

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: ANDY GUSTAVSON, SENIOR PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WORK PLAN

AGENDA ACTION: RECEIVE REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development (PED) that the Council and Planning Commission hold a Study Session to receive a report regarding the proposed General Plan Update work 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 is in need of a comprehensive update to address State law requirements including climate change and housing, as well as respond to community changes and events including persistent homelessness and wildfire recovery.

PED prepared the attached General Plan Update (GPU) Request for Proposal (RFP) for Council and Commission consideration and comment before it is released later this month. It states the purpose of the comprehensive GPU and outlines the tasks that will be completed in the 3-year citywide effort including public engagement, special studies and policy analysis, and environmental review. It also lists the technical planning issues and community concerns, identified by City Departments and the public last May and June, the candidate GPU consultant must, at minimum, address in their submitted proposals. Consultant selection is expected in October and work on the GPU is expected to begin in November.

BACKGROUND

The 2035 General Plan was adopted in 2009. It is the City's long-term vision of community development with goals and policies that guide day-to-day decisions regarding housing and commercial development, and infrastructure improvements. It establishes priorities for public service and facility improvement, neighborhood social services, and natural resource protection within the City. It also serves as the baseline environmental document to help streamline California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for private and public projects within the City.

The General Plan needs to be updated to reflect significant community changes and events. Since 2009 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, the GPU will establish a new environmental baseline and mitigation measures that will help facilitate review of future projects according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The comprehensive, community based reassessment of these issues will extend the General Plan planning horizon to 2050.

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.
- On or before April 1 of each year, the Planning and Economic Development Department presents the General Plan Annual Report to the Council and Planning Commission.

ANALYSIS

General Plan Purpose and Structure

The General Plan is the foundation of 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.



Senate Bill 1000 designated the southern portion of Roseland as a Disadvantaged Community, which requires the City to add an Environmental Justice Element and a companion Air Quality Element to its general plan. Government Code 65302.h.4.a. These two new elements need to outline how the City will help to improve public health and quality of life in its neighborhoods that are disproportionately 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 of the general plan are listed and summarized in the table on the following page.

Agency Input and Public Outreach

The update will be an "all hands" event. PED reached out to City Departments in May with a scoping survey to help ensure the RFP identified known near-term and long-term City infrastructure and service issues. Once GPU work begins, a technical advisory consisting of city department and outside agency representatives will be convened to review special studies and help formulate policy recommendations. A community advisory committee (made up of representatives from various parts of the City) will be established at the on-set and remain engaged throughout the GPU update. This body will provide input as special studies are released and help the GPU team evaluate policy options.

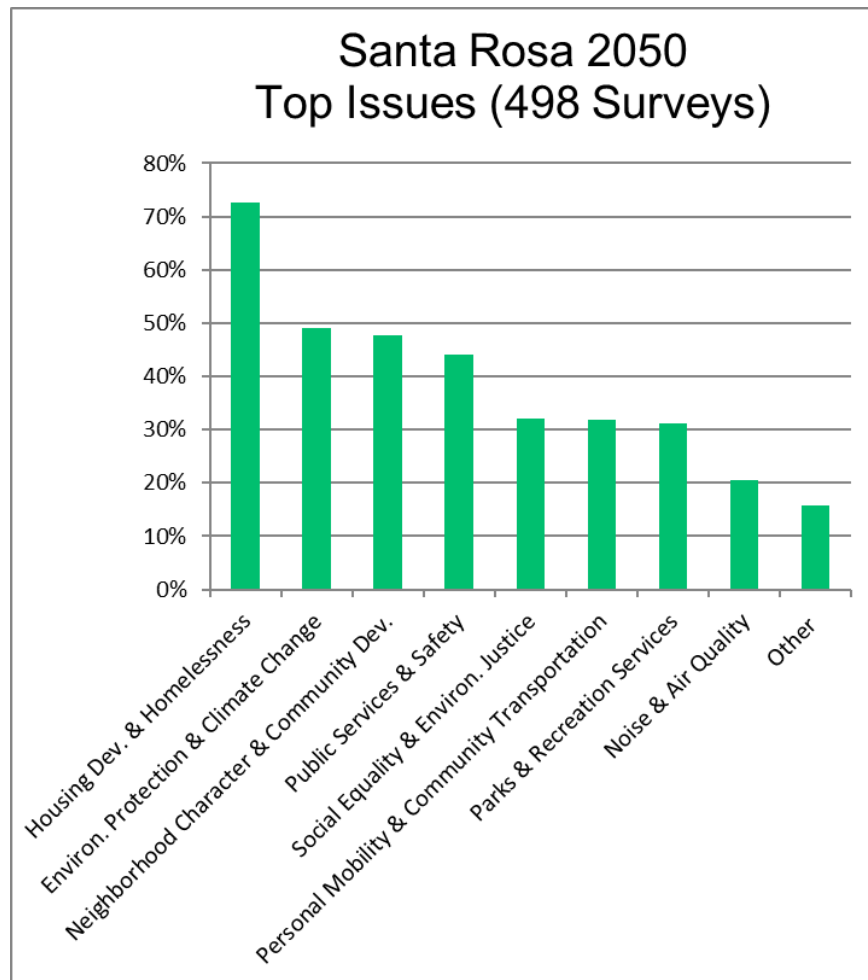
In addition to community workshops and public hearings, public outreach would include targeted surveys, focus groups, pop-up events, attendance at local meetings and groups, brochures and advertising, all including non-English translation. The objective is to reach all segments of the community including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

PED recommends website with links to enhance public access to general plan reports and information resources on the internet. 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 (based on Urban Footprint or similar modeling program) 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.

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.

Community Conversation

In May and June of 2019, PED hosted a series of eight community meetings (including one Spanish language meeting). These meetings were held in a variety of neighborhood venues to announce the start of the General Plan Update, to hear community sentiment about what matters most for the future of the City, and to start building relationships and promote public engagement throughout the project lifetime. In addition to general plan presentation and open discussion, PED asked participants what matters most to the future of Santa Rosa by completing a survey. Nearly 500 surveys were completed. The results echoed the sentiment expressed at public meetings and underscore housing development and homelessness is the leading concern of respondents by 73%. Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and Neighborhood Character and Community Development both ranked equally high at 49% and 48%. Public Services and Safety trailed a few percentage points behind at 44%. While these results do not reflect the sentiment of the entire community, they do indicate issues that are foremost for individuals who are likely to be engaged in the General Plan update. The general plan work plan recommended by PED will fully and equally address all of the listed topics as required by State law.



The recommended GPU RFP includes the work plan PED and the GPU consultant will follow to resolve technical and community planning issues identified through examination of the city's existing social, economic, and environmental setting. It also guides the preparation of policy options to address land use, housing, traffic, environmental and other issues. Engagement with neighborhood groups, civic organizations, and special interest groups throughout the update process will help to ensure these issues are thoroughly examined.

In light of recent trends and events, significant issues include:

- Housing production and homelessness reduction
- Neighborhood protection
- Development constraints and streamlining
- Climate change and greenhouse gas reduction
- Population growth and household demographic change
- Cannabis industry impact on industrial land supply
- Roseland Community land use and transportation integration
- Wildfire and other natural hazard reduction and mitigation

The GPU will generate special studies to assess economic conditions, housing and employment opportunities, infrastructure capacity, community and urban design, transportation needs and options, noise and air quality conditions, water supply, natural and man-made hazards.

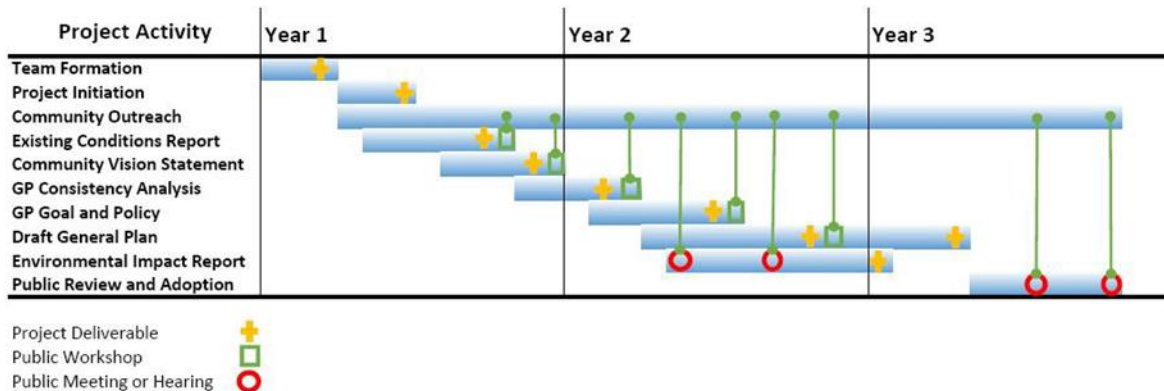
The chapters of the current general plan will be updated to add new or revised policies including and not limited to environmental justice, climate change, and community resilience. The RFP includes a detailed list of specific issues in Section 5.f that shape the scope of the GPU.

FISCAL IMPACT

The General Plan Update and the Environmental Impact Report is projected to cost about \$2.5 million and three years to complete. The cost associated with the GPU reflects public engagement built into the work plan, 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. The cost of the GPU is expected to be met by the PED Advance Planning fund. Additional funding will be sought from a variety of planning grants as they become available.

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE WORK PLAN
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Below is the potential timeline for a comprehensive update to the General Plan:



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The release of the RFP is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project that has a potential to result in either a direct physical change in the environment, nor will it result in a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

The adoption of the GPU will be subject to CEQA review. This review is a substantial part of the RFP work plan and is expected to require the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The selected GPU consultant will be required to thoroughly and adequately assess the impacts of the updated General Plan and to comply with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act.

As further specified in Section 5.g of the RFP, the EIR will address, at a minimum, the following areas consistent with the current CEQA Guidelines:

- Land Use Consistency and Compatibility. The EIR will describe existing land use and development patterns and evaluate the inconsistencies which could occur under the Draft General Plan.
- Population, Housing and Employment. The EIR will analyze projected population, housing and employment impacts of the Draft General Plan.
- Transportation and Circulation. A traffic study shall be completed to determine the project’s impacts, based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT) to the existing and proposed roadway system, existing and proposed bikeway network, transit systems (bus and commuter rail) and pedestrians. The traffic study shall utilize the citywide computer traffic model which is maintained by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority. Corridor levels of service shall be determined for regional/arterial streets and Highway 101.
- Air Quality. The EIR will address the project’s impact on air pollutants and their precursors as well as localized carbon monoxide impacts utilizing the appropriate

air quality modeling tools. The analysis will address both operational, including vehicular emissions (long term) and construction level (short term) impacts on local and regional air quality.

- Noise. The EIR will address the potential impacts on ambient noise levels from any construction related noise as well as potential impacts on ambient noise from the proposed project (buildout of proposed land uses).
- Biological Resources. The EIR will analyze the project's short term (construction) impacts as well as long term impacts on biological resources, including special status species.
- Water/Wastewater. The EIR will analyze and address the project's construction and operational impacts to the water and wastewater systems, water supply and wastewater capacity to serve buildout of the General Plan. A Water Supply Assessment will be completed for the project and will be available to the EIR consultant.
- Hydrology/Flooding. The EIR will analyze the stormwater system, potential flooding impacts and water quality.
- Public Services. The EIR will evaluate the potential impacts to public services such as schools, parks, solid waste disposal, police response and services, fire response and services and utilities.
- Cultural and Historic Resources. The EIR will evaluate potential impacts to cultural and historic resources. Special attention shall be given to the analysis of cultural resources.
- Visual Quality. Scenic, natural, cultural and historic assets are evaluated and potential impacts of the project identified.
- Open Space. The EIR will evaluate the potential loss of open space to urbanization.
- Geology and Seismicity. The EIR will examine geologic and seismic conditions, addressing ground shaking and liquefaction potential from earthquakes, surface fault rupture, landslides, erosion, settlement and slope stability.
- Hazardous Materials. The EIR will describe hazardous materials which exist in the Santa Rosa Urban Growth Boundary and assess the potential exposure to these hazards through development anticipated in the Draft General Plan.
- Energy/Climate Change. Changes in energy consumption anticipated through implementation of the Draft General Plan shall be analyzed. Greenhouse gas emissions anticipated with the project shall be included. The EIR shall analyze how development anticipated by the General Plan will be affected by climate

change and how implementation of the Plan will affect climate change.

The EIR shall establish a greenhouse gas emission baseline and quantify projected emissions from project to determine project impact. While analysis of this topic is evolving, this EIR should include the most current thinking and practice regarding impacts of greenhouse gas emissions.

Wildfire. Assess wildfire hazards within the City associated with the draft GPU and alternatives and their consistency with the City's adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plans, and wildfire risk created by local environmental conditions (slope, winds, etc) and planned infrastructure (roads, fuel breaks, powerlines, etc) as well as post fire public safety risks (landslides, flooding, slope instability, etc).

In addition, the EIR shall include discussion of growth inducing and cumulative impacts, and significant, unavoidable impacts, if any. A range of reasonable alternatives to the Draft General Plan shall be evaluated, including the "No Project" alternative. A Mitigation Monitoring Program, findings of fact pursuant to CEQA, and statement of overriding considerations shall also be developed by the consultant.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In April, 2018, the Council had the following comments in response to the general plan annual report 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

An information notice was posted on the PED General Plan Update website and distributed by email to interested parties including Community Conversation meeting attendees.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - General Plan Update Request for Proposal

CONTACT

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