



2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Purpose

The City of Santa Rosa's State Legislative Platform confirms the City Council's position on current issues with the potential to impact the City directly or indirectly. The legislative platform is a guiding document that the City will continue to work with constituents, legislative consultants, and elected representatives to promote and preserve the City's interests at the state level.

City staff will monitor state legislation and administrative or regulatory proposals, and take appropriate action when required to advance and protect City interests. Also, staff will collaborate with our local and regional partners when appropriate, such as the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Sonoma Water, Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District, Sonoma County Transportation Authority, Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Council Priorities

The City Council adopted priority areas in 2023 that guided the legislative priorities and initiatives:

- **Deliver Housing for All**
- **Reduce Homelessness and its Impacts**
- **Ensure a Healthy and Safe Community for All**
- **Promote Economic and Community Vibrancy**
- **Build and Maintain Sustainable Infrastructure**
- **Achieve Organizational Excellence**
- **Address Climate Change**

Legislative Overview and Fiscal Outlook

In 2023, we worked closely with Renne Public Policy Group on state legislation and funding priorities. In Sacramento, the City took a position on 29 policy proposals ranging from affordable housing, homelessness, conservation measures and indoor drinking water standards, public safety and emergency management, climate change and public transit. We also partnered with Cal Cities on priority areas on state ballot measures that would adversely impact local governments raising revenue and priority policies in the state Capitol.

The Legislative Analyst's Office currently projects a \$68 billion deficit for the coming fiscal year. With the pending changes in the state's fiscal outlook, legislators may be pressed to explore budget cuts and tightening of expenditures, so we will continue to monitor these developments.

Legislative Strategy and Actions

The Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Office proactively coordinated with City executives, management and staff, the Mayor and the City Council to develop the list of items and subsequent actions below to ensure the City's interests are protected.

Wildfire Prevention and Recovery, Hazard Mitigation, & Resiliency

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To support policy and funding needs, outlined in the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, General Plan and other regulatory documents.
- To minimize the frequency and impact of electric utility power shutoffs intended to reduce wildfire risk.
- To fund hazard mitigation projects, such as wildfire hardening, seismic upgrade, and flood protection measures, including those identified in a FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- To fund state efforts to update and prepare earthquake hazard mapping.
- To establish resiliency hubs throughout cities or population centers.
- To advocate that additional funding be appropriated for emergency areas such as parks to have proper bathrooms, and to be properly equipped for emergency use.
- To address the State Insurance Commissioner's cancellation of fire insurance and rates for those living in the Wildland Urban Interface. Support efforts to ensure a fair market cost to fire insurance for the City's residents.

Oppose Legislation:

- That attempts to shift wildfire costs associated with investor-owned utility-caused events to the City and its residents.

Administration, Human Resources and Risk Management

Support Legislation:

- To increase civic participation and engagement, including the continued allowance of legislative subcommittees, advisory committees, and commissions to participate virtually (post-COVID-19 state of emergency) without physical location posting requirements under the Ralph M. Brown Act.
- To promote efforts to advance workplace diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

- To facilitate the ability of local government to share resources to increase efficiencies and decrease costs, including local efforts to address regional management of fire services.
- To maximize flexibility for local government in contracting and contract negotiations.
- To maintain fiscal solvency concerning unfunded pension and retiree healthcare liability. Support efforts that decrease local costs.
- To fully fund programs mandated by the State.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- Proposition 13 and city and county tax apportionment proposals.
- Proposed policies related to the use of artificial intelligence technology pertaining to ethical considerations, privacy, and emerging technologies, with an emphasis on use in government operations.
- Cybersecurity measures and funding opportunities for local governments to bolster capabilities to protect our communications infrastructure and capabilities.

Oppose Legislation:

- That would redistribute sales and use taxes, affecting the City's ability to provide city services and thereby cause a negative fiscal impact.
- That would reduce local control over employee relations issues or mandate new or enhanced local government employee benefits.
- That would impose unfunded mandates on local governments.

Governmental Transparency and Public Access

Support Legislation:

- That balances increased public trust, confidence and access to public meetings while realizing local government's fiscal and operational constraints.
- To empower local jurisdictions to eliminate hate speech at public meetings.
- To fund efforts that assist with enhanced public access for community members.
- To permit the City to provide electronic copies of documents to satisfy the California Public Records Act requirements.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- Proposals that create new mandates under the California Public Records Act without state reimbursement provisions.
- Proposals that require a one-size-fits-all approach to local-retention policies.

Oppose Legislation:

- That would incentivize increased litigation by removing safe harbor provisions in the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA).

Economic Development

Support Legislation:

- To attract, retain and provide resources for current and future technology-based, commercial, and industrial businesses.
- To provide streamlined approval and permitting opportunities for development projects that further the goals of the General Plan.
- To fund economic development tools, including infrastructure investment, housing, childcare, and other needs critical to a foundation of equitable economic resiliency.
- That encourages working with other cities, counties, and government agencies to jointly leverage resources and assets to create and strengthen economic clusters within the region.
- That diversifies Santa Rosa's primary economic base, increases workforce resiliency, and facilitates investment, resulting in more equitable economic growth, maintaining or growing local jobs, and creating an environment that is attractive to current and emerging industries.
- To support economic development initiatives that preserve and enhance a favorable business climate and maintain and grow the business tax base.
- To support CEQA exemptions for projects or locations tied to economic investment.
- To allow policies that perpetuate temporary standards related to business operations, such as ABC regulations specific to outdoor dining and off-sale requirements.
- To support equitable programs for the continued disbursement of sales and use taxes that reflect local impacts on various communities.
- To increase funding for childcare, early childcare programs, and those in the early childhood education industry.
- That incentivizes those going into the childcare and early childhood care industry by supporting their education and expanding opportunities for those seeking a career in that industry.
- To fully fund all educational programs impacting families and children.
- To support all children and adult nutritional programs.

- To support early childhood literacy and fund local libraries and community engagement programs that support literacy and biliteracy programs to support English language learners.

Environment, Climate Change & Sustainability

Support Legislation:

- To provide funding opportunities focused on coordinating sustainable planning in transportation, housing, and economic development.
- To enact mitigation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to limit the effects of climate change and enhance local and regional planning for climate resilience, including wildfire mitigation and water conservation.
- To provide funding to enhance or implement climate adaptation planning initiatives, such as programs with combined benefits to air quality, water supply, water quality, storm/flood mitigation, housing, infrastructure (including multi-modal transportation systems and seismic upgrades) and public health.
- To continue funding and incentives to local agencies to work together to improve air quality through reducing emissions and advancing economic and technical developments.
- To increase funding for municipal, residential, and commercial electric vehicle charging stations, electrical infrastructure upgrades, and the purchase of clean fleet vehicles.
- To encourage or require the responsible industry to institute environmentally responsible product designs and disposal options to further reduce environmental harm, including enhanced cleanup, recovery, and recycling.

Energy

Support Legislation:

- To promote the development and long-term sustainability of locally run Community Choice Aggregators (CCA) to promote ratepayer equity between CCA's and other public and private electrical utilities.
- To provide local governments with funding for and/or assistance to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and total energy use.

Solid Waste and Recycling

Support Legislation:

- To maintain and enhance local authority and economic flexibility to regulate solid waste and recyclables.
- To promote waste reduction, reuse, required recycled content and extended producer responsibility.

- To facilitate the development of local and regional recycling and composting facilities.
- To fully fund local jurisdictions complying with and implementing SB 1383.

Water Quality and Water Supply

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To increase the availability of, and funding for, water infrastructure improvements (including seismic upgrades, flood protection, and fire hardening), water conservation, water reuse technologies, recycled water, local water storage, groundwater storage, recharge and recovery, alternative water supply studies, planning and technologies, watershed protection and improvement, stream restoration, storm/flood risk mitigation, and Integrated Regional Water Management Plans.
- To provide streamlined approval and permitting opportunities for projects such as, but not limited to, water supply, stream restoration, and flood resiliency.
- To enhance a reliable and sustainable water supply for the City and surrounding communities.
- To increase water supply and improve water quality in the region, including drought relief, response, support, and community outreach and education legislation.
- To create funding opportunities that are provided to local jurisdictions through past and future bond opportunities.
- To reflect the realities of persistent drought conditions and impacts associated with reduced water supply, including meeting state-mandated regional housing needs assessment (RHNA) targets.
- To remove barriers to future groundwater projects and support innovative ways that advance groundwater aquifer storage, as well as efforts approved by local Sustainable Groundwater Management Act agencies.
- To continue to provide funding for Groundwater Sustainable Agencies and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans.
- That fund statewide low-income, emergency, and hardship water and wastewater rate-assistance programs.
- To streamline the process of imposing or increasing water, wastewater, and stormwater fees, rates and/or assessments, administrative process to challenge such fees, rates and/or assessments, as well as encourages rate setting and water and wastewater operations education.
- To promote funding to encourage water-efficient fixtures and programs to help customers reduce water use.

- To work with a coalition of water agencies to advocate for continued support and appropriations to the Department of Water Resources' Atmospheric Rivers program.
- To advocate for funding and support to continue the operation of the diversion facilities at the Potter Valley Project to protect water supply resiliency and fisheries.
- To advocate for expanding of funding eligibility, such as the State Revolving Fund, to include projects in disadvantaged and/or low-income subsections of communities.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- Legislation and regulations that impose additional monitoring or treatment requirements for unregulated contaminants such as, but are not limited to, Perfluorooctanoic acid and Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To impose new fees on water, such as public goods charges, that do not benefit all ratepayers.
- To discourage or to inhibit the use of biosolids.
- To impose duplicative, unreasonable, and unfunded water quality testing, treatment, and reporting requirements.

Land-Use Planning and Housing

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To strengthen local agencies' legal and fiscal capability to prepare, adopt and implement plans for orderly growth, development, beautification, and conservation of local planning areas.
- That promotes housing measures to preserve and rehabilitate existing affordable housing.
- To create funding opportunities that are provided to local jurisdictions through statewide or regional bond efforts.
- To meet the state's planning goals while maintaining local control, ensuring communities evolve in a manner that reflects the residents' will and protects the public's health, safety, and welfare.
- To create funding opportunities that support local jurisdictions affordable housing investment and partnerships.
- To create a tax increment financing mechanism at the state level to support local redevelopment efforts and funding.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To withhold funding dedicated to transportation funding unless proposed housing goals are being met.
- That undermines established general plan, zoning, and housing regulations.
- That undermines the planning vision of local government and contradicts the expectations of our community, which includes projects mitigating their impacts.
- That limits local discretion over mixed-use development projects near multi-modal transportation centers, including any policies or guidelines issued by the California Air Resources Board or any other agency.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To create efficiencies within CEQA and support local discretion and planning efforts to limit delays.
- That minimizes CEQA review of environmental impacts related to additional density for housing projects that involve density bonus consistent with State law.
- To prevent CEQA lawsuits from being filed for any reason other than a bona fide environmental impact.
- To streamline state environmental review processes and limit court reviews of environmental documentation.

Cannabis

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To lower the state excise tax. Advocate for the continued ability of local government to impose excise taxes on the adult-use cannabis industry.
- To fund local implementation of cannabis regulations.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That seeks to undermine a locally adopted ordinance pertaining to the regulation, land use, and enforcement authority of medical and adult-use cannabis.
- That imposes onerous state law requirements on applicants who fully comply with local regulations.

Homelessness

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To sustain and increase funding for the development and ongoing operations of permanent supportive housing, including resources to finance the development

of new units, resources to provide long-term sustainability for supportive services, and resources for ongoing rental subsidies.

- To increase state funding and identify ongoing dedicated funding to prevent and reduce homelessness in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County.
- To provide additional resources, including outreach, to address the homeless encampments those located on state property.
- To provide resources to address the mental health and alcohol/substance use needs of persons experiencing homelessness.
- To allow local flexibility and/ or state funding mechanisms for safe parking programs to transition the City's most vulnerable residents to permanent housing.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That imposes on local governments with state mandates without adequate state funding regarding homelessness prevention or permanent supportive housing.

Recreation & Parks

Support Legislation:

- To help the City fund improvements through multiple opportunities (e.g., state park grant funds, conservancy grant funds, project mitigation funds) for parks, open space, natural resources, historic preservation, the arts, and cultural resources.
- To advocate for non-competitive per capita funding measures offered through the Natural Resources Agency, State Parks and Recreation to benefit the City's parks and recreation capital improvement projects.
- To fund the Housing Related Parks Program offered through the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- To promote local agency control over policies that recognize the benefits of parks and recreation facilities.
- That promotes and expands opportunities to enable creative placemaking within our neighborhoods and parks to connect residents with their community, promote safety and ensure continued essential services, and improve local infrastructure.
- To fund critical regional and community services that positively impact Californian's access to parks, open space, bike lanes, after-school programming, youth services, senior services, food programs, and facilities that promote physical activity, protect natural resources, and strengthen safety and security.

Oppose Legislation:

- That will erode funding for vital regional and community services that negatively impact Californian's access to parks, open space, bike lanes, after-school programming, youth services, senior services, food programs, and facilities that promote physical activity, protect natural resources, and strengthen safety and security.
- To eliminate or reduce park development impact fees necessary for providing parks for new housing developments.

Public Safety/Police

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To strengthen community-oriented public safety policies, including funding for hiring police officers, sideshow prevention and enforcement, violence prevention programs and gun violence prevention funding/initiatives, such as policies addressing growing issues surrounding 3D printing and selling of ghost guns.
- To increase funding to help local governments with improving community policing and rebuilding community trust through creating a co-responder team that includes the hiring of mental health officers, police officers for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction; support for mental health programs for staff, and support programs like the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program.
- To increase accountability and transparency of law enforcement agencies and personnel. Identify funding to help improve accountability and transparency of law enforcement agencies and personnel.
- To create and sustain funding opportunities for public safety agencies to include diversity in police and fire hiring, recruiting and education practices.
- To increase funding for restorative justice programs that impact children and youth.
- To increase funding for violence prevention and gang prevention/intervention programs, including efforts focused on our youth, such as tattoo removal, workforce development, crisis response, life skills, and violence interrupters.

Monitor and Evaluate:

- The implementation of best practices regarding law enforcement procedures and policies.

Fire and Emergency Services

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To encourage regional collaboration and deployment of resources to maximize firefighting efforts, including building new fire stations and hiring firefighters, emergency operations personnel and paramedics.
- To advocate for local control of emergency medical and ambulance services, including pre-hospital care and transport.
- To advocate for the local determination of adequate staffing based on data and analytics.
- To improve the coordination when public safety shut-off (PSPS) events occur between customers, regulators, government officials, and public safety partners.
- To fund mental health response services, such as the City of Santa Rosa's inRESPONSE program.
- To fund programs that promote situational awareness during emergency events and evacuations.

Transportation

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To increase funding for local transportation projects, including road resurfacing projects, local transit operating and capital projects, transit fare subsidy programs, zero-emissions buses and charging infrastructure, adding bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and trails throughout the city where appropriate, programs that facilitate development-oriented transit and transit-oriented development and enhancing bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- To increase State funding of transportation improvements with regional or sub-regional benefits for all modes of transportation.
- To protect dedicated transportation-related tax revenues and enhance the ability of local agencies to finance local transportation programs and facilities.
- To coordinate joint planning efforts and projects with Santa Rosa's border cities and the County of Sonoma on traffic congestion relief projects.
- To advocate for funding that supports Vision Zero programs and project implementation.
- To maximize share of any General Fund surplus revenues invested in local/regional transportation projects and initiatives.
- To advocate for policies aimed at equitable access for transportation system users and equitable transportation funding for disadvantaged communities.
- To increase funding for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and the conversion of fleets from gas-powered to electric vehicles.

- To collaborate with local schools and advocate for safe routes to school grants to support children and families walking and riding bikes to school.

Public Works and Utilities

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To preserve net neutrality.
- To increase the funding for broadband, including middle and last mile expenditures.

Oppose Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- That undermines local decision-making in the installation of broadband services.

Public Health

Support Legislation and Regulatory Efforts:

- To enable local governments' efforts to receive direct and flexible funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic or a state public health emergency, including funding for public transportation systems, affordable housing, homelessness prevention, rental, and utility assistance programs.
- To advocate for assistance to communities to help with emergency response operations related to a public health emergency, vaccine distribution and testing.
- To protect employees and the community from a public health emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To provide assistance for rental relief and water/utility/wastewater payments to residents impacted by income loss due to a state health emergency such as COVID-19 or other financial hardship.
- To provide statutory relief to public transit agencies to maximize funding flexibility for response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.