

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
HOUSING AUTHORITY

TO: HOUSING AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS

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SUBJECT: SANTA ROSA FORWARD LAND USE AND CIRCULATION  
ALTERNATIVES AND HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE REPORT

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning & Economic Development Department that the Housing Authority receive and provide input on the Santa Rosa Forward (2050 General Plan Update) Land Use and Circulation Alternatives and the status of the Housing Element update.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Land Use and Circulation Alternatives present three potential approaches to achieve Santa Rosa's vision for the future, as detailed in the Vision Statement, while taking existing conditions, analyzed as part of the first phase of Santa Rosa Forward, into consideration. Each of the three Alternatives offers a different approach to distributing future housing and economic growth, presented in detail in the Alternatives Workbook. The Alternatives Workbook provides a comparative analysis of the alternatives with regards to housing, economics, sustainability, and safety outcomes, based on a limited initial framework for the alternatives which assumes an equal amount of housing growth but a unique pattern for future development. The three alternatives are intended as a starting point to support thoughtful discussions about where future growth and change should occur (including homes, shopping, office, and industrial uses) and what circulation improvements are needed to support people's ability to easily and safely move around the city. Community comments on the alternatives will inform development of a draft preferred alternative to be refined through additional outreach and then serve as the foundation for the updated General Plan.

A Housing Element is being prepared consistent with State housing law including a housing needs assessment, evaluation of the existing housing element, housing site inventory analysis, potential and actual government constraints analysis, analysis of the Growth Management Ordinance, and housing implementation goals, policies, and programs to support housing production, housing affordability, and homelessness among other topics. Outcomes and policy direction from the Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement Strategies will be incorporated into the Housing Element as appropriate. This Housing Element status report will provide an overview of what has been completed, summarize community comments, and discuss next steps in the update process.

## BACKGROUND

### **Santa Rosa Forward – Comprehensive General Plan Update**

In March 2020, the Planning & Economic Development Department started the Santa Rosa Forward project. This three-year project entails a comprehensive update of the City's existing General Plan, Housing Element, and Climate Action Plan.

On August 25, 2020, Council accepted the Community Involvement Strategy for the Santa Rosa 2050 General Plan Update. At the same time a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was assembled with representation from the City's diverse neighborhoods and interests and from each of the Council Districts. CAC members provide input on the project and serve as liaisons to help to promote broad and inclusive public engagement. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was also convened among City departments to provide the Project Team with ongoing advice and guidance.

On December 8, 2020, Council accepted the CAC Member Selection Process and approved the CAC Organizational Framework.

On July 20, 2021, Council reviewed and provided input on the Santa Rosa Forward Community Vision Statement.

On December 9, 2021, the project team presented the alternatives to the TAC to gather their suggestions for refinements to the Alternatives Workbook content and input on which alternative they liked best and changes they would want to see in the Preferred Alternative to be developed in the next phase of work.

On December 14, 2021, the project team presented the alternatives to the CAC. CAC members identified details they wanted to see clarified in the Workbook and requested a follow-up meeting to discuss the alternatives in more detail.

On January 24, 2022, the project team met with the CAC again to present a revised Workbook and gather input on the alternatives.

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In March, April, and May 2022, the project team led a robust outreach process to discuss the land use and circulation alternatives with the community.

**Housing Element Update**

The existing City Housing Element was adopted on July 29, 2014.

In March 2020, the Planning & Economic Development Department started the Santa Rosa Forward project. This three-year project includes a comprehensive update of the City’s existing General Plan, including the Housing Element.

Between November 2021 through February 2022, stakeholder organizations were interviewed to provide one-on-one feedback on local housing needs and programs.

In February 2022, an online Housing Survey was released to members of the public to receive feedback on a range of housing issues.

On March 10, 2022, a Virtual Community Workshop was held to provide information and gather feedback on the update to the City’s Housing Element.

**ANALYSIS**

**Santa Rosa Forward - Comprehensive General Plan Update**

The Land Use and Circulation Alternatives is the third of eight total phases of work in Santa Rosa Forward, as listed in Table 1. Each phase of work builds on previous efforts. Following is a summary of the completed phases 1 and 2, as well as a detailed report on the Land Use and Circulation Alternatives phase, currently in process.

*Table 1 Santa Rosa Forward Work Phases*

1. Community Involvement Strategy	2. Existing Conditions Analysis and Vision	3. Land Use and Circulation Alternatives	4. Preferred Alternative	5. Draft General Plan	6. Environmental Analysis	7. Public Review and Adoption	8. Additional Zoning Amendments
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1. Community Involvement Strategy

Public engagement is a critical component of Santa Rosa Forward. At the outset of the project, the project team crafted a Community Involvement Strategy (CIS) to create an open, inclusive planning process that engages a representative cross-section of people and organizations with interest in the city. The CIS recognizes the need to employ innovative strategies to reach people who do not typically get involved in community planning projects or other civic activities. It presents an initial framework for outreach in each phase of the project to be further refined by the project team at that phase. The CIS also establishes the role of the TAC and CAC. The TAC is comprised of technical

experts from City departments and partner agencies charged with providing feedback and technical insights to the project team. The CAC is composed of community members representing a variety of organizations and perspectives and is charged with providing feedback to help refine materials before they are presented to the greater community and acting as project ambassadors to encourage their fellow community members to get involved in the project. Following the CIS as a guide, Santa Rosa Forward is working to engage a variety of stakeholders, representative of the city's diverse community, giving special attention to 10 identified equity priority communities:

- Low-income individuals and families
- Racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes
- Seniors, children, youth, and young adults
- Individuals with disabilities
- Immigrants and refugees
- Outdoor workers and farmworkers
- Individuals who are limited-English proficient (LEP)
- Unhoused people
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ+) communities
- Individuals who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated

## 2. Existing Conditions Analysis and Vision

The Existing Conditions Report was released in December 2020. This technical background document analyzed and summarized a variety of data including demographic, economic, land use, community character, mobility, natural resources, infrastructure, environmental justice, community health, and other conditions in Santa Rosa. The comprehensive Existing Conditions Report was distilled into a high-level summary of the major findings and take-aways in a Briefing Book, released in February 2021. Information gathered through the existing conditions analysis is serving as the backbone for remaining work on the project by helping the community and project team understand and appropriately prioritize the various issues and opportunities facing Santa Rosa.

Following development of the existing conditions analysis, in March 2021, the project team met separately with the TAC and CAC to review takeaways from the Existing Conditions Report and gather initial ideas about the vision, leading to development of a Draft Vision Statement that is an aspirational expression that frames community needs and desires. In May 2021, the project team hosted 10 virtual Community Vision Workshops to gather community feedback on the draft Vision Statement. Input from the 160 community members who participated in the workshops informed refinements presented to City Council and Planning Commission in a study session on July 20, 2021. City Council and Planning Commission members provided comments to help further hone the Vision Statement, the made up of 13 detailed points summarized as follows:

Santa Rosa is a diverse, equitable, and sustainable community built on civic engagement that empowers everyone to provide and support equal and affordable opportunities to obtain good housing, education and jobs; to enjoy vibrant cultural events and arts; and to live healthy lives in resilient neighborhoods that adapt to social and environmental change.

### 3. Land Use and Circulation Alternatives

To kick-off development of the Land Use and Circulation Alternatives, the project team held a half-day planning charette to discuss how to reflect the Vision and account for the various existing conditions in three different alternative land use and circulation development scenarios or “alternatives”. The project team also undertook a detailed analysis of the City’s capacity for more housing and found that, based solely on the land use designations in the current General Plan, the city could add 36,000 new housing units. Though the project team and various growth forecasts expect the city to grow at a more modest rate through the 2050 horizon year of the updated General Plan, the three alternatives created in this phase each retain the existing capacity for housing from the current Plan. This consistent level of growth enables a comparative analysis of the impacts and tradeoffs of concentrating growth in different locations but does not preclude the community from directing that either more or less housing growth be supported by the new General Plan.

The three alternatives are described and analyzed in detail in an Alternatives Workbook that provides a comparative assessment of each alternative in the areas of housing, economics, efficiency, sustainability, community safety, and resilience. Additional important issues like equity, adequate public services (police and fire protection), access to childcare, housing availability and affordability, climate change, and many more will be addressed through policies and programs developed later in the Santa Rosa Forward process. Following is a summary of each alternative.

#### **Alternative 1: Central Corridors**

This alternative would focus future commercial and residential growth near Downtown and along central thoroughfares that are connected to transit facilities. Most community needs, such as jobs, retail, and commercial services, could be met in or near the central part of the city. This compact and efficient form of development would be supported by a robust transit system.

#### **Alternative 2: Neighborhood Main Streets**

This alternative would concentrate housing, jobs, and community destinations along key corridors and at community centers. This includes both Shopping Center (larger commercial and services centers) and Neighborhood Center (smaller retail) nodes. Nearly all residents would have convenient access to many daily needs within walking or biking distance, reducing the need for many daily vehicle or bus trips around the city.

### **Alternative 3: Distributed Housing**

This alternative would disperse new duplexes, triplexes, courtyard, and similar types of homes throughout the city on parcels that can accommodate new housing, growing in a more distributed pattern. Since new housing is more spread out, people might need to travel more often by private vehicle or bus to access daily goods and services.

#### Alternatives Outreach

On December 9, 2021, the project team presented the alternatives to the TAC to gather their suggestions for refinements to the Alternatives Workbook content and input on which alternative they liked best and changes they would want to see in the Preferred Alternative to be developed in the next phase of work.

On December 14, 2021, the project team presented the alternatives to the CAC. CAC members identified details they wanted to see clarified in the Workbook and requested a follow-up meeting to discuss the alternatives in more detail. On January 24, 2022, the project team met with the CAC again to present a revised Workbook and gather input on the alternatives.

In March and April 2022, the project team led a robust outreach process to discuss the land use and circulation alternatives with the full community. The engagement activities centered around gathering input on the alternatives to inform development of a preferred alternative. The project team prepared an Alternatives Worksheet, which combined information on the alternatives with detailed questions designed to better identify community priorities. Outreach activities included a series of five in-person workshops, pop-up events, a virtual open house and web-based survey, and meetings with community organizations. Feedback received during these activities will be presented to City Boards, Commissions, and the Council during April and May of this year.

Input received on the alternatives will inform development of a draft Preferred Alternative that will be presented to the community this summer. Community members will be asked to suggest refinements to finalize this preferred scenario that will then be used as the basis for the updated General Plan.

All Santa Rosa Forward products, including the Community Involvement Strategy, Existing Conditions Report, Briefing Book, Vision Statement, Land Use and Circulation Alternatives Workbook, and Alternatives Worksheet are available on the project website in both English and Spanish: <https://www.santarosafoward.com/>.

#### Housing Element Update

The Housing Element is one of the eight required elements of the City's General Plan. Because housing affordability and availability is a critical issue with statewide implications, State law requires Housing Elements to be updated on a regular basis.

The City of Santa Rosa is currently part of an 8-year update cycle (2023-2031) and is working to update the Housing Element which is due January 31, 2023. The Housing Element Update must be reviewed and certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

The Housing Element is required to address the following:

- Assess and address constraints to housing development.
- Provide an assessment of housing needs.
- Analyze progress toward implementing the previous Housing Element.
- Guide future housing development.

### Regional Housing Needs Allocation

One of the primary purposes of the Housing Element update is to demonstrate that the City can meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). HCD provides an allocation to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). ABAG then determines the RHNA for the individual jurisdictions within its planning area. Table 1 provides the City's RHNA allocation for the 2023-2031 planning period.

**Table 1: Regional Housing Needs Allocation by Income Group**

<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Income Range</b>	<b>RHNA (Units)</b>
<b>Very Low-Income</b> (<50% of Median Income)	<b>\$58,150 or less</b>	<b>1,218</b>
<b>Low-Income</b> (50-80% of Median Income)	<b>\$58,151 – \$93,050</b>	<b>701</b>
<b>Moderate Income</b> (81-120% of Median Income)	<b>\$93,051 – \$123,950</b>	<b>771</b>
<b>Above Moderate Income</b> (>120% of Median Income)	<b>\$123,951 or more</b>	<b>1,995</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>4,685</b>

### Housing Element Update Progress

A Public Review Draft of the City's Housing Element will be released in early May 2022. A meeting will be held with the Planning Commission on May 26<sup>th</sup>, and with the City Council on June 21<sup>st</sup>, to receive feedback on the Public Review draft, and to solicit additional public comments. The Public Review Draft will include the following components:

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- Analysis of existing and projected housing needs
- Inventory of available land for housing
- Analysis of potential constraints on housing (e.g. permit processing procedures, fees)
- Assessment of Fair Housing
- Evaluation of previous housing element
- Goals, policies, and implementation programs

Community outreach continues to provide essential feedback for the Public Review Draft, and has consisted of one-on-one stakeholder interviews, a housing survey (results included as Attachment 2 to this Staff Report), and a virtual community workshop. In addition, Planning staff continue to work with the Napa/Sonoma Collaborative on other components of Housing Element work such as the Countywide Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing report, and Equity Working Group, and program development.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact related to this item as the funding has already been allocated to the Santa Rosa Forward and Housing Element update projects.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The discussion and direction regarding General Plan Alternatives is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project and does not have potential for resulting in either a direct, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. The full scope of the General Plan Update process includes a programmatic Environmental Impact Report to commence in late 2022 once a CEQA project (policy document) is developed. Additionally, the discussion and acceptance of Housing Element status report is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project and does not have potential for resulting in either a direct, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378. Based on the required timing of the Housing Element, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Addendum to the General Plan 2035 EIR will be prepared prior to adoption of the Housing Element update.

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

None.

#### NOTIFICATION

A variety of notification and promotion was completed as part of the Land Use and Circulation Alternatives and Housing Element update process, including the use of print

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and radio media, printed flyers, email blasts, website advertisements, targeted emails to community groups, promotion through members of the Community Advisory Committee, and discussions with individuals; all while adhering to State and County Health Orders.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Housing Survey Results

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