

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: ANDY GUSTAVSON, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN 2035 UPDATE

AGENDA ACTION: RECEIVE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council receive a report regarding the update of the City's 2035 General Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The General Plan expresses the City's community vision and contains goals and policies that shape future housing and job development, foster healthy and resilient neighborhoods, protect and manage natural resources, and promote social and economic equity. The Santa Rosa General Plan 2035, which was adopted in November 2009, is in need of an update to address changes in State law, as well as changes in the community, since its adoption. While a limited scope update to address the State law changes would be sufficient, due to the recent focus on resiliency, housing, commercial and industrial uses and newly annexed land, among other issues, a comprehensive update to the General Plan is recommended.

BACKGROUND

The 2035 General Plan was adopted in 2009. It is a comprehensive plan that establishes the City's long-term vision of the community-based values and objectives expressed through public engagement. While the goals and policies of the plan guide day-to-day decisions regarding housing and commercial development, infrastructure improvements, and decisions related to public service and facility improvement, it also supports programs that provide neighborhood social services and protect natural resources within the City. The General Plan is also a vital baseline document for environmental review of private and public projects within the City.

The General Plan needs to be updated as significant changes and events occur in the community. Since the plan was adopted, the City has experienced low housing production and increased homelessness, the destruction of housing and displacement

of residents by the Tubbs fire, the impact of cannabis business activity on industrial and commercial land, and the annexation of the Roseland community into the City. In addition, State Law now requires the City's General Plan to address infrastructure and service deficiency, and environmental degradation within designated disadvantaged community areas within the City. Finally, General Plan update will establish a new environmental baseline and mitigation measures that will help facilitate review of future projects pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The comprehensive, community-based reassessment of these issues will extend the General Plan planning horizon to 2045.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

In 2009, the City Council adopted the 2035 General Plan.

In 2015, the City Council adopted the current Housing Element Update.

In April 2018, the City Council received the 2017 General Plan Annual Report and heard General Plan update options.

ANALYSIS

General Plan Purpose and Structure



The General Plan serves as the foundation for the City's land use decisions and establishes the long-term, 20-year vision for how the community will grow. It contains a comprehensive set of community goals and policies that are shaped by public input and which inform the City's development regulations, transportation improvements, infrastructure development, waterways protection, and social service programs. State law requires cities and counties within the State to adopt and periodically update the general plan to keep abreast of changing trends in the community and integrate State law.

General Plan Requirements

The General Plan is required by State law to address a comprehensive range of issues, organized by elements, with goals and policies that map and organize land use and transportation circulation within the City and foster healthy neighborhoods and environmental management, and promote housing and public safety.

The designation of the southern portion of Roseland as a Disadvantaged Community requires the City to add an Environmental Justice Element and a companion Air Quality Element to the General Plan. These two new elements are intended to outline how the City will help to improve public health and quality of life in its neighborhoods that are burdened by household poverty, infrastructure and public service deficiencies, and environmental pollution. In addition, the City's General Plan also includes optional

elements regarding community design and economic development. The mandatory elements are summarized below.

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS		
STATUS	ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Update	Land Use	Designates the type, intensity, and general distribution of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses.
Update	Circulation	Correlates with the land use element and identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities.
Update	Housing	Assesses current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community. In addition, the housing element embodies policies for providing adequate housing and includes action programs for that purpose. By statute, the housing element must be updated every, five or eight years, according to a schedule set by the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).
Update	Conservation	Addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.
Update	Open Space	Details plans and measures for the long-range preservation and conservation of open-space lands, including open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.
Update	Noise.	Identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for land use distribution determinations.
Update	Safety	Establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards, as well as from other concerns such as drought.
New 	Environmental Justice <u>REQUIRED</u>	Identifies objectives and policies to reduce pollution exposure, improve air quality, promote public facilities, improve food access, advance access to housing, and increase physical activity in identified disadvantaged communities.
Optional 	Optional Elements Recommended by the State	Health, equity, community development, water, climate change, and resiliency are some examples of additional elements that can be added to general plans or used to frame general plans.

General Plan Update Scope

City staff is recommending that the Council pursue a comprehensive update work program, based on robust public engagement. This approach will allow staff and the Council to examine and reconcile a variety of issues with residents, special interest groups, and neighborhoods throughout the update process. In light of recent trends and events within the City and the region, significant issues are likely to include environmental constraints to development in Santa Rosa, changes to population growth and household demographic trends, the effect of expanded cannabis cultivation and production on industrial land supply, land use and transportation integration of the annexed Roseland Community into the City, and community protection from wildfire and other natural hazards. Special studies will analyze a variety of issues including economic development, long-term housing and job objectives, infrastructure capacity, community design, transportation, noise and air quality, water supply, natural and man-made hazards. Public engagement with neighborhood groups, civic organizations, special interest groups, and the community will be a core part of the General Plan update.

At this stage, the work program is likely to include major updates to the Land Use, Housing, and Safety elements of the General Plan. It will add a new Environmental Justice Element and accompanying Air Quality Element, as required by State law. Staff will recommend the update examine policy which builds economic and environmental resilience within the City. A resilient city strategy and policy may be added as a separate element, integrated with provisions within other elements of the General Plan, or adopted as a standalone implementation document, such as a specific plan.

Outreach

The update will be an “all hands” event. A policy steering committee (representatives from City Council and other City boards and commissions), a community advisory committee (made up of representatives from various parts of the City), and a technical advisory committee (made up of representatives from City departments and outside agencies) will be established at the on-set and engaged throughout the update.

In addition to community workshops and public hearings, public outreach would include targeted surveys, focus groups, pop-up events, attendance at local meetings and groups, brochures and advertising, all including non-English translation. The objective is to reach all segments of the community including groups or individuals that do not typically vocalize their perspective on issues in traditional public hearing venues.

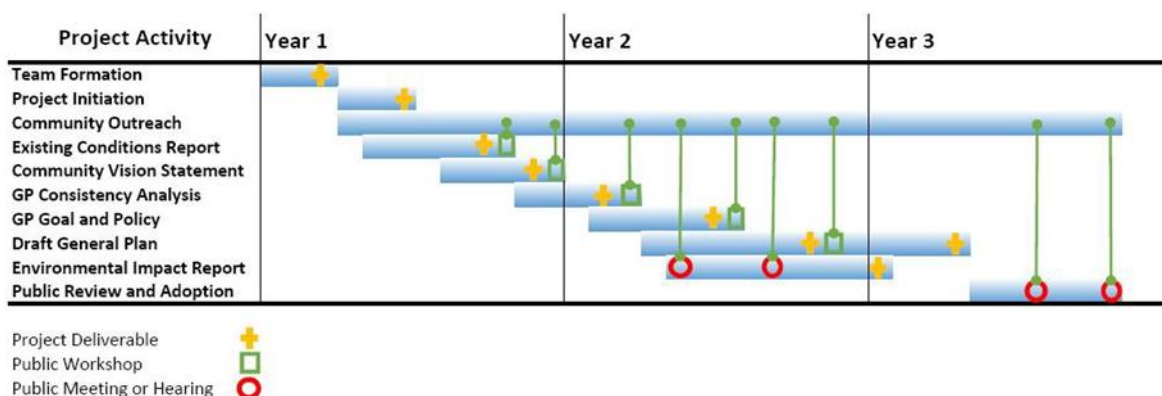
The City would also produce an on-line plan with embedded resource links to the internet to enhance public access. Web-based information and survey tools can be used to generate community design scenarios that will help stimulate discussion on a variety of topics including increased residential density in the downtown, along arterial streets, and near single family residential neighborhoods. Land use modeling will be used to test land use scenarios impact on infrastructure capacity, traffic circulation, and

public service demand. This technology will help the City to coordinate its update with other jurisdictions within Sonoma County including the County of Sonoma and the City of Rohnert Park, among others.

FISCAL IMPACT

The update, including the environmental impact report, is anticipated to cost between \$2 and \$3 million, and will take approximately two to three years to complete. This range is based on information staff collected from planning firms and local jurisdictions. The City’s existing General Plan Revision Fund- which accrues Advance Planning fees collected with the new development building permits- includes nearly half of the anticipated update cost; additional funding through grants and other sources will be required to fill the shortfall. The cost and time associated with the Update will largely depend on the level of community engagement built into the work program, the extent of research and data collection needed to characterize the existing conditions (e.g., traffic, noise, air quality, natural hazards, demographics, land use inventory, etc.), and the number of and level of analysis of plan alternatives.

Below is an example of the potential timeline for a comprehensive update to the General Plan:



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This report action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In April 2018, after staff outlined the three General Plan Update options at the Annual General Plan Report, the Council had the following comments in response to the presentation:

- Prepare a comprehensive General Plan Update
- Base the General Plan Update on full community engagement; engage community at the district level
- Housing and homelessness is a continued priority
- Prepare citywide environmental justice policy
- Plan for increased intensity of development
- Achieve jobs/housing balance and work towards sub-regional solutions
- Evaluate and protect industrial land

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

None

CONTACT

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