



WHERE SUCCESS TAKES ROOT

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## City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting

April 2025



# Agenda

1. Call to order and roll call
2. Remote Participation
3. Modifications to the Agenda
4. Announcements
5. Approval of Minutes
6. Public Comments
7. Partner Reports
8. New Business Items
9. Matters held in Committee
10. Department Reports
11. Adjournment

# 7. Partner Reports

# 8. New Business Items

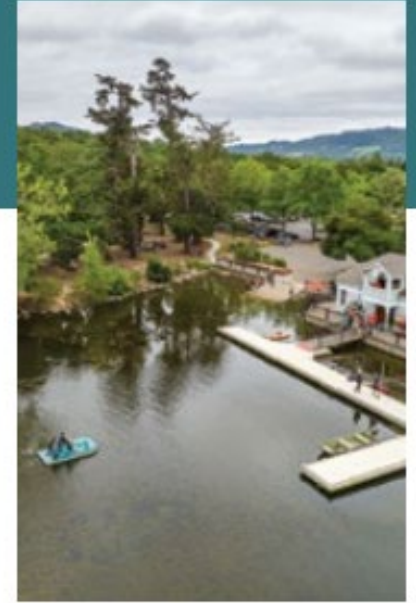
## 8.1 Economic Development Division Update

- A) Economic Development Strategy Implementation Plan Update
- B) Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Update
- C) Entrepreneurship and Small Business Update
- D) Economic Vibrancy and Resiliency Update
- E) Community Investment Update
- F) Metrics and Indicators
- G) Special Projects Update

Creating Economic Growth,  
Vitality, and Fiscal Stability  
for Santa Rosa

# Economic Development Strategy Implementation Plan Update

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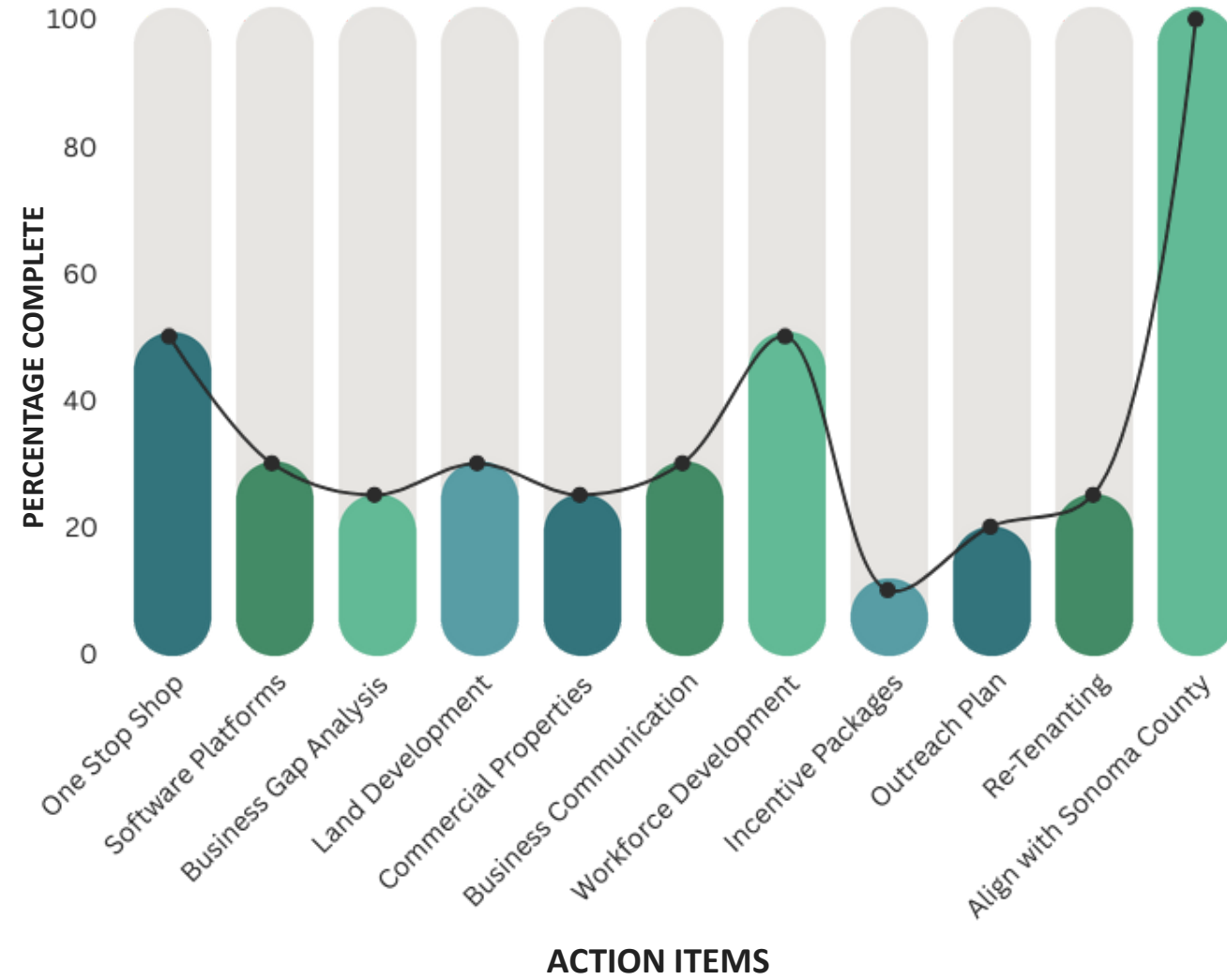
Economic Development Strategy

Adopted April 2024

### Objectives:

- Create Fiscal Stability
- Support Workforce
- Business-Friendly City
- Communication Strategy
- Increase Businesses
- Business Retention & Expansion
- Support & Grow Businesses
- Support Entrepreneurship
- Remove Barriers

# BUSINESS GROWTH & RETENTION



City of Santa Rosa

Economic Development Division



[biz@srcity.org](mailto:biz@srcity.org)



[srcity.org/doingbusiness](http://srcity.org/doingbusiness)

Implementation Plan Progress as of April 1, 2025

# BUSINESS GROWTH & RETENTION

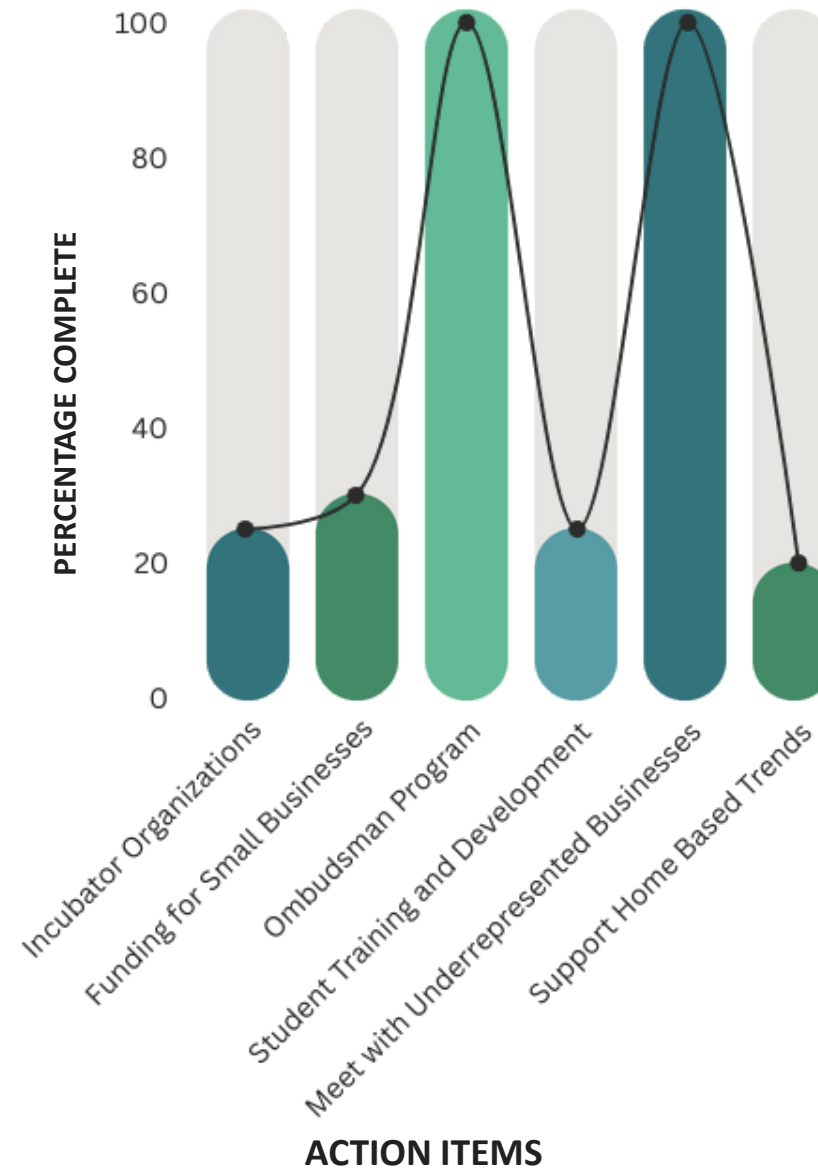
## ACTIONS:

1. Create a Virtual (online) and Physical One-Stop-Shop to support businesses
2. Obtain Software Platforms for Tracking and Reliable Demographics
3. Conduct a Business Gap Analysis, Existing Cluster Industry Analysis, and Key Emerging Industry Sectors Analysis
4. Identify Key Opportunities and Land Development Sites and Work with Outside Partners to Prepare and Market
5. Align Policies, Procedures, and Standards with Plans to Encourage Mixed-Use and Innovative Uses of Commercial Properties
6. Establish Site Visits and Open Communication with Businesses
7. Strengthen and Support Partnerships with Educational Organizations and Business Associations to Support Workforce Development Needs
8. Develop Incentive Packages to Attract Identified Key Industries
9. Create a Comprehensive Outreach and Marketing Plan (aka “Business Recruitment Plan”.) to Attract Identified Key Industries
10. Create a Streamlined Re-Tenancing Program with Clear Pathways for Re-Tenancing Retail, Restaurant, or Office Spaces
11. Align Efforts with Sonoma County to Create a Tandem Approach to Attraction Efforts

**Objectives:**

- Create Fiscal Stability
- Support Workforce
- Business-Friendly City
- Communication Strategy
- Increase Businesses
- Business Retention & Expansion
- Support & Grow Businesses
- Support Entrepreneurship
- Remove Barriers

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS



*Implementation Plan Progress as of April 1, 2025*



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS

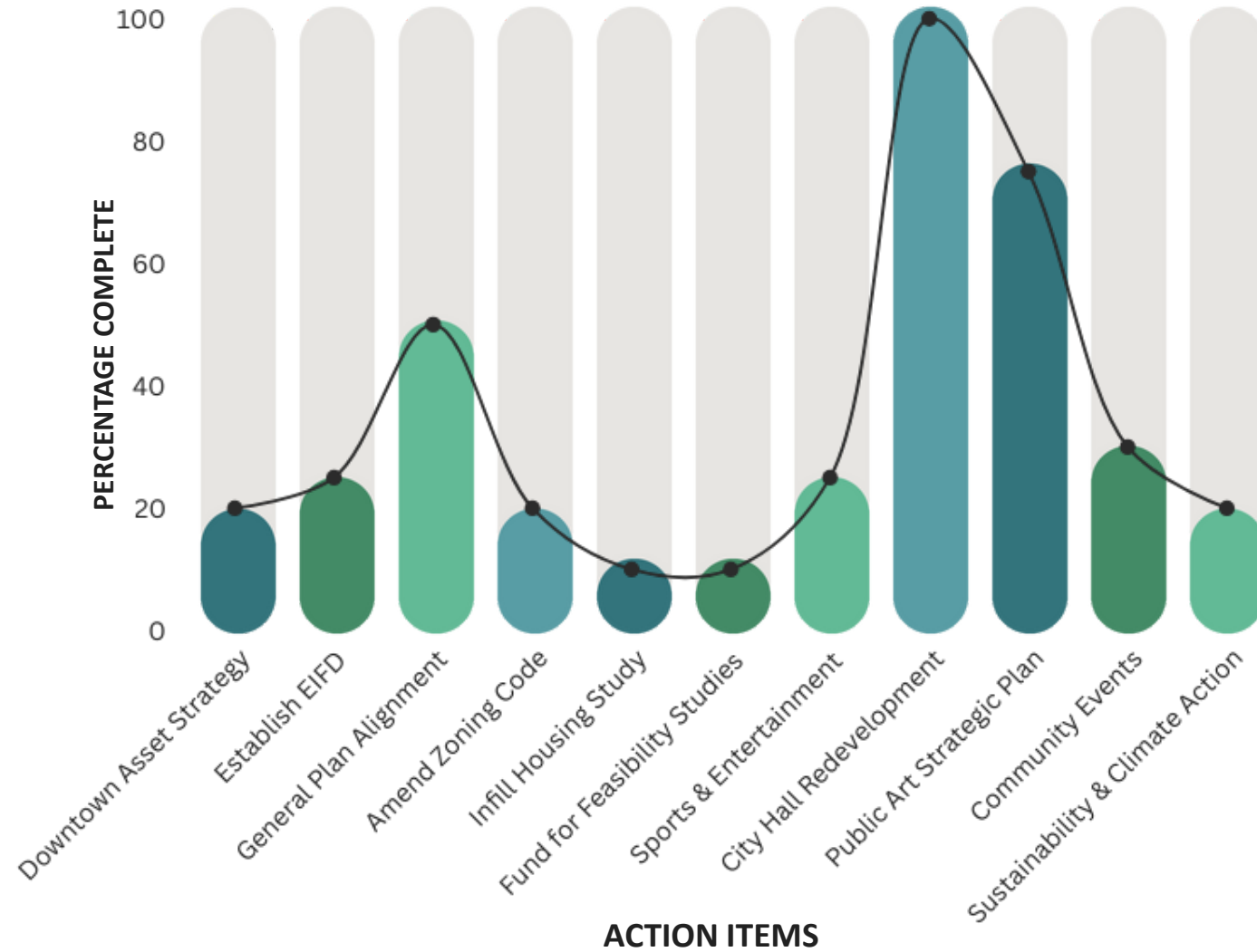
## ACTIONS:

1. Strengthen Support for Entrepreneurship through Incubator Organizations
2. Identify and Promote Available Funding Sources for Small Business Owners
3. Create Ombudsman Program for Technical Assistance and Process Support
4. Partner and Connect Students for Training Opportunities, Mentoring, and Workforce Development Upskilling
5. Meet with underrepresented (LGTBQ, Immigrant, BIPOC, and Women-Owned) Businesses to Identify Barriers and Build Pathways for Assistance and Support
6. Analyze Opportunities to Support Home-Based and Work from Home Entrepreneur Trends

**Objectives:**

- Downtown Housing
- Increase Revenue
- Support Economy
- Walkable Neighborhoods
- Climate Action Goals

# ECONOMIC VIBRANCY & RESILIENCY



*Implementation Plan Progress as of April 1, 2025*

# ECONOMIC VIBRANCY & RESILIENCY

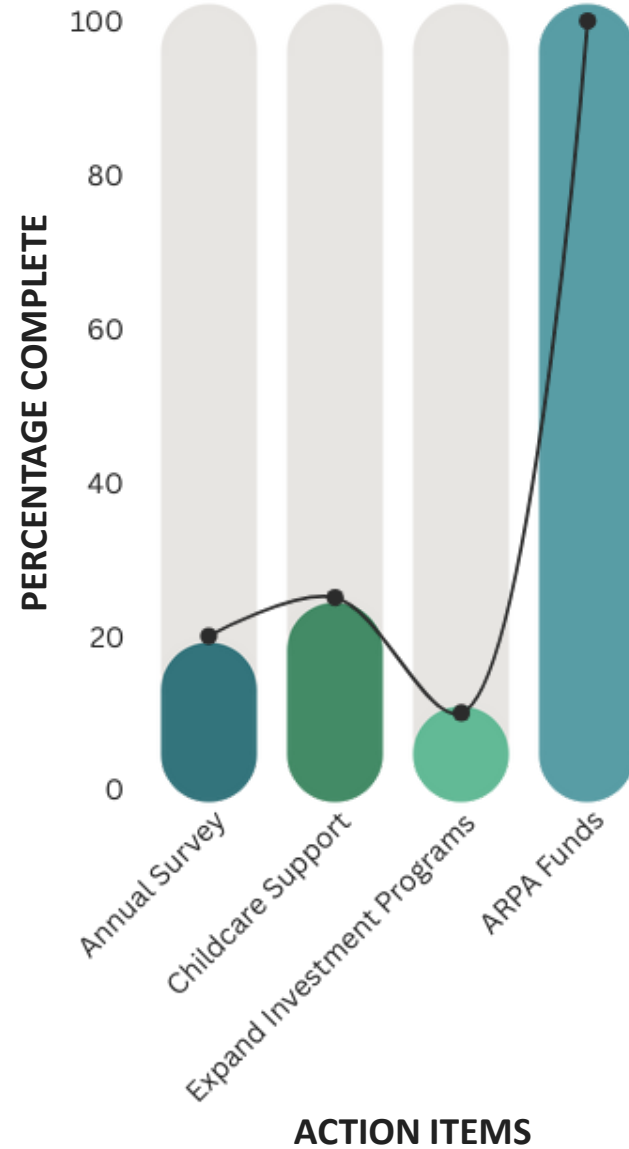
## ACTIONS:

1. Expand Downtown Asset Strategy activating city-owned property for economic development purposes, to include housing and housing supportive amenities with an emphasis on sustainability and walkable neighborhoods
2. Establish an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District in Downtown
3. Ensure General Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan alignment
4. Review and amend zoning code where needed to align with economic strategies in support of development initiatives and opportunities
5. Conduct a downtown infill housing economic and fiscal impact study
6. Create an Economic development fund to conduct feasibility studies
7. Explore, develop, and implement sports and entertainment as an economic driver for both residents and tourists
8. Continue to assess City Hall Complex redevelopment opportunities
9. Implement the public art program strategic plan
10. Support community events and activities through direct programming and grants
11. Champion sustainability and the City's Climate Action

**Objectives:**

- Upstream Investment
- Support Diverse Needs
- Address Childhood Poverty
- Early Childhood Sector

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT



# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

## OBJECTIVES:

1. Coordinate annual district-based surveys to solicit community input at a neighborhood level from all seven districts
2. Advance childcare support programs
3. Identify and capitalize on funding opportunities to expand upstream investment pilot programs
4. Use ARPA funds to continue pilot programs addressing childhood poverty and increase advanced education opportunities – continue implementation through expenditure of funds by end of 2024

## Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion:

### Large Business Attraction

Create a business-friendly, sustainable, and strong economy by attracting new businesses and expanding, retaining, and supporting existing businesses



#### Goals:

- Create fiscal stability for the City, businesses and property owners
- Support a thriving workforce
- Establish Santa Rosa as a business-friendly city
- Develop a communication strategy for the promotion of services and interactions with business owners
- Increase the number of medium and large businesses in key industries
- Create a business retention and expansion strategy for existing industry

#### Actions:

- Create a virtual one-stop-shop online portal of virtual tools to start or expand a business, customized to meet diverse cultural and language needs, building from partnerships with the County, State, and Sonoma Small Business Development Center.
- Obtain software platforms for tracking and reliable demographics

- Conduct a business gap analysis, existing cluster industry analysis, and key emerging industry sector analysis
- Identify key opportunities and land development sites and work with outside partners to prepare a market
- Align policies, procedures, and standards with plan to encourage mixed-use and innovative uses of commercial properties
- Establish site visits and open communication with businesses
- Strengthen and support partnerships with educational organizations and business associations to support workforce development needs
- Develop incentive packages to attract identified industries
- Create a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan to attract identified key industries
- Create a streamlined re-tenanting program with clear pathways for re-tenanting retail, professional office spaces
- Align efforts with Sonoma County's joint tandem approach to attraction efforts

# Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Update

City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee  
Meeting April 2025



## Entrepreneurship and Small Business

Actively support and empower the existing small business ecosystem while establishing clear pathways to enable successful and fulfilling small business ownership

### Goals:

- Support and grow existing small business
- Support and promote opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Understand and remove barriers for immigrant, BIPOC and women-owned business

### Actions:

- Strengthen support for entrepreneurship through incubator organizations
- Identify and promote available funding sources for small business owners
- Create Ombudsman program for technical assistance and process support
- Partner and connect students for training opportunities, mentoring and work force development upskilling
- Meet with Immigrant, BIPOC and women-owned businesses to identify barriers and build pathways for assistance and support
- Analyze opportunities to support home-based and work from home entrepreneur trends



### Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Measurements:

- % change in the number of business licenses compared to base year
- % change in startups
- % change in the number of business licenses by industry
- % commercial property vacancy rate
- Website analytics for virtual portal
- Monetary tracking for incentive programs
- # of site-visits
- % business demographics
- Track BIPOC and women-owned business support through an annual survey

# Entrepreneurship and Small Business Update

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## 1. Small Business Support, Retention, and Expansion

Under the direction of the Chief Economic Development Officer, the Ombudsman will administer programs designed to support small businesses (fewer than 500 employees), including:

- **One-Stop-Shop Initiative** (*Implementation Plan, pg. 11*)
- **Site Visits and Open Communication with Businesses** (*Implementation Plan, pg. 15*)
- **Strengthening Support for Entrepreneurship through Incubator Organizations** (*Implementation Plan, pg. 19*)
- **BIPOC and Underrepresented Business Support** (*Implementation Plan, pg. 22*)
- **Home-Based Business and Work-from-Home Entrepreneur Support** (*Implementation Plan, pg. 22*)
- Additional small business and entrepreneurship support initiatives as assigned.

### Responsibilities Include:

- Providing one-on-one consultations to help businesses identify and access specific resources.
- Coordinating with City departments on behalf of small businesses.
- Connecting businesses with partners offering financial, workforce, and technical resources.
- Engaging partner agencies that provide business support and services.
- Analyzing and identifying trends related to business retention, expansion, and relocation.

## 2. Business Concierge Program

Under the direction of the Planning and Economic Development Director, the Ombudsman will oversee the City of Santa Rosa Business Concierge Program, which provides specialized planning and permitting assistance for businesses as assigned.

### Services Include:

- Early review of concepts or plans to identify potential challenges.
- Providing education and guidance on entitlement and permitting requirements.
- Advising business owners and developers on required fees, permits, and property use or development opportunities.
- Assisting with building permits, submission requirements, and inspection processes to ensure compliance with applicable building codes.
- Acting as a liaison within City Hall to guide businesses through ministerial and discretionary permitting processes for tenant improvements or new construction.
- Monitoring the permitting process to help advance construction projects.
- Offering additional support to help businesses navigate the permitting and licensing process while ensuring alignment with the Planning Department's customer service strategies.
- Support businesses impacted by graffiti through the PED graffiti abatement and removal program.



**Goals:**

- Bolster Downtown housing, commercial and retail business
- Increase revenue to businesses and the City
- Support a thriving economy
- Support walkable neighborhoods
- Promote and enhance climate action goals and sustainability principles

**Actions:**

- Expand Downtown Asset Strategy activating city-owned property for economic development purposes, to include housing and housing supportive amenities with an emphasis on sustainability and walkable neighborhoods
- Establish an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District in Downtown
- Ensure General Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan alignment
- Review and amend zoning code where needed to align with economic strategies in support of development initiatives and opportunities
- Conduct a downtown infill housing economic and fiscal impact study

- Create an Economic development and feasibility studies
- Explore, develop, and implement sports entertainment as an economic driver for residents and tourists
- Continue to assess City Hall Complex redevelopment opportunities
- Implement the public art program strategy
- Support community events and activities through direct programming and grants
- Champion sustainability and the City's Climate Action Plan

**Measurements:**

- Identification of potential business opportunities
- Implementation of/or monetary amount for financial fund for feasibility areas
- % of empty store front/office space in downtown compared to Year 1
- Housing construction in progress on surplus sites number of available sites
- Feasibility and fiscal impact studies complete, and business opportunities defined

# Economic Vibrancy and Resiliency Update

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## Community Investment

Invest in and support our diverse community to fortify current and future economic challenges

### Goals:

- Increase economic opportunity through upstream investment
- Support diverse needs of all districts
- Address childhood poverty
- Strengthen early childhood education sector

### Actions:

- Coordinate annual district-based surveys to solicit community input at a neighborhood level from all seven districts
- Advance childcare support programs
- Identify and capitalize on funding opportunities to expand upstream investment pilot programs
- Use ARPA funds to continue pilot programs addressing childhood poverty and increase advanced education opportunities – continue implementation through expenditure of funds by end of 2024

### Measurements:

- Report progress on all funded program implementation through online dash.
- # of programs funded, dollars provided, individuals impacted
- Report progress from annual surveys, yes, through dashboards



# Community Investment Update

City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee  
Meeting April 2025

# Metrics and Indicators

# Special Projects Update



# HARRY'S HOUSE

## Pop Up Program

City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting  
April 2025





# Street Activation

City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting  
April 2025





# Farmers Market



# One Stop Shop

City of Santa Rosa Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting  
April 2025



# End New Business

Public Comment on New Business

## 9. Matters Held In Committee

# 10. Department Reports

# 11. Adjourn