) Traffic flow and ingress/egress for residents and emergency vehicles.
- 5) Site-specific built-in fire protection.
- 6) Potential impacts to emergency services and fire department response.

Policy SAF-26: Development proposals shall be reviewed with reference to the dam failure inundation maps in order to determine evacuation routes.