

RESOLUTION NO. 28696

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA INITIATING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND REZONING OF THE APPROXIMATELY 57 ACRE SITE COMPRISED OF UNDEVELOPED HIGHWAY 12 RIGHT OF WAY BETWEEN FARMERS LANE AND SPRING LAKE REGIONAL PARK IN SOUTHEAST SANTA ROSA

WHEREAS, the subject site, commonly referred to as the “Southeast Greenway Property,” (the “Site”) is approximately two miles long, and is comprised of approximately 57 acres of mostly vacant land beginning at Farmers Lane and continuing eastward, generally parallel to Hoen Avenue, connecting with Spring Lake Regional Park; and

WHEREAS, the Site was acquired by California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) over a twenty-year period from the 1950s to 1970s as Highway 12 right of way for the future extension of the freeway from its current terminus at Farmers Lane through the Site, through land that is now developed with the Santa Rosa Creek Reservoir and Spring Lake Regional Park, and connecting with Highway 12 near Melita Road; and

WHEREAS, the Site does not have a General Plan land use designation on Santa Rosa’s land use diagram. A Class 1 bicycle facility is called for in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Citywide Creek Master Plan depicts the planned bicycle and pedestrian facility and envisions enhancement and restoration of the three creeks that traverse the site: Matanzas, Sierra Park, and Spring; and

WHEREAS, on October 18, 2011, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted Resolution No. 27995 which included Council Goal #4, Strategic Objective #4: “Acknowledge Southeast Greenway community planning projects.” The Southeast Greenway Campaign is a community group established to develop an urban greenway on the Site. The Site is owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans); and

WHEREAS, on April 16, 2013, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28266 reaffirming Council Goal #4, Strategic Objective #3: “Support Efforts of Southeast Greenway Campaign by Monitoring and Providing Information;” and

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2014, the City of Santa Rosa joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership by signing a Mutual Letter of Intent. At the time Santa Rosa joined the Partnership, it consisted of the following partners:

- City of Santa Rosa
- Sonoma County Water Agency
- Sonoma County Regional Parks
- Southeast Greenway Campaign
- Landpaths

WHEREAS, the Sonoma Land Trust joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership in late 2014 and is contributing expertise and effort toward facilitating the future transfer of the Caltrans land to local public ownership for open space purposes; and

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2014, the California Transportation Commission adopted a resolution to rescind the freeway adoption due to lack of operational need, local support, and funding, allowing the Site to be transferred or sold as surplus property; and

WHEREAS, support for the Southeast Greenway Campaign's urban greenway concept has been identified as a Council priority for three different Councils; and

WHEREAS, on July 7, 2015, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28666 approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans, Sonoma Land Trust, and the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership. The MOU documents how the Partnership, Sonoma Land Trust, and Caltrans will collaborate and work together toward development of an agreement that will transfer the Site to local public ownership. The MOU states that the City of Santa Rosa would be responsible for developing an Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints report to document existing conditions on the site and opportunities and constraints resulting from existing adopted plans; and

WHEREAS, the "Southeast Greenway Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints" report ("Report") was prepared on September 15, 2015 and presented to the Council on October 6, 2015 at a public meeting of the Council. Notices of the meeting were mailed to property owners within 500 feet of the site and emailed to known interest groups. The Report was included in the Council packet that was made available to members of the public and the Council on the City's Internet site and at City Hall located at 100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 10, Santa Rosa, CA; and

WHEREAS, a key constraint identified in the Report is that the Site does not currently have a General Plan land use designation; and

WHEREAS, based on the information in the Report, participation in the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership since June 2014, and consideration of options for community engagement in decision making about future land uses, staff recommends that the Council initiate a General Plan and Rezoning to allow staff to move forward with a public process that will involve significant community engagement and participation in consideration of future uses; and

WHEREAS, the Council has the authority to initiate a General Plan Amendment or Zoning Code Map Amendment (rezoning) by resolution; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends the General Plan Amendment initially envision designating the majority of the site for Parks and Recreation to facilitate local public acquisition and future development of a linear park and Class 1 bicycle path connecting Farmers Lane to Spring Lake Regional Park, as envisioned by the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership; and

WHEREAS, the project, which will consist of a proposed General Plan Amendment and rezoning of the Site, will require environmental review which would be completed prior to any action on the General Plan Amendment and Rezoning process; and

WHEREAS, staff recommends that as part of the Project other land use designations be considered in some locations on the Site, such as:

- Retail and Business Services at the northeast corner of Hoen Avenue and Farmers Lane to facilitate retail development along Farmers Lane.
- Higher density residential to facilitate future construction of affordable housing. This is due to the overall size and location of the site and the community need for affordable housing.
- Public/Institutional near Montgomery High School for possible education-related uses.
- Other land uses which emerge through an extensive community engagement process that will involve significant public input; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council accepts the Report and recommendations of staff and hereby initiates a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning of the Site.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council hereby directs staff to proceed with the initial land use vision as herein described, recognizing that proposed land uses will evolve through the community planning process, and that the final decision will be made by the City Council after extensive community engagement and at formal public hearings.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED this 6th day of October, 2015.

AYES: (5) Vice Mayor Coursey, Council Members Carlstrom, Combs, Olivares, Schwedhelm

NOES: (0)

ABSENT: (2) Mayor Sawyer, Council Member Wysocky

ABSTAIN: (0)