Santa Rosa General Plan Update
SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATION #1
July 18, 2020

Introduction

Santa Rosa is in a time of incredible change. The recent wildfires, exacerbated housing crisis, electrical grid blackouts, global pandemic, and calls for social justice and racial equity provide a backdrop for an immensely important discussion on how the City will grow and change over the coming years and decades using the General Plan Update. Santa Rosa can "Bounce Forward" to become an even more sustainable, resilient, healthy, and inclusive community.
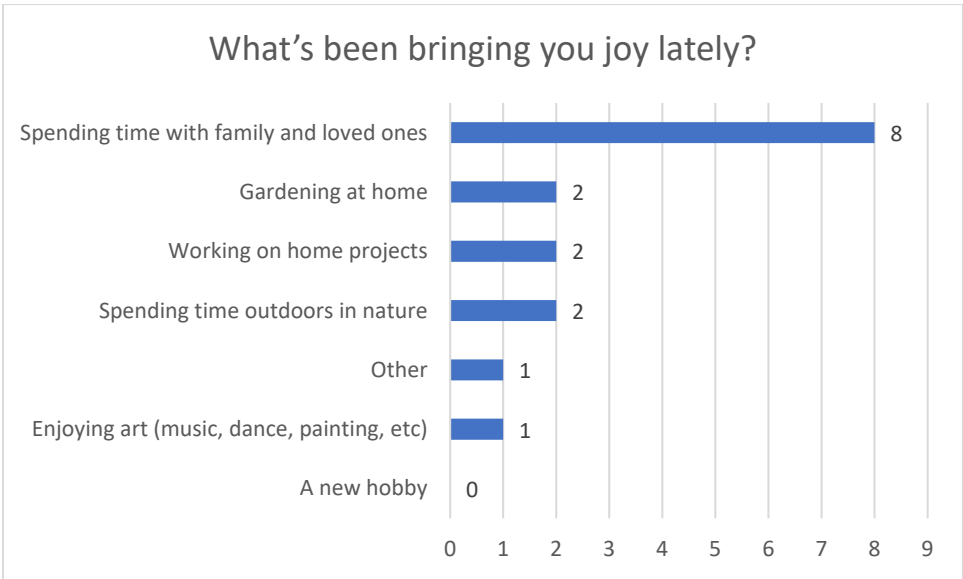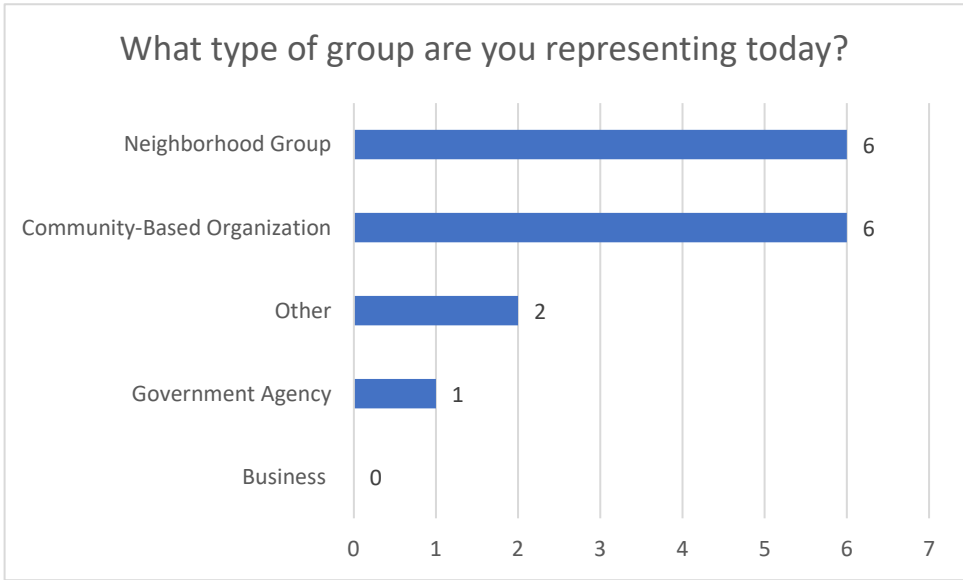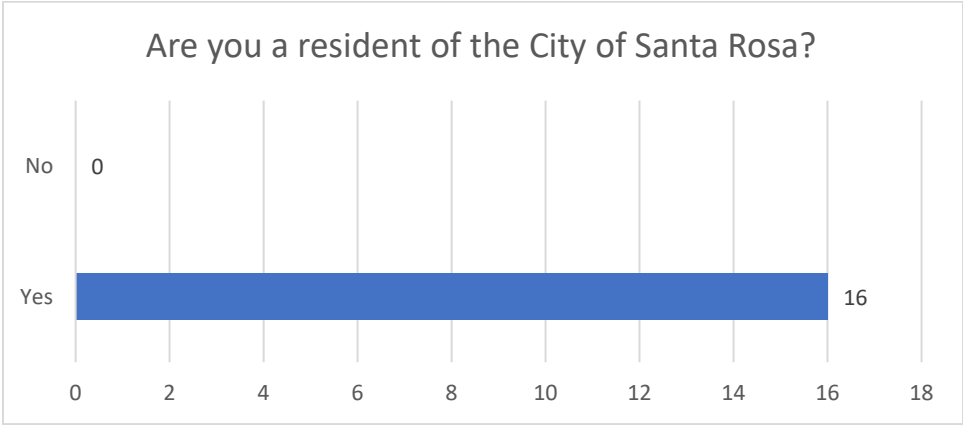
On Saturday, July 18, 2020, City of Santa Rosa staff and MIG (City Consultants) held a Community Conversation, marking the start of a three-year community engagement process for the General Plan Update (GPU). The goals of the community conversation were to:

- **Introduce the General Plan Update** process.

- **Solicit feedback** on the draft Community Involvement Strategy (CIS); and

- **Collect input and ideas** on how the City can best engage the Santa Rosa community.

The City publicized the meeting through e-blasts, social media and the City website. Approximately 23 people attended the online virtual meeting, which was conducted through Zoom. For those who were unable to join the online meetings, a digital recording of the community conversation was made available on the City website and community members were encouraged to email comments to GPComment@srcity.org.

I.   Welcome and Agenda Review

Jamillah Jordan of MIG welcomed participants and provided a brief orientation on how to use the Zoom input features. Andy Gustavson, Senior Planner with the City's Planning Division, provided an additional welcome and opening remarks. Next, Jamillah Jordan reviewed the meeting agenda, which included presentations and discussions on the General Plan Update process, the Community Involvement Strategy, and next steps in the GPU process. She also briefly introduced the Project Team (City of Santa Rosa staff and consultants). A few polling questions were asked during the meeting to collect input on the participant affiliations; the responses are shown on the next page.

Are you a resident of the City of Santa Rosa?

No	0
Yes	16

(x-axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18)

What type of group are you representing today?

Neighborhood Group	6
Community-Based Organization	6
Other	2
Government Agency	1
Business	0

(x-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

What's been bringing you joy lately?

Spending time with family and loved ones	8
Gardening at home	2
Working on home projects	2
Spending time outdoors in nature	2
Other	1
Enjoying art (music, dance, painting, etc)	1
A new hobby	0

(x-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)

The meeting also included several sections with pause points for participants to ask questions and provide comments. Questions and comments could be submitted through the Zoom chat feature.

II. Santa Rosa General Plan Update: Project Overview

Dan Amsden of MIG presented the General Plan Update project overview. The General Plan is an overarching policy document that is often described as the as a blueprint or constitution for land use, development, mobility, health, sustainability, equity, and resource decisions. It must be comprehensive and internally consistent. Santa Rosa's previous General Plan was adopted in 2009.

Other key topics that will addressed throughout the GPU process include creating housing for all, fostering economic development, supporting healthy communities, and ensuring environmental justice and social equity. Mr. Amsden provided a visual GPU process graphic which outlined the major phases of the planning process that will occur over the next three years.

Questions and comments from participants were submitted via the chat feature. The questions and responses are summarized as follows:

- Is there going to be a Climate Action Plan?
    - o The Climate Action Plan is a separate stand-alone document; but climate action strategies around greenhouse gas reduction, operations, and ways to become more sustainable will be integrated into the GPU.

- Will the 2020 census data be incorporated in the Update?
    - o The consultant team is putting together an existing conditions inventory using all currently available information. As the 2020 census information becomes available, the Project Team will integrate the new data into the GPU planning.

- Is portable and clean energy being addressed as part of the General Plan Update?
    - o Energy resiliency is a key topic for the General Plan. The consultant team is reviewing the existing policies, existing technologies, and how they could be further implemented throughout the city. The Project Team is allowing policy flexibility to account for future technologies and emerging state legislation.

- Will participant input be shared?
    - o The Project Team will respond to questions and/or summarize comments on the GPU website. There will be opportunities to share input and questions about the

community vision, assets, opportunities and challenges through the engagement activities, work products, and the GPU website.

- What do you mean by internally consistent?
    - o Everything has to be addressed holistically and consistent with zoning, specific plans, and other documents because many of the GPU elements are interconnected with different issues or areas of the city.

- Is gender equality being addressed in the General Plan Update?
    - o Yes, the team will be applying an equity lens throughout every aspect of the GPU, specifically from a policy and community engagement standpoint. The Project Team is intentional about mitigating and addressing implicit bias, structural racism, and inequities throughout the GPU process.

- What topics are being encompassed in the General Plan Update?
    - o The General Plan is an overarching policy document for all issues and topics related to the built or the natural environment. Various issues, including but not limited to, such as industry innovation, infrastructure, feeding the hungry, homeless services, clean water, and sanitation will be covered in the General Plan.

III. Engaging the Community: Our Community Involvement Strategy (CIS)

Next, Jamillah Jordan presented the draft Community Involvement Strategy (CIS). The CIS outlines key outreach strategies and methods, target audiences, communication tools and the proposed timeline for implementation. The City of Santa Rosa is committed to designing and implementing an inclusive and dynamic engagement process to ensure the General Plan Update is based on robust and genuine feedback from the community, civic and city leaders, and the private sector.

The CIS includes specific community engagement activities that were added, enhanced, or expanded upon as a direct result of the Kaiser Permanent Healthy Communities Grant provided to the City of Santa Rosa. The CIS is a guiding document for the GPU process to ensure that Santa Rosa community members are actively engaged throughout the process, and that community ideas, perspectives, and needs directly inform all phases of this important planning effort. The CIS approach includes the following goals:

1. **Leverage Local Networks and Existing Community Engagement Efforts.** Build on the variety and depth of existing community involvement initiatives in Santa Rosa to engage the public effectively and efficiently in the General Plan process. Tap into existing community-based networks of local leaders and groups to connect with a wider range of community members.

2. **Identify Barriers to Participation.** Cultivate an understanding of existing or potential barriers to the full participation of all community members, particularly communities of color and low-income populations, in the General Plan process.

3. **Create Opportunities for Inclusive and Equitable Participation**. Provide multiple and varied opportunities for a broad range of community members, businesses, and interest groups to share meaningful input.

4. **Collaborate and Inform General Plan Decision-Making.** Collect useful and relevant public input that reflects local expertise and values and informs decision-making related to the General Plan.

5. **Build Long-Term Capacity for Civic Engagement around Growth, Development, and Community Design.** Build social capital and support those engaged through the process to stay involved and share concerns and issues as well as solutions and strategies necessary to implement the General Plan.

Questions and comments from participants were submitted via the chat feature. The questions and responses are summarized below.

- Reaching out to black organizations and black students is important. We are less than 2% in this county, but our voices must count as well.

    o The Project Team would like to hear from all community members and in particular those who are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. We would like to tap into groups like the Black Student Union and other groups to reach community members. The Project Team will be intentional about addressing issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement and identifying strategies for how the GPU can address structural racism.

- Community members may lack understanding of some of the technical concepts. A virtual explanation would help a lot so people can learn at their own pace and time.

    o The Project Team will share the core components of the General Plan and why it's important through online and in-person activities (pending guidance from county health officials).

- Will feedback from neighborhood organizations be filtered through an equity lens to prioritize needs in the city?

    o Everything will be filtered through an equity lens. Community-based organizations and neighborhood groups are encouraged to participate and inform the Project Team's thinking about the engagement approach.

- Will all resources, surveys, and outreach be available in Spanish?

    o The Project Team is working with Latino Service Providers and other organizations throughout Santa Rosa to make sure that the ideas, concerns, and strategies are
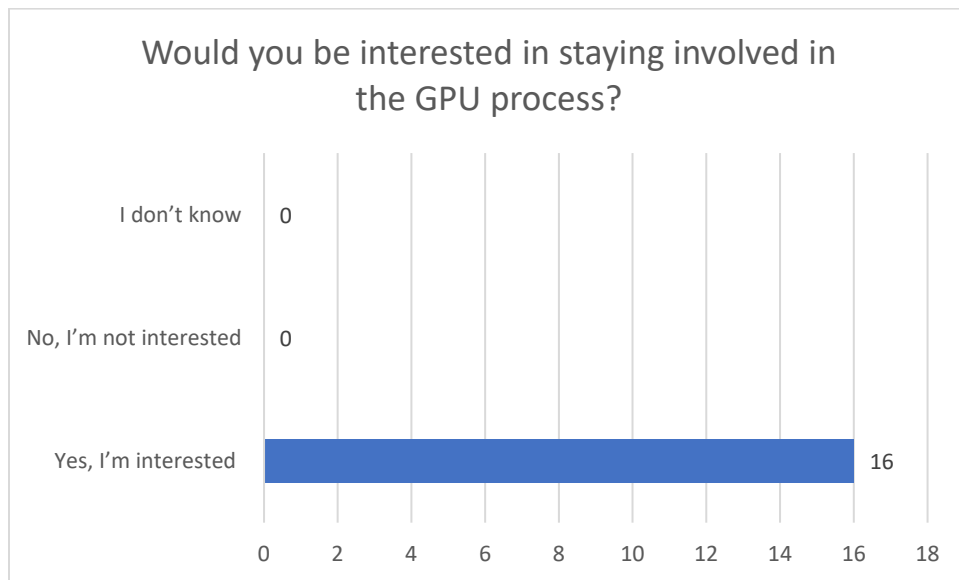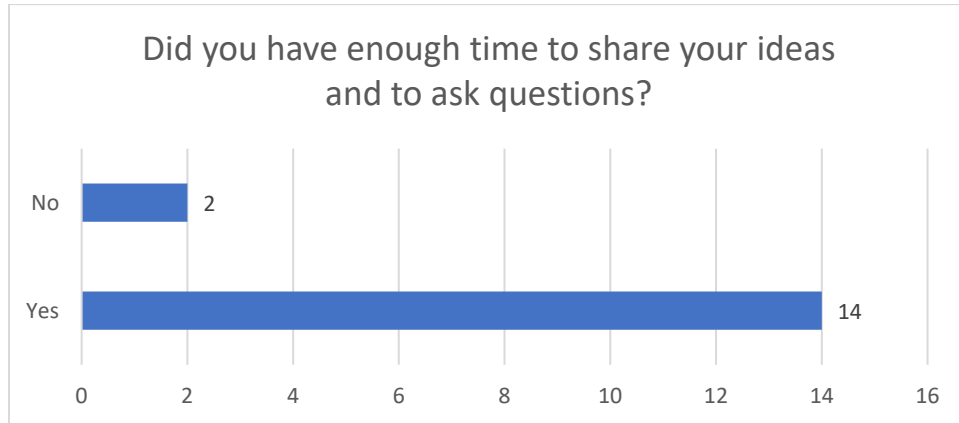
accessible to Spanish-speaking community members. Materials will be translated and posted on the website.

- Many don't have access to the internet, but most have cell phones, will you be including texting?

    o The Project Team will strategically build texting into out engagement approach.

- Will the board game be online?

    o Yes, the Project Team will provide the game online and in physical form. The hard copies of the game may be available for check out at libraries and through community-based organizations.

- What are the preferred alternatives going to discuss?

    o As the GPU progresses, input from community discussions will be used to develop a series of land use and circulation alternatives. The alternatives will articulate different options for how the city could evolve in the form of a combination of maps, diagrams, and emerging policies. The alternatives will inform the draft General Plan.

- What process will you using to revise the strategy as you go along? Who will approve changes?

    o The draft CIS will be shared with the City Council in August to get general agreement and approval of the approaches in the CIS document. The approach will adapt when new needs emerge. City staff will edit the document; but they will also strive for the City Council's agreement going forward.

- How will the focus groups and the CIS group participants be chosen?

    o The selection process is under development, but we will craft an equitable and inclusive process in collaboration with City Staff.

- Will state lawmakers be engaged on issues that require state involvement, whether it's through funding or resources to better address them?"

    o Yes, there will be integration and discussions with local, regional, and state-level agencies and elected officials throughout the GPU. (Example: CalFire)

- How will you measure whether your participants mirror the diversity of the community?

    o The Project Team is conducting an existing condition review to develop a demographic profile that will be used as a standard to make sure outreach and engagement participants mirror the profile. Engagement activities and surveys will have opportunities for participants to submit demographic information. By comparing the profile and engagement responses, the Project Team will adapt the strategy to intentionally reach groups that may not be participating.

- Santa Rosa needs advocacy inclusion, diversity, and equity for all.
    - Thank you for your comment.
- Love seeing the metrics. I think you should also survey people who do not participate, as well as those who participated.
    - Thank you for your comment.
- Is there going to be a date for having an American sign language workshop or outreach since there is a large non-hearing community in Santa Rosa?
    - The suggestion will be taken under advisement and the Project Team will think about how to thoughtfully integrate ASL access into engagement activities. A participant recommended reaching out to Earle Baum Center for the Blind.
- How about using poll functions of Zoom to assess those who respond to your outreach within this and other events?
    - We will use Zoom features and other tools to collect input and get a sense of how well people are connecting to the process.
- Is there a way to make these opportunities more visible on the Santa Rosa connection site?
    - The engagement activities and products will be publicized via social media, the project website, e-blasts, and radio advertisements. The Project Team will identify ways to make engagement opportunities more visible on the website.
- How frequently and how are we going to be sharing what comments we are receiving through the process?
    - After engagement activities, materials, and summaries will be posted on the website for feedback and how to stay involved.
- Suggesting that maybe something in the middle between some of those responses to get more accurate answers.
    - Thank you for your comment.
- Will the recordings of these meetings be published immediately?
    - The meeting recording and summary will be posted in about one week.
- It's super important to fulfill Santa Rosa's potential and dignity and equality and a healthy environment. Sustainable development goals were unanimously adopted by other countries, and we get to our part here in Santa Rosa for 2030.
    - Thank you for your comment.

IV. Next Steps

Jamillah Jordan described the next steps in the process. She invited participants to share additional ideas or comments on the draft CIS via email to GPcomment@srcity.org by July 25, 2020. Another Community Conversation that will be conducted in Spanish will take place on Saturday, July 25th, from 10:00 – 11:30 AM. Next, Ms. Jordan invited to participants to share feedback on the community conversation through a series of polling questions. Participant responses are illustrated below.

Did you have enough time to share your ideas and to ask questions?

No	2
Yes	14

(Horizontal axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16)

Would you be interested in staying involved in the GPU process?

I don't know	0
No, I'm not interested	0
Yes, I'm interested	16

(Horizontal axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18)

The City is also preparing an online survey for the community to discuss opportunities and challenges facing Santa Rosa. The survey will include a mapping tool so participants can define their neighborhood. The first round of community virtual meetings, surveys, and online events are scheduled to begin in September.