

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
FROM: LISA KRANZ, SUPERVISING PLANNER  
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST GREENWAY ALTERNATIVES

AGENDA ACTION: NONE

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission and Council provide feedback on draft guiding principles and three land use and circulation alternatives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southeast Greenway Community Partnership, including the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma Land Trust, LandPaths, and the Southeast Greenway Campaign, have come together to plan for the acquisition of 57 acres of land owned by CalTrans and originally planned for an extension of Highway 12. The City Council initiated a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning in fall 2015 to designate land uses for the site. To that end, two community workshops have been held to understand residents' land use preferences for the site. The purpose of the joint study session is to provide the Planning Commission and City Council with summaries of the workshops, to present draft guiding principles and three land use and circulation alternatives, and to receive feedback to help shape the preferred alternative.

BACKGROUND

Project History

On October 18, 2011, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted Resolution No. 27995 which included Council Goal #4, Strategic Objective #4: "Acknowledge Southeast Greenway community planning projects." The Southeast Greenway Campaign is a community group established to develop an urban greenway on approximately 57 acres of land acquired for State highway purposes over a 20 year period spanning the 1950s to the 1970s. The land is owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

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On April 16, 2013, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28266 reaffirming Council Goal #4, Strategic Objective #3: “Support Efforts of Southeast Greenway Campaign by Monitoring and Providing Information.”

On June 17, 2014, the City of Santa Rosa joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership by signing a Mutual Letter of Intent. The Partnership consists of the following partners:

- City of Santa Rosa
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Sonoma County Regional Parks
- Southeast Greenway Campaign
- Landpaths

As outlined in the Mutual Letter of Intent, the initial vision is that the highway land between Summerfield Road and Spring Lake Regional Park would be transferred to the Sonoma County Water Agency and operated/maintained by Sonoma County Regional Parks. The remaining land would be transferred to the City of Santa Rosa and would be operated and maintained by City of Santa Rosa’s Recreation and Parks Department with support from community members and nonprofits.

In late 2014, the Sonoma Land Trust joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership and is contributing expertise and effort toward facilitating the future transfer of the Caltrans land to public ownership.

On August 20, 2014, the California Transportation Commission adopted a resolution to rescind the freeway adoption due to lack of operational need, local support, and funding. This means that the land may be transferred or sold.

On July 7, 2015, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28666 approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans, Sonoma Land Trust, and the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership. The MOU documents how the Partnership, Sonoma Land Trust, and Caltrans will collaborate and work together toward development of an agreement that will transfer the highway land to public ownership.

The MOU states that the City of Santa Rosa would develop an Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints report to document existing conditions on the property and opportunities and constraints resulting from existing adopted plans. This report was completed and presented to the City Council on October 6, 2015.

On that date, the Council considered the information contained in the Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints report and adopted Resolution No. 28696, initiating a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning of the site, along with development of an environmental impact report. In its action, the Council directed the study of:

- A linear park and Class 1 bicycle path connecting Farmers Lane to Spring Lake Regional Park;

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- Retail and business services at the northeast corner of Farmers Lane and Hoen Avenue Frontage Road;
- Higher density residential to facilitate future construction of affordable housing;
- Public/Institutional uses near Montgomery High School for possible education-related uses; and
- Other land uses which emerge from the community engagement process.

On June 14, 2016, the Council approved a Professional Services Agreement with PlaceWorks, Inc. for preparation of the General Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and Environmental Impact Report for the 57 acre site.

On August 6, 2016, the first community workshop was held, and participants envisioned desired uses on the site. On October 8, 2016, the second community workshop was held for participants to consider and provide feedback regarding draft guiding principles and three land use and circulation alternatives. Greater detail about these workshops is contained in the Analysis section, below.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Previous Council actions are detailed in the Background section, above.

### ANALYSIS

#### Planning Process

The first community workshop for the project was held on August 6, 2016. Approximately 200 people participated in envisioning future land uses for the site. Attendees filled out cards identifying their vision and concerns for the greenway and broke into small groups to discuss specific uses for the 57 acres.

Meeting participants strongly favored open, natural spaces with paths for walking and bicycling, parks, and gardens. There was some interest in compatible retail and housing. Concern was expressed regarding safety, lack of security, parking in adjacent neighborhoods, homeless encampment, development and housing. Participants located potential future uses, generally denoting open space uses along the majority of the site, with school use adjacent to Montgomery High School, and non-open space uses such as mixed use, retail, lodging, or retail, at Farmers Lane and around the main cross streets, Franquette, Yulupa, and Summerfield. A full meeting summary of Community Workshop 1 is Attachment 1.

The direction from the Council, input from attendees at the community workshop, input from the project's Technical Advisory and Partnership Committees, and site characteristics helped to shape three land use and circulation alternatives and inform development of project guiding principles.

#### Draft Guiding Principles

Draft Guiding Principles were developed to guide the planning process.

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1. The Greenway provides a continuous, non-motorized transportation connection from Spring Lake Regional Park to Farmers Lane, as well as to downtown Santa Rosa, surrounding neighborhoods and schools, and the regional trail system.
2. The Greenway provides open space and active and passive recreation for local residents and visitors.
3. The Greenway is developed sustainably to enhance and protect natural resources, promote economic vitality and encourage social equity, and minimize negative impacts on neighbors.
4. Uses on the Greenway are designed to face the Greenway, provide easy access to pathways, maximize views of the hills, promote safety, and preserve the privacy of surrounding neighbors.
5. The community, public agencies and private partners work together on the Greenway's planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, stewardship, safety, and funding.

#### Land Use and Circulation Alternatives

The alternatives include: *Alternative 1 – Minimal Footprint*, *Alternative 2 – Active to Tranquil*, and *Alternative 3 – Nodes of Activity*. All of the alternatives include a bicycle and pedestrian path or paths traversing the site west to east, a mix of open space uses with some non-open space uses. The multi-use path crosses Franquette, Yulupa, and Summerfield in each plan. North-south multi-use paths are also a common feature: Wanda Way to Camden Court, Mayette Avenue to Hoen Avenue along Sierra Park Creek, and Mayette Avenue to Hoen along a right-of-way at the Friedman Center. Restoration of Matanzas, Sierra Park and Spring Creeks is also a shared feature of the plans.

Attachment 2 is a Southeast Greenway Alternatives Memo which includes a description and map of each alternative. Attachment 3 is a table which compares features of the alternatives. The following provides a brief description of each alternative.

*Alternative 1 – Minimal Footprint.* This alternative has a variety of open spaces on either side of a multi-use path, including picnic areas and playgrounds, school-related uses, active recreation, urban agriculture, and habitat restoration areas. A paved path would have soft-surface shoulders on both sides, would accommodate bicycles and pedestrians, and connect the open spaces. The triangular site at Farmers Lane is designated for mixed housing and retail uses.

Access to this parcel is proposed from the Hoen Avenue Frontage Road. The multi-use path connects to Vallejo Street.

*Alternative 2 – Active to Tranquil.* This alternative includes separate bicycle and pedestrian paths with a range of uses. The most active uses, including lodging, mixed housing and retail uses, 3-4 story residential, and school-related uses, are located in the western section, from Farmers Lane to Franquette Avenue. Townhouse residential uses are located along the north side of the greenway, accessed with extensions of existing streets, with public plaza, picnic areas, playgrounds, and urban agriculture between Franquette and Yulupa Avenues. East of Yulupa, uses become less active, with 2-3 story attached housing uses at Yulupa with greenway and urban agriculture. The eastern section is more tranquil, mostly including open space restoration.

The existing Highway 12 onramp would be relocated westward from its current location. A roundabout is proposed to accommodate development at Farmers Lane and the Hoen Avenue Frontage Road. The multi-use path connects to Vallejo Street.

*Alternative 3 – Nodes of Activity.* This alternative focuses active uses at four main access points with smaller active nodes of recreation and community gardens along multi-use pathways. The east-west paths would include a paved bicycle path and a non-paved path for pedestrians and possibly equestrians. The western parcel at Farmers Lane is designated for mixed residential and retail uses. At Franquette, 3-4 story housing is proposed, at Yulupa mixed residential and retail uses are proposed on the south side of the site, and at Summerfield a small café is located on the west side with 2-3 story housing on the east. Greenway and open space make up much of the rest of the uses along the greenway.

This alternative reconfigures the onramp to Highway 12 with a 90-degree angle, which will slow vehicle speeds. It provides access to the Farmers Lane parcel from Hoen Avenue Frontage Road and a new access to Monterey Drive. The multi-use path connects to Vallejo Street.

Generally, Alternative 1 would allow the least amount of development and Alternative 2 has the most. A general comparison shows:

- Alternative 1 has about 46 acres of open space/greenway/urban agriculture designations with about 20,000 square feet of retail use and 75 units.
- Alternative 2 has about 39.5 acres of open space/greenway/urban agriculture designations with about 20,000 square feet of retail use, 2,000 square feet of café, 3 acres of lodging, and 150 units.
- Alternative 3 has about 44 acres of open space/greenway/urban agriculture designations with about 22,000 square feet of retail, 2,000 square feet of café, and 120 units.

Cost considerations include initial land acquisition costs, development costs, and operations and maintenance costs. Local non-profits can assist with fundraising for acquisition, particularly for a mostly open space plan. Development costs could be

funded by grants, private sources, and/or local government. Operations and maintenance costs would vary depending on the improvements developed and on the amount of private development that might occur.

#### Community Outreach

The draft guiding principles and the three land use and circulation alternatives were considered at a community workshop conducted on October 8, 2016. Approximately 150 persons attended the meeting. Participants broke into groups to review the alternatives and principles and completed surveys to register preferences about each.

In order to provide other ways for Santa Rosans to respond to the alternatives, an on-line and paper survey were available. From October 10 to 26, 2016, the on-line survey was available on the project website, [www.planthegreenway.com](http://www.planthegreenway.com). Intercept surveys were conducted at 7 educational, retail, and park locations near the greenway on Monday, October 10, Saturday, October 15, and Saturday October 22. The same survey was used at the workshop, in person, and on-line. The survey is attached as Attachment 4. A summary of the community workshop and of survey responses will be provided at the November 1 joint session.

The purpose of the joint Planning Commission/City Council session is to present input received from the community workshops, present the draft guiding principles, land use and circulation alternatives, and solicit feedback from the Commission and Council. All this information will help form the preferred land use and circulation alternative.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

Funds were allocated to this project and are in the Planning and Economic Development Department budget. Funding support has also been provided by Santa Rosa Water, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and the Southeast Greenway Campaign.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project at this time. An Environmental Impact Report will be prepared as part of the community planning process.

#### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

#### NOTIFICATION

The project is of significant public interest, as evidenced by attendance at the two community workshops. Notice of the joint Planning Commission/City Council study session was provided via email and through the project and City websites. The email

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list for the project includes about 800 addresses.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Summary of Community Workshop 1, August 6, 2016
- Attachment 2 – Southeast Greenway Alternatives Memo
- Attachment 3 – Alternatives Comparison Chart
- Attachment 4 – Community Input Survey

CONTACT

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