



City of Sebastopol Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: May 13, 2025
Agenda Item: 6A
To: Planning Commission
From: Tori Henkel, Planning Technician

Subject: Conditional Use Permit
Recommendation: Approval with Conditions
Applicant/Owner: Gayle Russell
File Number: 2025-020
Address: 100 Morris Street, Suite 100 (APN 004-750-002)
CEQA Status: Exempt
General Plan: Light Industrial (LI)
Zoning: Commercial Industrial (CM)

Introduction:

This is an application for a Conditional Use Permit from Gayle Russell on behalf of Grace Yoga located at 100 Morris Street, Suite 100. Grace Yoga has requested to operate seven (7) days a week, running classes from 5:00 am to 9:00 pm, offering 4-6 classes per day.

Project Description:

The project proposal is for a boutique yoga and group fitness studio located at 100 Morris Street, Suite 100. Grace Yoga will offer the following:

- Vinyasa and Restorative Yoga Classes
- Infrared Heated Yoga Classes
- Mat-based Pilates Classes
- Mindful Movement and Strength Fusion Classes

Project Location and Surrounding Land Uses:

The project is located on the East side of Sebastopol within the Barlow District. The suite is located in a commercial industrial building with several similar suites with mixed uses around it. To the South is the Cock Robin Restaurant. To the North is the Crooked Goat Brewing, and to the West is the backside of the Sebastopol Community Market.

General Plan Consistency:

The project is consistent with the following General Plan policies:

Land Use Element

Goal LU 1: Maintain Sebastopol as a unique, charming, and environmentally sensitive small town that provides residents, businesses, and visitors with opportunities to enjoy a high quality of life.

Economic Vitality Element

Policy EV 1-5: Ensure that adequate sites are available through appropriate land use practices to accommodate a diverse range of desired businesses, including professional, technical, industrial, retail, and service-oriented, in order to provide goods and services to the West County region and to provide skilled, high-paying jobs for local residents.

Policy EV 3-1: Recognize and support the Downtown, Northern Gateway, and Southern Gateway as distinct, but connected, business districts.

Policy EV 5-2: Encourage the rehabilitation and retrofit of existing commercial, office, and industrial buildings to meet current market needs and code requirements.

The project aligns with this goal and policies by providing a previously vacant building with a new exercise facility on the Eastern side of the City and the first within the Barlow District.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

Commercial Industrial. The CM District is intended to encourage local production, innovation, and sales of local art, textile, food, beverage, and other tangible goods by allowing a range of complementary, community-oriented building types and spaces that accommodate small- and mid-size makers, fabricators, producers, and manufacturers, as well as specified commercial, residential, and other uses.

This is an existing vacant building. Having an exercise facility that also focuses on healing, community connection, and strength building will allow locals and visitors to experience many different activities in the Barlow District.

Environmental Review:

The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301 – Existing Facilities, Class 1. Grace Yoga would be utilizing a vacant building and, therefore, would not create any new environmental impacts, as it would be in an already developed area.

City Departmental Comments:

The Community Development Department circulated the project to all relevant City departments for review. No comments or concerns were received in response.

Public Comment:

As prescribed by Section 17.460 of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Department completed the following: (1) Provided written notice to all property owners within 600 feet of the external boundaries of the subject property; (2) provided a written notice that was published in the Press Democrat; and (3) posted three written notices publicly on and within vicinity of the subject property.

No public comments have been received as of the writing of this staff report.

Analysis:

The project, as described in the written statement, is to open a new, locally owned boutique studio designed to support whole-body wellness through a range of movement practices, including yoga, mat-based Pilates, and other small group fitness offerings. As a sister studio to Ruby Pilates, also located in Sebastopol, Grace Yoga will maintain a similarly high standard of aesthetic and community orientation, with a focus on healing, connection, and strength building. This location

is in a commercial building with shared access to bathroom and locker room facilities with a future tenant. The suite will consist of approximately 1,400 square feet of open floor space used for classes and light prop equipment. There will be no heavy gym equipment. Approximately 186 square feet of reception area will be stationed in the front with limited retail display. The studio features large roll-up doors for fresh air during select classes, ceiling fans, air conditioning, an HVAC system, and infrared radiant ceiling panels to be used for select heated classes. The sound system will be kept at a moderate indoor volume so as not to be audible from the exterior.

Classes are anticipated to run seven (7) days a week, hours ranging from 5:00 am – 9:00 pm, offering 4-6 classes per day, depending on demand and scheduling. There will be approximately 20-50 participants per class, depending on mat spacing and class type. Industry student spacing guidelines will be followed.

Grace Yoga clients and staff will utilize available public and tenant parking at and around the Barlow. There is public parking along Morris Street, within the central Barlow parking lots, and in the Barlow overflow lot. Staff will be encouraged to park in the overflow lot or employee zones. Additionally, class schedules will be staggered to minimize overlap and allow for turnover, reducing congestion and maximizing available parking resources.

Required Findings:

Section 17.415.030 of the Sebastopol Municipal Code states the following findings must be made for all conditional use permits:

- A. *The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan and all applicable provisions of this title.*
- B. *The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the use applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular case (location, size, design, and operating characteristics), be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the area of such use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City.*

Recommendation:

Staff believes the proposed use is compatible with the site and recommends approval.

If it is the consensus of the Planning Commission that the proposed use is compatible with the site and surrounding uses, staff recommends that the application be approved based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth in this staff report and as found in Exhibit A: Recommended Findings of Approval, and subject to the Recommended Conditions of Approval found in Exhibit B, and any additional or modified conditions the Planning Commission determines is appropriate.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary, and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Commission provide direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

Attachments:

- Exhibit A: Recommended Findings for Approval
- Exhibit B: Recommended Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit C: Application Materials



EXHIBIT A
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF APPROVAL

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT: 2025-020
100 Morris Street (APN 004-750-002)

Applicant: Gayle Russell
Scope of Work: Use Permit for Grace Yoga Studio

1. The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA under Section 15301 Class 1 (a) existing facilities "interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances. In that the project is converting a pre-existing vacant space into an exercise facility.
2. The project is consistent with the provisions of the General Plan, in that the project adds an additional exercise facility within city limits and meets the following General Plan policies:

Land Use Element

Goal LU 1: Maintain Sebastopol as a unique, charming, and environmentally sensitive small town that provides residents, businesses, and visitors with opportunities to enjoy a high quality of life.

Economic Vitality Element

Policy EV 1-5: Ensure that adequate sites are available through appropriate land use practices to accommodate a diverse range of desired businesses, including professional, technical, industrial, retail, and service-oriented, in order to provide goods and services to the West County region and to provide skilled, high-paying jobs for local residents.

Policy EV 3-1: Recognize and support the Downtown, Northern Gateway, and Southern Gateway as distinct, but connected, business districts.

Policy EV 5-2: Encourage the rehabilitation and retrofit of existing commercial, office, and industrial buildings to meet current market needs and code requirements.

3. As conditioned, the project is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, in that it requires a conditional use permit for an exercise facility within the Commercial Industrial district of Sebastopol.
4. As conditioned, the establishment, maintenance, and operation of the use applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular case (location, size, design, and operating characteristics), be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the area of such use or be detrimental or injurious to property and improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the City in



that the project would improve the welfare and health of the community in offering access to exercise/health studio and exercise classes.



EXHIBIT B
RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT: 2025-020
100 Morris Street (APN 004-750-002)

Applicant: Gayle Russell
Scope of Work: Use Permit for Grace Yoga Studio

1. Plans and elevations shall be in substantial conformance with application documents and plans prepared by Gayle Russell on behalf of Grace Yoga, and stamped received on March 24, April 1, and April 22, 2025, and on file at the City of Sebastopol Planning Department, except as modified herein:
2. All construction shall conform to the approved plans, unless the design is modified by the City for compliance with code requirements. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit prior to the commencement of construction activities. Minor changes may be approved administratively by the Community Development Director or their respective designee upon receipt of a substantiated written request by the applicant. Prior to such approval, verification shall be made by each relevant Department or Division that the modification is consistent with the application fees paid and environmental determination as conditionally approved. Changes deemed to be major or significant in nature shall require a formal application or amendment.
3. This approval does not include any signs. Any new signs that will identify the use of this property are subject to the prior approval of the Design Review Board or City staff, as appropriate.
4. The terms and conditions of this conditional use permit shall run with the land and shall be binding upon and be to the benefit of the heirs, legal representatives, successors and assigns of the permittee.
5. The applicant shall apply for a Business license with the City of Sebastopol before starting operation.
6. All training classes offered by Grace Yoga shall not be allowed outside of the hours of 5:00 am and 9:00 pm Sunday through Saturday, and shall provide 15-minute intervals between scheduled classes.
7. The applicant shall develop a good neighbor policy to address any noise or other issues with adjoining commercial uses. This policy shall include a contact for neighbors to report any of these concerns and shall be submitted as part of the building permit review for City staff.



City of Sebastopol

Planning Department
7120 Bodega Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472
(707) 823-6167

MASTER PLANNING APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION TYPE

- Administrative Permit Review
Alcohol Use Permit/ABC Transfer
Conditional Use Permit
Design Review
Lot Line Adjustment/Merger
Preapplication Conference
Preliminary Review
Sign Permit
Temporary Use Permit
Tree Removal Permit
Variance
Other

This application includes the checklist(s) or supplement form(s) for the type of permit requested: Yes No

REVIEW/HEARING BODIES

- Staff/Admin
Design Review/Tree Board
Planning Commission
City Council
Other

APPLICATION FOR

Street Address: 100 Morris St
Assessor's Parcel No(s): 004-750-002-000
Present Use of Property: vacant
Zoning/General Plan Designation: CM

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Property Owner Name: The Barlow
Mailing Address: 6780 Depot St Ste 110
City/State/ZIP: Sebastopol, CA 95472
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 3/20/25
Authorized Agent/Applicant Name: Gayle Russell
Mailing Address: 818 Jewell Ave
City/State/ZIP: Sebastopol, Ca 95472
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 3/20/25
Contact Name (If different from above):
Phone/Email:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PERMITS REQUESTED (ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY)

Yoga studio

CITY USE ONLY

Table with 3 columns: Action, Action Date. Rows include Staff/Admin, Planning Director, Design Review/Tree Board, Planning Commission, City Council.

CONDITIONS OF APPLICATION

1. All Materials submitted in conjunction with this form shall be considered a part of this application.
2. This application will not be considered filed and processing may not be initiated until the Planning Department determines that the submittal is complete with all necessary information and is "accepted as complete." The City will notify the applicant of all application deficiencies no later than 30 days following application submittal.
3. The property owner authorizes the listed authorized agent(s)/contact(s) to appear before the City Council, Planning Commission, Design Review/Tree Board and Planning Director and to file applications, plans, and other information on the owner's behalf.
4. The Owner shall inform the Planning Department in writing of any changes.
5. **INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT:** As part of this application, applicant agrees to defend, indemnify, release and hold harmless the City, its agents, officers, attorneys, employees, boards, committees and commissions from any claim, action or proceeding brought against any of the foregoing individuals or entities, the purpose of which is to attack, set aside, void or annul the approval of this application or the adoption of the environmental document which accompanies it or otherwise arises out of or in connection with the City's action on this application. This indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, damages, costs, expenses, attorney fees or expert witness fees that may be asserted by any person or entity, including the applicant, arising out of or in connection with the City's action on this application, whether or not there is concurrent passive or active negligence on the part of the City.

If, for any reason, any portion of this indemnification agreement is held to be void or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of the agreement shall remain in full force and effect.

NOTE: The purpose of the indemnification agreement is to allow the City to be held harmless in terms of potential legal costs and liabilities in conjunction with permit processing and approval.

6. **REPRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION OF PLANS:** I hereby authorize the Planning Department to reproduce plans and exhibits as necessary for the processing of this application. I understand that this may include circulating copies of the reduced plans for public inspection. Multiple signatures are required when plans are prepared by multiple professionals.
7. **NOTICE OF MAILING:** Email addresses will be used for sending out staff reports and agendas to applicants, their representatives, property owners, and others to be notified.
8. **DEPOSIT ACCOUNT INFORMATION:** Rather than flat fees, some applications require a 'Deposit'. The initial deposit amount is based on typical processing costs. However, each application is different and will experience different costs. The City staff and City consultant time, in addition to other permit processing costs, (i.e., legal advertisements and copying costs are charged against the application deposit). If charges exceed the initial deposit, the applicant will receive billing from the City's Finance department. If at the end of the application process, charges are less than the deposit, the City Finance department will refund the remaining monies. Deposit accounts will be held open for up to 90 days after action or withdrawal for the City to complete any miscellaneous clean up items and to account for all project related costs.
9. **NOTICE OF ORDINANCE/PLAN MODIFICATIONS:** Pursuant to Government Code Section 65945(a), please indicate, by checking the boxes below, if you would like to receive a notice from the City of any proposal to adopt or amend any of the following plans or ordinances if the City determines that the proposal is reasonably related to your request for a development permit:

A general plan

A specific plan

An ordinance affecting building permits or grading permits

A zoning ordinance

Certification

I, the undersigned owner of the subject property, have read this application for a development permit and agree with all of the above and certify that the information, drawings and specifications herewith submitted are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are submitted under penalty of perjury. I hereby grant members of the Planning Commission, Design Review Board and City Staff admittance to the subject property as necessary for processing of the project application.

Property Owner's Signature: J. Delaney Date: 3/20/25

I, the undersigned applicant, have read this application for a development permit and agree with all of the above and certify that the information, drawings and specifications herewith submitted are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are submitted under penalty of perjury.

Applicant's Signature: [Signature] Date: 3/20/25

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the applicant and their representatives to be aware of and abide by City laws and policies. City staff, Boards, Commissions, and the City Council will review applications as required by law; however, the applicant has responsibility for determining and following applicable regulations.

Grace Yoga – Special Use Permit Application

Location: The Barlow, Sebastopol, CA 100 Morris St, Suite 100

Business Name: Grace Yoga

Applicant: Gayle Russell

Zoning Use Request: Boutique Yoga & Group Fitness Studio

Business Overview:

Grace Yoga is a new, locally-owned boutique studio designed to support whole-body wellness through a range of movement practices including yoga, mat-based Pilates, and other small-group fitness offerings. As a sister studio to Ruby Pilates, also located in Sebastopol, Grace Yoga will maintain a similarly high standard of aesthetic and community orientation, with a focus on healing, connection, and strength-building.

We are applying for a Special Use Permit to operate within The Barlow in a shared commercial building, where our studio will occupy a designated unit with shared access to bathroom and locker room facilities.

Site Layout and Facility Details:

Based on the submitted site layout plan, it will be divided as follows:

- **Reception/Check-In Area:** Approximately 186 sq ft, located in the small delineated square at the entrance. This space includes a welcome desk and limited retail display.
- **Main Studio (Yoga & Group Fitness Area):** Approximately 1,400 sq ft of open floor space used for classes. The western wall will house built-in, low-profile storage cabinetry to store blocks, hand weights, straps, and props, designed not to intrude on the open layout...but it will eat up some of the square footage
- **Bathroom/Locker Room:** Shared with our future neighbor and not included in our square footage. This shared amenity provides a restroom and changing area for clients and staff.

Studio Features:

- Large roll-up doors on the northern and southern sides for fresh air during select classes
- Ceiling fans and air conditioning
- HVAC system for climate control
- Select classes will be heated via **infrared radiant ceiling panels**

- Sound system will be kept at moderate indoor volume, inaudible from exterior
- No heavy gym equipment—only light props (hand weights, blocks, straps)

Operations Plan:

Days & Hours of Operation:

- **7 days a week**
- **Classes may run from 5:00 AM – 9:00 PM**, depending on demand and scheduling
- We anticipate starting with a lighter schedule (4–6 classes/day) and scaling up based on community interest

Class Types:

- Vinyasa and restorative yoga
- Heated yoga (infrared radiant ceiling heat)
- Mat-based Pilates
- Mindful movement and strength fusion classes

Maximum Capacity:

- Approximately **20-50 participants** in the main studio space, depending on mat spacing and class type

Industry guidelines suggest the following space allocations per student:

- **Standard Comfort:** Approximately 21.5 square feet per person, allowing for a 4.5' x 4.5' area per mat with 2.5 to 3 feet between mats.
- **Enhanced Comfort:** Around 25 square feet per person, providing more room for movement-intensive practices like power or hot yoga.

Staffing:

- 1–2 instructors on site per class
- Additional admin support during peak hours

Parking Plan:

Grace Yoga clients and staff will utilize available public and tenant parking at and around The Barlow:

- **Morris Street curbside parking**
- **Barlow central parking lots**
- **Barlow overflow lot**, located within short walking distance
- Staff will be encouraged to park in designated overflow or employee zones

Class schedules will be staggered to minimize overlap and allow for turnover, reducing congestion and maximizing available parking resources.

Neighborhood Considerations:

Noise: All classes will be conducted indoors. Music and instructor voice levels will be moderate and contained within the studio. The building is well insulated and not expected to produce any noise pollution.

Lighting: Interior lighting will be warm and low-glare. Exterior signage and lighting will comply with The Barlow’s standards and will be non-intrusive.

Ventilation: Roll-up doors and HVAC systems will provide ample airflow and climate control. On temperate days, classes may be held with doors open for added ventilation.

Signage: A tasteful, minimal sign consistent with The Barlow’s aesthetic will be installed above the entrance, along with a window decal. All signage will comply with city codes.

Community Impact and Intent:

Grace Yoga is designed to be a **welcoming, healing, and inclusive** space for locals and visitors alike. We will prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, and wellness.

As a family business honoring my daughter Ruby’s legacy, Grace Yoga holds a special place in our hearts and in our community. We are committed to being a responsible and generous tenant within The Barlow and Sebastopol.

Grace Yoga North Facing Frontage – 100 Morris St Ste 100

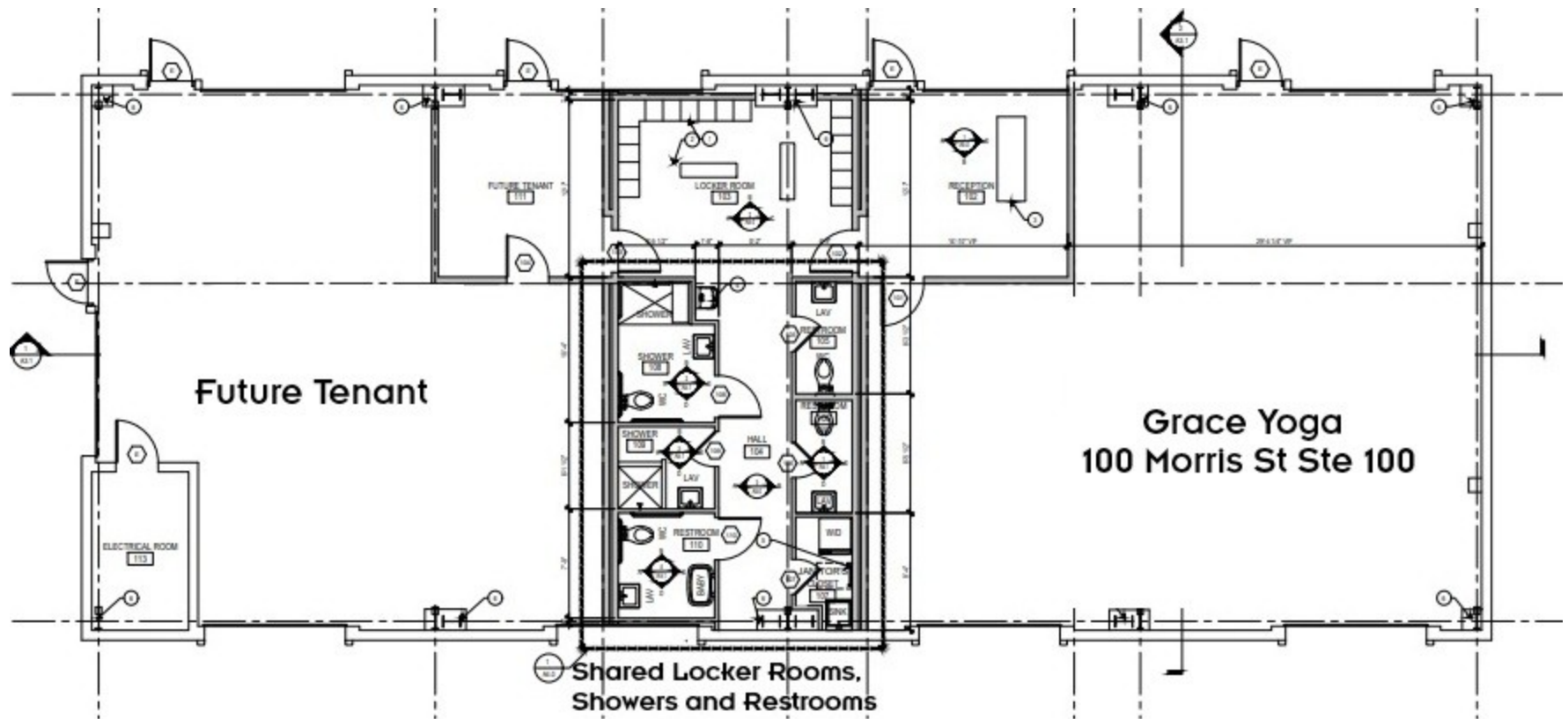


Grace Yoga South Facing Frontage – 100 Morris St Ste 100



Grace Yoga East Facing Frontage – 100 Morris St Ste 100





Grace Yoga
100 Morris St Ste 100

