

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: RAISSA DE LA ROSA  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION DIRECTOR  
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY FORUM AND INPUT ON SANTA ROSA COMMUNITY  
EMPOWERMENT PLAN

AGENDA ACTION: STUDY SESSION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council hear from the community on current events concerning police practices, review the Santa Rosa Community Empowerment Plan, accept feedback and input from the public, and provide direction to staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been just over a month since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis set in motion a groundswell of global protests, including here in Santa Rosa. This study session is a forum for the community to express their grief and anger, as well as demands and desires for a better Santa Rosa. To this end, the Santa Rosa Community Empowerment Plan is a starting point for change in recognition that the City of Santa Rosa seeks to reorient efforts and change policies in a collaborative manner with the community, and particularly with our communities of color. The focus of the Plan is to engage and work in partnership with the public in a way that all community members feel they have a voice and are empowered to seek and implement a better more inclusive system. An overview of this initial plan, intent and timeline will be reviewed so that it may be modified as needed based on public input. With a repetitive loop of input, action, and analysis, it is intended that the Community Empowerment Plan be iterative and ongoing, evolving based on feedback and need.

BACKGROUND

In response to the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, a groundswell of protests erupted nationwide, including Santa Rosa, calling, in part, for changes in use of force policies, as well as other policies and funding decisions that ignore or ineffectively address institutional structures that continue to impact communities of color. Prompted by the local protests, the City developed the Community Empowerment Plan (Attachment 1) to address Santa Rosa Police Department (SRPD) policies and practices through a strategic process informed and guided by community input. While initially focusing on the SRPD, the overall goal of the Plan is to improve the community's relationship with and trust in the City of Santa Rosa as a whole.

The Community Empowerment Plan is rooted in the principles of community engagement informed by extensive research by Community Engagement staff and supported by the

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recommendations set forth by the 2014 Mayor's Open Government Task Force (Attachment 2) and the international Spectrum of Public Participation model (Attachment 3).

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

There was no previous Council action specific to the Santa Rosa Community Empowerment Plan.

On June 23, 2020, as part of the budget hearing Council approved a budget allocation to resource the Plan's implementation.

ANALYSIS

There are many ways by which the public communicates with policymakers, with recent peaceful protests being one of many effective mediums. This study session offers an additional outlet and an opportunity to capture demands, ideas, requests, and general feedback on what is needed to make Santa Rosa a more equitable, inclusive and livable community for everyone.

An additional tool for change is the Community Empowerment Strategy, the focus of which is to engage the community related to current protests, and for which input is needed. Through this Strategy, the potential exists to address policies and practices to improve the City's relationship with, trust amongst, and service to the community. While it is focused on SRPD engagement, the SRPD does not stand alone in responding to the need for change. In addition to addressing SRPD practices and policies, the plan is meant to be inclusive of or evolve to include broader safety net solutions through other City departments and programs, such as economic opportunities, land use planning, budgeting, hiring practices, etc.

The Plan has three goals with related objectives:

1. Increase constructive and inclusive dialogue between leaders from black and Latinx communities in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, and the City of Santa Rosa
  - 1.1 Develop a process for regularly sharing progress and updates on this plan and related efforts.
  - 1.2 By July 31, 2020, at least 50 leaders have been engaged and a plan for broader community engagement is developed.
  - 1.3 By August 31, 2020, at least 5 community listening sessions are completed.
  - 1.4 By September 30, 2020, a report on community listening session outcomes is developed and presented back to community leadership.
  - 1.5 By December 31, 2020, a plan is developed for ongoing community engagement opportunities, with a focus on 2021
2. Community is provided with opportunities to review and provide input on Santa Rosa Police Department's use of force and community policing policies.
  - 2.1 Establish a forum to provide ongoing input on community policing practices, community issues, and ideas for improvement.
  - 2.2 Hold at least 5 community workshops for review and feedback on priority policies (priorities determined through the Police Chief's conversations with community leaders).
  - 2.3 Utilize input from community workshops to shape the independent police auditor scope of work.

3. Establish a feedback loop to gauge effectiveness of efforts with and in the community, and among City staff.
  - 3.1 Train City staff on opportunities for and levels of community engagement, including reviewing and adjusting based on community dialogue/listening session feedback.
  - 3.2 Develop resource strategies to support and optimize community engagement opportunities related to specific programs, projects and services.
  - 3.3 Evaluate community engagement efforts; loop in educational institutions and local organizations.
  - 3.4 Annually report to City Council on community engagement activities and progress towards each goal.

The Plan is modeled in consideration of two foundational engagement documents: the 2014 Mayor's Open Government Task Force (MOGTF) recommendation related to public engagement, and the Spectrum of Public Participation developed by the International Association of Public Participation.

While the goal of the MOGTF was to obtain recommendations from a diverse group of Santa Rosa residents on how to improve openness and transparency in Santa Rosa municipal government, the community engagement recommendation called on the City to develop a culture that values public engagement and transparency. This includes a communication loop that values community input and participation, increased opportunities for diverse engagement and effective participation, and a strong civic infrastructure that allows as well as educates people about how to best engage.

The Spectrum of Public Participation lays out a grid of five levels of public participation to help clarify the role of the public in planning and decision-making, and how much influence the community has over planning or decision-making processes. Moving from low to high levels of participation, the spectrum summarizes engagement levels as informing, consulting, involving, collaborating, and empowering. By nature of its organizational structure, the City has a history of relying on lower levels of engagement, choosing to inform by providing the public with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions, and to consult, obtaining public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

It behooves the City and is the intention of the Plan to move deeper into the spectrum toward collaboration, in which the City partners with the public in each aspect of the decisions including the development of alternatives and identification of preferred solutions.

### FISCAL IMPACT

This item is a study session report with no associated fiscal impact.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The study session is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that no activity is proposed for approval.

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BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Santa Rosa Community Empowerment Plan
- Attachment 2: Principles of Community Engagement
- Attachment 3: Spectrum of Community Engagement

CONTACT

Raissa de la Rosa  
Economic Development Division Director  
rdelarosa@srcity.org