

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DINA MANIS, CITY CLERK
SUBJECT: 2025 ANNUAL PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS REPORT

AGENDA ACTION: MOTION

RECOMMENDATION

The City Clerk's Office recommends that the Council, by motion, accept the 2025 Annual Public Records Requests Report. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 1-10 Open Government, Article 3 (Attachment 1) requires the City Clerk, acting as the public records coordinator, to prepare an annual report of all public records requests submitted. "The report shall, at a minimum, identify the total number of requests, nature of the requests, number of requests fulfilled, number of requests unfulfilled, and the reason they were not filled." This report fulfills this annual requirement.

GOAL

This item satisfies Council's legal mandate under the Santa Rosa City Code Chapter 1-10 Open Government, Article 3 (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

In 2013, the Mayor of Santa Rosa convened the Mayor's Open Government Task Force (Task Force) to improve openness and transparency in Santa Rosa municipal government. The Task Force produced a report (Attachment 2) which provided multiple recommendations towards improving open government efforts. One of those recommendations was to adopt a "Sunshine" or Open Government Ordinance. The City of Santa Rosa adopted Chapter 1-10 - Open Government into City Code in 2018 in part to establish new local standards to supplement the California Public Records Act, and to codify certain existing policies and practices that exceed State law requirements.

On December 8, 2020, the City Council adopted the Open Government Chapter of City Code.

On July 13, 2021, the City Council adopted amendments to Open Government Chapter of City Code.

On April 16, 2024, the City Council received the 2022 and 2023 Annual Public Records Requests reports.

On March 4, 2025, the City Council received the 2024 Annual Public Records Requests report.

ANALYSIS

The 2025 Annual Public Records Request Report (Attachment 3) includes the required data as outlined in Chapter 1-10 of City Code. Additional data in the reports include a year-over-year lookback for the last five years, and, in response to requests from the Open Government Implementation Task Force, the number of unique requesters.

The lookback shows a peak of requests in 2025, with a 12% increase in public records requests over 2024. While the number of requests unfilled in 2025 (462 or 27% of 1,701 total requests) appears significant, further evaluation of the unfilled request category shows that it includes requests that were marked as withdrawn, affidavits not received by requester, other agency records, records that do not exist, or no response from requester. Only 5% (81) of requests in 2025 were unfilled due to records withheld or denied under the California Public Records Act allowable exemptions.

FISCAL IMPACT

Acceptance of the report does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the proposed action is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the proposed action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – City Code Chapter 1-10 Open Government
- Attachment 2 – Open Government Task Force 2014 Report
- Attachment 3 - 2025 Annual Public Records Requests Report

PRESENTER

Dina Manis, City Clerk