



Draft Preferred Alternative

This memorandum describes the draft preferred alternative for the land known as the Southeast Greenway. This memo includes:

- Summary of City Council Direction
- Site Characteristics and Planned Improvements
- Updated Guiding Principles
- Draft Preferred Alternative
- Land Use Concept
- Circulation Concept
- Draft Policies
- Infrastructure and Economic Considerations

SUMMARY OF CITY COUNCIL DIRECTION

Upon initiating a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning in October 2015, the Santa Rosa City Council directed the planning team to study several alternative land uses on the site, including:

- A linear park and Class 1 bicycle path connecting Farmers Lane to Spring Lake Regional Park
- Retail and business services at the northeast corner of Hoen Frontage Road and Farmers Lane to facilitate retail development along Farmers Lane
- Higher density residential to facilitate future construction of affordable housing
- Public/Institutional land uses near Montgomery High School for possible education-related uses
- Other land uses which emerge from the community engagement process

Upon reviewing the three land use and circulation alternatives and considering input from two community workshops and the results of a community survey, the Planning Commission and City Council provided additional direction at a joint session on November 1, 2016 to create a Preferred Alternative that:

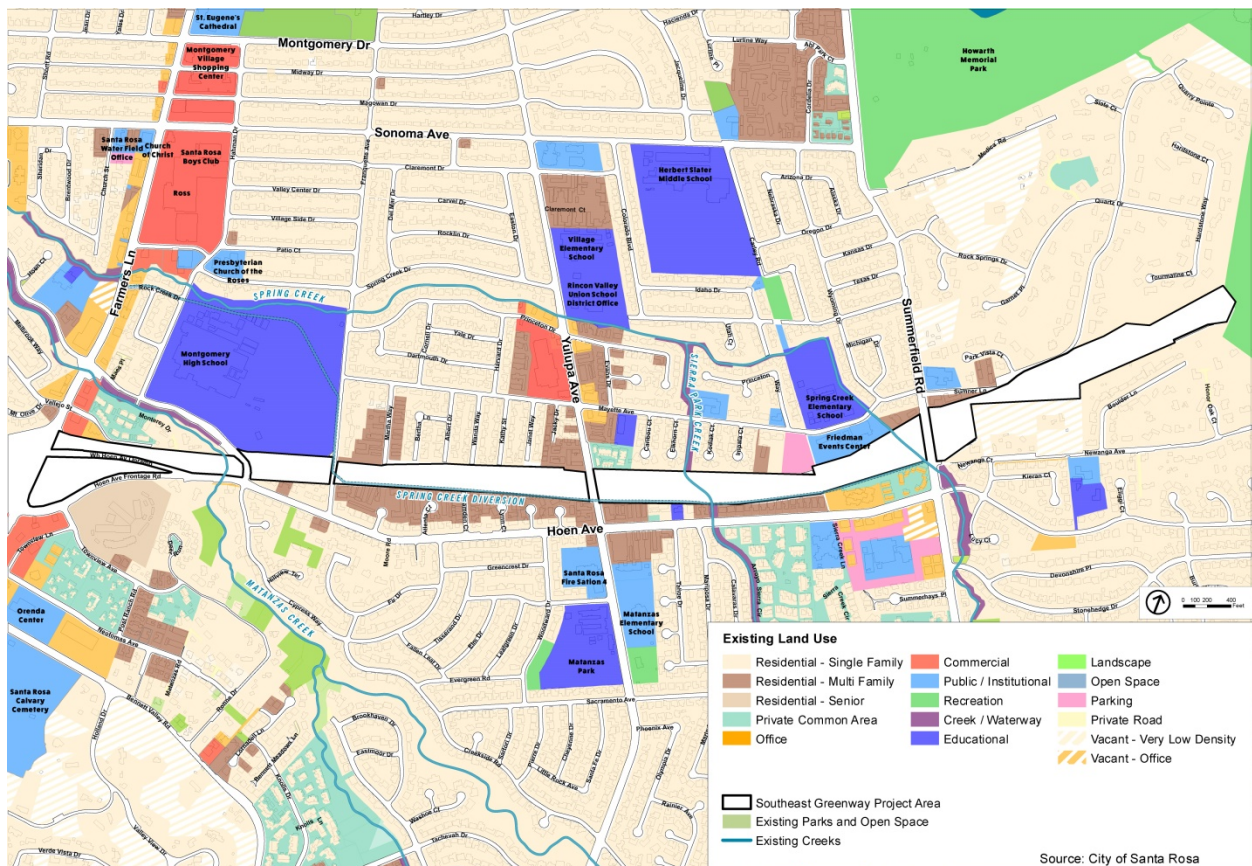
- Provides a continuous Greenway with separate bike and pedestrian paths
- Works for all the community and connects beyond to Downtown
- Addresses the city's need for housing and provides housing opportunities near existing infrastructure
- Increases eyes on the Greenway and activates the space
- Doesn't change the freeway onramp
- Maximizes shared parking opportunities with adjacent properties, such as Montgomery High School and Spring Lake Regional Park
- Restores the remnant orchards, particularly east of Summerfield Road
- Is financially feasible

SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

In addition, a number of existing opportunities and constraints have guided the Greenway’s planning and thus, the preferred alternative:

- Planned creek restoration
- Planned Class 1 bikeway through the Greenway which would connect Spring Lake Regional Park to existing Class 2 bike lanes on Summerfield Road to planned Class 3 bike route on Hoen Avenue near Montgomery High School and Class 3 bike route on Vallejo Street west of Farmers Lane.
- Planned pedestrian/ bicycle paths connecting:
 - Wanda Way to Camden Court
 - Mayette Avenue to Hoen Avenue along Sierra Park Creek
 - Mayette Avenue to Hoen Avenue along the Right-of-Way through the Friedman Center
- Existing water well between Albert and Wanda Ways and planned wellfield with more wells in the area
- The Spring Creek Diversion, an existing subsurface water culvert on the southern edge of the property
- Planned new water pipeline the length of the Greenway, connecting the Sonoma County Water Agency’s two water tanks (requires an approximate 25-foot easement)
- Existing land uses on either side of the Greenway

Existing Land Uses



UPDATED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles were drafted using the input received from the community workshops, community survey, the project's Technical Advisory Committee and Partnership meetings, as well as the Planning Commission and City Council's direction at their joint study session on November 1, 2016. These principles establish a framework for the Greenway's current and future land use planning, design, and development.

Guiding Principle 1

The Greenway provides a **continuous pedestrian, bicycle, and non-motorized transportation connection from Spring Lake Regional Park to Farmers Lane** and links to downtown Santa Rosa, surrounding neighborhoods and schools, and the regional trail system. It should provide **separate bicycle and pedestrian paths** where possible.

Guiding Principle 2

The Greenway provides **open space, educational and cultural opportunities, and active and passive recreation** for residents and visitors.

Guiding Principle 3

The Greenway is developed sustainably to **enhance and protect** wetlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater and air quality.

Guiding Principle 4

The Greenway is developed to **support a walkable, livable neighborhood, promote economic vitality, and encourage social equity.**

Guiding Principle 5

The community, public agencies and private partners **work together** on the Greenway's planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, stewardship, safety, and funding.

Guiding Principle 6

Uses on the Greenway are designed to **face and provide easy access** to the main paths in the Greenway, **maximize views** of the hills, **promote public safety**, and **respect the character** of adjacent neighborhoods.

DRAFT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The draft preferred alternative is illustrated in plan and section on the following pages. The land use and circulation concepts are described in detail below.

LAND USE CONCEPT

The Southeast Greenway presents a rare opportunity for community members and the City to plan and develop a twenty-first century public open space in the heart of southeastern Santa Rosa which will be a local and regional attraction and amenity. The concept described below is shown graphically in Figure 1: Preferred Alternative.

The Greenway will be a continuous linear open space with separated bicycle and pedestrian paths linking Spring Lake Regional Park to Hoen Avenue with a bicycle connection to Farmers Lane and beyond. Additional pedestrian and bicycle connections will link neighborhoods to the north and south to the Greenway and to each other.

A mix of park and open space uses will help to knit the urban fabric together, and increase the connectivity between neighborhoods to the north and south. These will include wide, open spaces with native plantings and areas restored to their natural habitat, interspersed with picnic areas, playgrounds, community gardens, educational/recreational spaces that can be used by neighboring schools, and a strategically located place for community gatherings. The Greenway's trailheads, picnic areas, and playgrounds along it will increase activity and serve the public, thereby providing additional safety and security. Areas of sensitive habitat near creeks and wetlands will be restored, as will remnant walnut orchards. The Greenway character of parklike open spaces will extend to the fence line along most of the south edge from Hoen Avenue to Summerfield, where existing multifamily and commercial properties exist currently, properties that potentially could redevelop in the future to face the Greenway.

In addition to natural areas and park uses, select areas along the north edge of the Greenway will be developed to reflect the character of and provide amenities to the existing uses adjacent to the Greenway. Joint school facilities, a community gathering place, spaces for community gardens, as well as mixed-use development, will be located carefully here. A mix of land uses on the western edge of the Greenway will provide ample space for retail services, housing, and lodging for Santa Rosa residents and visitors. These uses will include the potential for approximately 190 housing units and 22,000 square feet of commercial space, thereby increasing the utilization of the Greenway, providing more adjacent users, and increasing the City's housing stock. These additional users will result in more people visiting the site at all hours of the day, increasing the number of eyes on the Greenway and fostering a safe environment. Having permanent residents along the Greenway, and businesses serving Greenway users, will create constituencies that will seek to preserve the quality of their environment, and will discourage unacceptable behavior on the part of users of the public spaces. Allowing some housing creates opportunities to serve other public goals, such as affordable housing, workforce housing, and transitional housing for formerly homeless people.

Each land use is described in detail and illustrated on the Preferred Alternative illustrative map. Council directed staff and consultants to explore housing along the entire length of the Greenway, particularly where infrastructure to serve it exists. The preferred alternative found that allowing development in the larger areas on the west edge of the Greenway will allow for more housing, less interrupted open space, and fewer impacts on neighbors. However, the planning team did study alternative configurations; alternatives for the west, central and east portions of the Greenway are described and shown following the description of the preferred alternative.

- **Greenway:** Open space with a mostly natural appearance will maintain a minimum width of 100 feet (but often wider) for the length of the Greenway property, and will include pathways for pedestrians, bicyclists, and non-motorized access; native plantings; and some areas dedicated to play areas and picnic areas near access points (see Image 1). Total acreage is: 18.3 acres.



1: Greenway

- **Public Plaza:** Locations for small gatherings, trailheads, and gateways. These areas would include signage and seating, and could include restrooms, kiosks, public art, and public parking (see Image 2). Assuming each plaza is approximately ¼-acre, the total acreage for the four areas is approximately 1 acre.



2: Public Plaza

- **Natural Open Space:** These areas would be for wildlife habitat and planted with appropriate native plants. The total acreage for natural open space restoration is 17.8 acres.



3: Creek Restoration

- **Creek Restoration:** Areas around creeks would be restored with riparian vegetation where appropriate (see Image 3). Aside from designated trails, these areas would have minimal access. The area designated for creek restoration is 3.1 acres.

- **School Facilities:** This is intended to be an area for joint-use active recreational uses (swim center, running tracks, basketball or tennis courts), “outdoor classrooms,” and associated restrooms and lighting that would serve as an extension of Montgomery High School. The area would be usable by other schools, as well as the community at-large and could benefit from sharing the school’s parking lots (see Image 4). Total acreage is: 1.4 acres.



4: School Facilities

- **Community Gathering Place:** This space would benefit from its proximity to the school facilities, potentially sharing Montgomery High School’s parking lot and would allow facilities for large, organized community events like celebrations, festivals and concerts. It could include a small amphitheater (see Image 5). Total acreage is: 0.5 acre.



5: Community Gathering Space

- Urban Agriculture:** These areas would allow community gardens or working farms, including orchards (see Image 6). They are primarily located near pedestrian/bicycle cross intersections and new housing. Community gardens serve the neighborhood and bring more “eyes to the Greenway” enhancing the safety for all users. They would be sited at pedestrian pathways to neighboring residential areas. Total acreage is: 5.1 acres.
- Mixed-Use:** Residential development with ground-floor retail uses, and potentially separate commercial structures, would be located on the triangular parcel at the terminus of Highway 12, bordered by Farmers Lane, Hoen Frontage Road and the Highway 12 onramp (see Image 7). Residential uses are required in this designation. Total acreage is: 4.7 acres. This land use includes approximately 20,000 square feet of commercial space and residential density at 18-30 units per acre, which results in approximately 114 dwelling units.¹ Mixed-use is also appropriate west of Yulupa Avenue, adjacent to other multi-family housing. Total acreage is: 1.2 acres. This land use includes approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space and approximately 27 dwelling units.
- 2-3 Story Attached Housing:** Apartments or condos of two to three stories in height would be allowed along Vallejo Street near housing of a similar nature (see image 8). Total acreage is: 3.7 acres. This land use includes residential density at 8-18 units per acre, which results in approximately 48 dwelling units.²



6: Urban Agriculture



7: Mixed-Use



8: 2-3 Story Attached Housing

CIRCULATION CONCEPT

- Multi-use Paths:** Multi-use paths running east to west will include a paved bike path (to accommodate travel in both directions) and paths to accommodate walkers, runners, and possibly equestrians (on the path east of Summerfield Road).

¹ When calculating dwelling units, the midpoint of the density range is used (24 units/acre).

² The midpoint of the density range is 13 units/acre.

- **Mid-block Crossings:** Mid-block crossings are proposed at Summerfield Road, Yulupa Avenue, and Franquette Avenue (see Images 9 and 10). These will differ depending on the street to create safe, noticeable crossings where the multi-use paths cross vehicle traffic.

- **Intersection Crossings:** Intersection crossings with enhanced signing, striping, and/or signal operations to improve pedestrian/bike travel are proposed at Hoen Avenue and Cypress Way, and at the new driveway on Hoen Avenue Frontage Road.

- **Vehicular Access:** New vehicular access and driveways serving mixed-use and residential development would be located on Hoen Avenue Frontage Road, Vallejo Street, and Yulupa Avenue. Access to the large mixed-use site will require a signalized intersection on Hoen Avenue Frontage Road. Access to trailheads/public plazas will be from Vallejo Street, Hoen Avenue, Yulupa Avenue, and Summerfield Road. Emergency vehicles will have access to the entirety of the Greenway.

- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Connections:** A number of north/south pedestrian/bicycle connections have been identified to connect to neighborhoods, provide safe routes to school, and to provide access to the Greenway between the cross streets. Numerous access points will facilitate easier pedestrian/bicycle access to the Greenway and allow areas between the roadways to be activated with foot and bicycle traffic.

In the area west of Hoen Avenue/Cypress Way, pedestrians walking from the Greenway to the new mixed-use development would cross to the south side of Hoen Avenue Frontage Road at the intersection of Hoen Avenue/Hoen Avenue Frontage Road /Cypress Way, walk along the south side of Hoen Avenue Frontage Road, and would cross Hoen Avenue Frontage Road at the new driveway intersection. Bike lanes already exist along Hoen Avenue Frontage Road so westbound bicyclists leaving the Greenway would connect to these bike lanes, however eastbound bicyclists accessing the Greenway from the mixed-use development would also have to cross Hoen Avenue Frontage Road at the new driveway intersection and cross back at the Hoen Avenue/Cypress Way intersection. This is not a very direct connection for pedestrians and bicyclists, but it does not result in any modifications to the onramp. The areas adjacent to the onramp on the most easterly part of the triangular parcel would need to be fenced to prohibit unsafe pedestrian/bicyclist crossing.

The multi-use paths connect to a number of existing and planned City bicycle facilities that lead to Downtown. In the west, bicyclists en route to Downtown Santa Rosa could choose to connect on bicycle facilities along proposed Class III facilities on Hoen Avenue to existing Class III facilities on Hahman Drive to existing Class II facilities on Sonoma Avenue. Alternatively, bicyclists could choose to use proposed Class III facilities on Vallejo Street to existing Class II facilities on Sonoma Avenue.



9: Mid-block Crossing



10: Mid-block Crossing

ALTERNATIVES

At Council's direction, the planning team studied alternatives for the west, central and east portions of the Greenway to disperse housing and address pedestrian/bicycle circulation in the west. Three areas within the Greenway have alternative land use or circulation concepts to consider. They are described below.

WEST ALTERNATIVE

Alternative circulation configurations were studied on the west side of the Greenway. With the existing condition of the Highway 12 onramp, pedestrians will not be able to safely cross rapidly moving traffic. Therefore, the planning team studied two options for safe, direct access to the multi-use paths.

- **A pedestrian/ bicycle undercrossing:** An undercrossing was studied to connect the multi-use pathway on the north side of the onramp to connect to the mixed use development on the south side. This undercrossing could be configured under the onramp in the form of a box culvert. Preliminary cost estimate is \$600,000.
- **Highway 12 Onramp Minor Modification:** An alternative to the undercrossing is to slightly reconfigure the onramp where it meets Hoehn Avenue Frontage Road and include pedestrian/bicycle crossing features so that pedestrians and bicyclists can safely cross and access the mixed-use development (see Image 11). Preliminary cost is \$350,000.

If the onramp can be reconfigured, there is not a need for the undercrossing and the extension of the multi-use paths on the north side, which would allow for more flexibility in the development in the area north of the onramp.



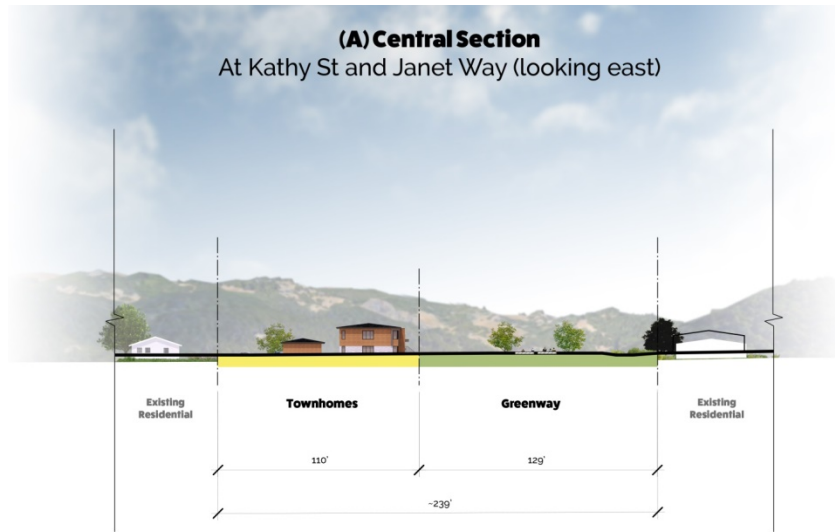
11: Onramp Pedestrian/Bicyclist Crossing

CENTRAL ALTERNATIVE

- **Townhomes:** Housing is in the form of attached or semi-detached two-story townhomes with greenway-facing entrances that would directly access the Greenway along the north edge between Martha Way and Janet Way (see Image 12 and (A) Central Section). Total acreage is: 1.8 acres. This land use includes residential density at 8-13 units per acre, which results in approximately 20 dwelling units.



12: Townhomes

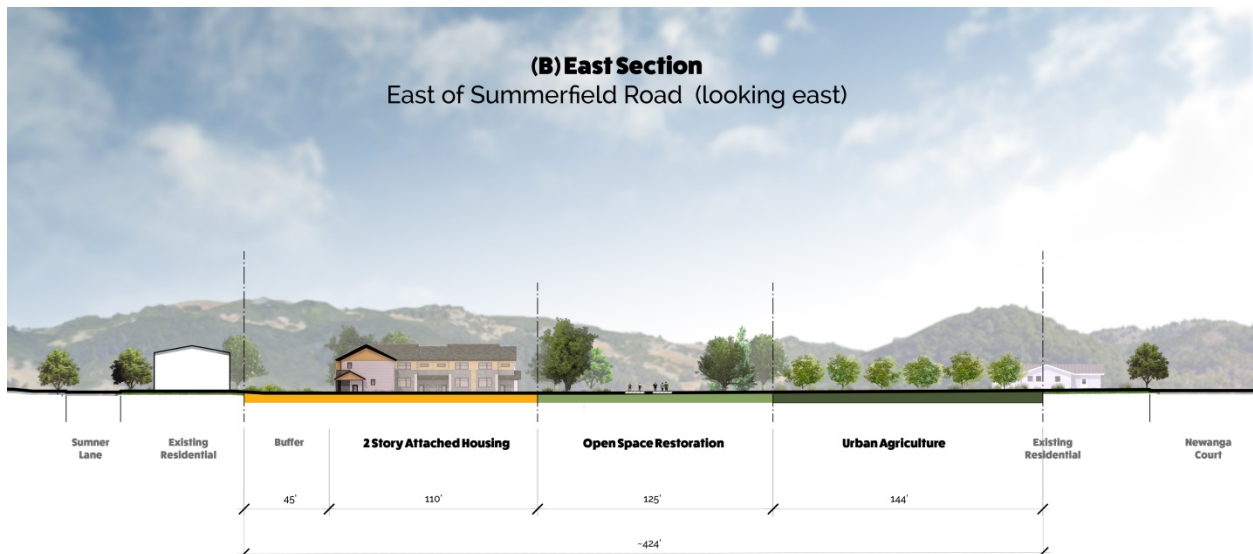


EAST ALTERNATIVE

- 2-3-Story Housing:** Apartments or condos of two to three stories in height facing the Greenway could be located just east of Summerfield Road across the seasonal creek from existing two-story multi-family housing (see Image 8 and (B) East Section). Total acreage is: .6 acres. This land use includes residential density at 8-18 units per acre, which results in approximately 13 dwelling units.
- Small scale retail:** Development such as a café, bicycle rental shop and other greenway-related retail use could be located just west of Summerfield Road across from the new housing (see Image 13). Total acreage is 0.3, which results in approximately 2,000 square feet of commercial space.



13: Small Café



DRAFT POLICIES

The following draft policies would be included with the Guiding Principles and General Plan Amendment to give more specific guidance to the development of the Southeast Greenway.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND FACILITY POLICIES

Ensure that the Greenway open space is continuous from Spring Lake Regional Park to Hoen Avenue (except in existing street crossings), and are as wide as possible but not less than 125 feet in width. The only exception is the “pinch point” east of Summerfield Road where the right-of-way narrows to approximately 68 feet in width.

Explore acquisition of property at the “pinch point” from property owners to allow for a wider and more accessible trail in that location.

Coordinate with Santa Rosa City School District and Montgomery High School to share educational, recreational and parking facilities to the greatest extent feasible.

Site the locations of community gardens as closely as possible to access points from neighboring residential areas to encourage use and activity.

Restore the areas around the three creeks that cross the Greenway: Matanzas Creek, Sierra Park Creek, and Spring Creek, consistent with the Citywide Creek Master Plan.

Maximize open space and native plantings in the Greenway to provide a wildlife corridor to the greatest extent possible.

Increase stormwater infiltration and groundwater recharge.

Reduce maintenance costs with the use of self-sustaining plant species.

Accommodate public infrastructure on the site, including an easement for the Sonoma County Water Agency to install a pipeline through the Greenway to help provide needed redundancy in the regional water system, space for the existing City well and potential additional wells near Franquette Avenue and Martha Way, the existing Spring Creek Diversion, and existing and new water and sewer lines through the area.

Ensure first responders can access the Greenway.

LAND USE POLICIES

Require all new development on or abutting the Greenway to front the Greenway with windows and entries, and limit fencing height and material to ensure views from private property into the Greenway to enhance public safety.

Locate new residential uses at select locations along the Greenway with access to existing streets and infrastructure. These new uses should be sensitively designed to consider neighboring residential area’s scale and shade on the Greenway.

Develop the site between Hoen Avenue Frontage Road and the Highway 12 onramp with a mix of residential and commercial development. Residential uses are required on this site and should be maximized. Lodging uses are allowed. Development of the site will require provision of pedestrian and bicycle access to the Greenway trails to the north.

Require the design of all structures, utilities and access roads in the Greenway to maximize public safety, attractiveness, and compatibility with other uses in the Greenway and surrounding neighborhood.

Consider a future planning effort for the area south of the Greenway between Franquette Avenue and Summerfield Road to identify land uses which would enable these properties to redevelop to interface with the Greenway

CIRCULATION POLICIES

Provide separate trails for bicycle and pedestrian use, and permit them to meander to respond to topographic or other features. Separate bicycle and pedestrian facilities should join together to cross streets and creeks for safety and habitat protection.

Provide multi-use path crossings of Yulupa Avenue and Summerfield Road that allow for the safest conditions given existing signalized intersections, merging vehicle travel lanes, and traffic.

Provide safe and convenient crossings where the Greenway bicycle and pedestrian trail crosses Hoen Avenue, Franquette Avenue, Yulupa Avenue and Summerfield Road. These could include enhanced crosswalks, median refuges, pedestrian and bicyclist activated signals and warning signage for drivers.

Identify and sign a main bicycle route from the Southeast Greenway to Downtown that is direct, well-marked, safe and easy to navigate, while ensuring multiple connections. Consideration should be given to the following routes as identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to determine the highest priority for improvement: Franquette to Sonoma Avenue; Hoen Avenue to Sonoma Avenue; Hoen Avenue to Hahman Drive to Sonoma Avenue; and Vallejo Street.

Ensure additional bicycle facilities connect to the Southeast Greenway as proposed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Seek opportunities for shared parking to serve the Southeast Greenway. These include Montgomery High School, the Friedman Center, Spring Lake Regional Park, and adjacent non-residential uses.

Provide for parking on the Southeast Greenway in future design phases of the project to minimize parking in surrounding neighborhoods.

Work with Caltrans to create a Greenway gateway on Farmers Lane north of the onramp that offers a prominently visible entrance to the open space and increases visitor awareness of the amenity.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Environmental Impact Report that is part of this General Plan Amendment will assess a wide range of impacts based on the preferred alternative. Prior to that analysis being done, the following sections address circulation, utilities and economic considerations.

CIRCULATION

Many of the streets in the area surrounding the Southeast Greenway carry high auto volumes during commute hours, leading to community concerns about traffic. Three aspects of the preferred alternative may have an effect on traffic:

- The preferred alternative proposes several new crossings for the pedestrian and bicycle pathway at intersecting or nearby streets, including Hoen Avenue, Franquette Avenue, Yulupa Avenue, and Summerfield Road. Drivers may encounter modest increases in delay as pedestrian and bicycle crossing activity increases.
- The alternative shows new housing and retail development at select locations along the Greenway, which will generate vehicle trips.
- The park and recreation facilities will attract users when developed, also generating vehicle trips.

All of these factors will be considered in the next phase of the planning effort. Potential transportation impacts from the preferred Greenway alternative will be quantified and analyzed in a full environmental impact report which will be completed and made available to the community as part of the review process.

UTILITIES

New development and greenway uses will require connection to sewer, water, and drainage facilities. The area is generally well-served with these utilities and therefore this alternative would not likely require significant off-site infrastructure improvements. The mixed-use area near Farmers Lane will, however, require an approximate 600-foot extension to sewer main at Farmers Lane Plaza.

ECONOMICS

The public costs of the Southeast Greenway fit into three categories: acquisition of the land from the California Department of Transportation; development and construction of Greenway improvements; and ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) costs.

ACQUISITION

It is possible that the entire stretch of open space and park-related areas not proposed for development with residential or commercial uses could be acquired through efforts led by the Sonoma Land Trust. Portions of the Greenway that are proposed for private uses (including the five-acre “triangle” site near Farmers Lane) could help

offset acquisition costs both by reducing the total acreage (and therefore cost) devoted to Greenway uses, and by potentially applying the funds generated by the lease or sale of the land to acquisition of the Greenway land.

DEVELOPMENT

Partnerships with Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma County Water Agency, Santa Rosa City School District, and other public agencies could work together to secure grants and provide funding for development of specific improvements.

A variety of non-profit partners could also develop facilities. For example, the school facilities could accommodate ball fields developed (and maintained by) a soccer club, little league, or other sports promotion entity in Sonoma County. Partnerships with local non-profit groups such as the Sonoma Land Trust and LandPaths could be sought for assistance with design and development of trails, habitat areas, and recreational areas. Where public plazas and pedestrian/bike paths are near residential and mixed use development, it could create an opportunity for plaza areas to offer food and beverage services with café seating indoors and out. With the potential for amenities to be provided by the surrounding commercial development, it is more likely that public spaces such as splash pads or other water features could be developed and operated in these more active nodes. Some Greenway improvements could be provided by residential and commercial development as related to the need for such facilities created by the developments.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Partnerships with Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma County Water Agency, Santa Rosa City School District, and other public agencies could also help with O&M funding for stewardship of the parcels they would use. Examples could include the school district for land near Montgomery High School, Regional Parks for the area east of Summerfield Road connecting to Spring Lake Regional Park, and the Sonoma County Water Agency for creek restoration zones and lands associated with their water distribution system.

As mentioned above, a variety of non-profit partners could also contribute to maintenance of facilities. Community gardens could be developed with volunteer assistance and donated materials and could generate some revenue through the rental of plots to individual households to cover costs of water and other shared expenses. Other forms of revenue-producing urban agriculture could include a retail nursery, walnut-producing orchards, or a community supported agriculture (CSA) cooperative. These urban agricultural uses could be maintained by private entities assumed to operate, maintain, and police the land within their jurisdictions, decreasing the amount of territory for the City and Regional Parks to operate and maintain.

The City's Recreation & Parks Department would be the logical steward of the picnic areas and playgrounds, a community gathering place, public plazas, and possibly the pedestrian/bike paths. The Department can set recreation fees to cover program costs, and collect revenues in the form of picnic reservations, event rentals, lease of space for food trucks and farmers' markets, and such activities. These revenues generally cover some of the Department's costs of managing, promoting, and monitoring of these activities, but are unlikely to be enough to cover the ongoing costs of landscape maintenance, periodic replacement of infrastructure, and other long-term costs of playgrounds, picnic areas, pathways, and other Greenway uses.

In addition, partnerships with private entities and adjacent developments could be pursued to help cover O&M costs. Private development will create assessed value on the tax rolls, and will generate tax revenue for the City, schools and other public agencies; contributing funding for the police, fire, recreation, special needs housing and other ongoing O&M services that will support the Greenway. By devoting a subset of the site to development uses, the amount of land area subject to public O&M is reduced, which reduces the cost burden on the City's General Fund.

The Greenway Partnership has developed a vast network of volunteers and groups that can be used for stewardship of the Greenway. Without significant responsibilities shifted to non-profit groups or other partner agencies, operation and maintenance of the Greenway would likely leave the City of Santa Rosa with a long-term reliance on its General Fund resources for approximately 31 acres. Regional Parks would be responsible for the management of approximately 16 acres east of Summerfield Road with ownership by the Sonoma County Water Agency.