



Planning Commission Agenda Report

From: Sam Ricklefs, Assistant Planner

Subject: Conditional Use Permit to operate a bar in a former winetasting room, located at 842 Norma's Alley.

CEQA: The project is exempt from environmental review as a class 1 categorical exemption for existing facilities pursuant to the State's Guidelines to Implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), § 15301

Location: 842 Norma's Alley (APN 009-044-012)

Date: April 14, 2026

Facts

1. The City of El Paso de Robles ("City") has received an application from Jeff Root, co-owner of the existing bar Jan's Place (1817 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo, CA), for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 26-20 to allow for the opening of a sister bar establishment of same name.
2. The proposed 860 sq. ft. retail space is located at 842 Norma's Alley (APN 009-042-012).
3. The property has a General Plan land use designation of Downtown Commercial (DC) and is located within the Town Center 1 (TC-1) zoning district of the Uptown/Town Center Specific Plan (see Vicinity Map, Attachment 1).
4. The TC-1 Zoning District allows for bars and cocktail lounges (with or without a restaurant, and potentially including dancing and live, amplified entertainment) as a conditionally allowed use as per [Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan Table 5.3-1](#).
5. The proposed business will operate under a Type 42 license, allowing for sale and on-site consumption of beer and wine, from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).
6. The property was occupied by a winetasting room, Taste in the Alley, from 2015 to 2026. This former business was operated with a Type 42 license. The proposed business will transfer the existing Type 42 license into their own name but will require a CUP due to the venue's change in use from winetasting to beer and wine sales.
7. No kitchen or hot food service is proposed as part of the proposal. Small shelf-stable food items will be sold as part of business activities, as is allowed under a Type 42 California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control license.
8. No external or internal construction is proposed for the property, other than the addition of a small projecting sign next to the property's entrance on Norma's Alley.
9. The proposed CUP was reviewed by the Development Review Committee on March 30, 2026. The Development Review Committee found no issues with the proposed usage nor the proposed signage to be added, and did not provide any further site-specific conditions of approval outside of those included in Exhibit A.
10. The project is exempt from environmental review as a class 1 categorical exemption for existing facilities pursuant to the State's Guidelines to Implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), § 15301.

Community Outreach

Public noticing included a legal notice in the New Times newspaper, postcards mailed to neighbors of the project, and a site notice posted on the property accomplished at least 10 days in advance of the public hearing in accordance with [Chapter 21.26.030 of the Paso Robles Municipal Code](#).

Options

After consideration of any public testimony, the Planning Commission should consider the following options:

1. Approve the project by adopting Resolution PC 26-XXX based on findings and subject to conditions of approval.
2. Approve the project with modifications by amending and adopting Resolution PC 26-XXX.
3. Refer the project back to the Development Review Committee or Staff for additional analysis.
4. Deny the project by adopting findings of denial.

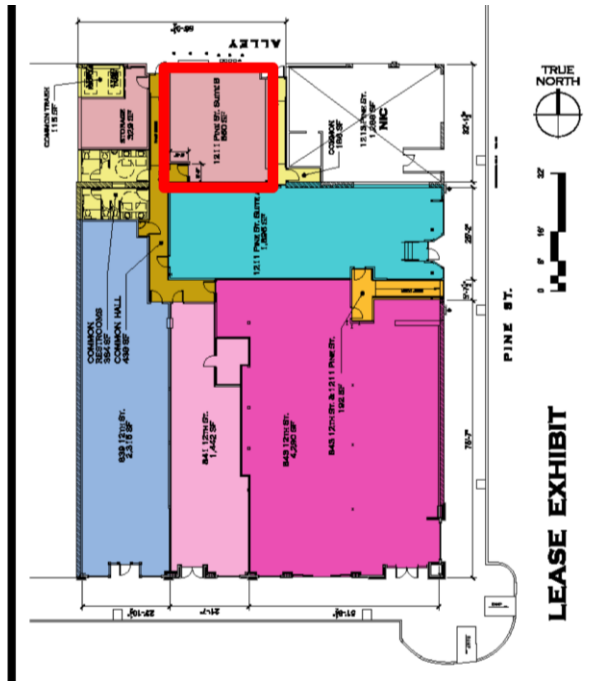
Analysis and Conclusions

Project Summary

The project as proposed is for consideration of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for on-site beer and wine sales at an existing 860 sq. ft. retail space located at 842 Norma's Alley. This space was previously occupied by a wine-tasting venue, with the applicant proposing usage of the existing layout of the space. No external or internal construction is proposed.



Aerial photo of location of 842 Norma's Alley



Lease space of 842 Norma's Alley, located within property addressed at 1211 Pine Street

General Plan and Zoning Compatibility

This space is located within the Town Center 1 (TC-1) zoning designation of the Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan, which applies to the City's historic Downtown core and is designed to "preserve and augment Downtown's unique historical value while enhancing its economic vitality." Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan Table 5.3-1 allows for bars and cocktail lounges within the TC-1 zoning with the approval of a CUP. There have been no changes in City codes for the TC-1 zoning designation related to this project.

Neighborhood Compatibility

The nature of the proposed usage of the space is consistent with the surrounding area and is compatible with surrounding land uses. Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan Table 5.3-1 limits bars to the TC-1, TC-2, and RSC zones with the intention of having such establishments within the Downtown area. The space is within a shared building that holds another tenant space, Street Side Ale House and Eatery, that serves beer and wine as part of a restaurant use under a Type 47 ABC license. Multiple other establishments within the TC-1 zoning area also currently operate under a Type 42 license and CUP, as is proposed by the applicant.

Hours of Operation

The applicant proposes the following hours of operation for the proposed use:

- Monday-Thursday: 1 pm to midnight
- Friday-Saturday: 1 pm to 2 am
- Sunday: 11 am to 10 pm

As part of the review performed by the Development Review Committee (DRC), the applicant noted that the proposed hours are intended to allow for private events to occur within the space on occasion. It was noted that, during normal operation periods, closing times would likely occur earlier than those above.

The hours of operation provided for review are comparable to other properties operating under a Type 42 license in the TC-1 zone.

Parking and Circulation

The primary entrance to the space is located on Norma's Alley, a paved alleyway between Park and Pine Streets that is fully accessible by both pedestrians and vehicles. The entrance is approximately 40 feet west of the alley's intersection with Pine Street. The site is additionally accessible from 13th Street via a secondary alley, which connects to Norma's Alley mid-block. [Section 5.7.2.H.2 of the Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan](#) states, "[d]owntown buildings not meeting current parking requirements that are replaced or reconstructed, shall not be required to provide more on-site parking than existed at the time of demolition or remodel. Expanded floor area beyond what previously existed shall be subject to downtown parking requirements." No expansion of floor area beyond what previously existed is proposed, so no additional parking is required. Parking for the location is provided through both on-street parking stalls and public parking lots located throughout Downtown.



View of primary entrance on Norma's Alley

The project will not generate a volume of either pedestrian or vehicle traffic that will exceed the safe capacity of all roads providing access, or beyond the normal traffic volume of the surrounding neighborhood. Capacity of the project is limited to 40 individuals at a given time, and access to the site by both pedestrians and vehicles is spread across multiple locations.

Noise

The project plans the use of pre-recorded music as entertainment during business hours, with no live or amplified entertainment proposed as part of the CUP. No accessible outdoor gathering space is available or proposed for the project, with all activities planned to occur within the existing indoor space.

The project is required to adhere to all noise standards for commercial/retail buildings as laid out in [Table 21.83.060-1](#) of the Paso Robles Municipal Code. It is not expected that the project as proposed would result in a significant noise impact due to its location and indoor nature of proposed uses.

Fiscal Impact

There are no specific fiscal impacts associated with approval of this entitlement.

CEQA

Staff recommends the Planning Commission find that the project is exempt from environmental review as a class 1 categorical exemption for existing facilities pursuant to the State's Guidelines to Implement the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), § 15301. No substantial changes are proposed to either the interior or exterior of the property, and thus there will be no actions that result in a significant new environmental effect.

Recommendation (Option 1)

Approve the project by adopting Resolution PC 26-XXX based on findings and subject to conditions of approval.

Attachments

1. Attachment 1. Vicinity Map
2. Attachment 2. Draft Resolution PC 26-xxx
 - a. Exhibit A. Site-Specific Conditions of Approval
 - b. Exhibit B. Standard Conditions of Approval
 - c. Exhibit C. Site Plan
 - d. Exhibit D. Floor Plan
3. Attachment 3. Mail Affidavit
4. Attachment 4. News Affidavit
5. Attachment 5. Site Notice Affidavit