

COUNCIL POLICY			
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BACKGROUND:

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to providing an open and transparent decision-making process to which Santa Rosa community members have equal access. The City believes that an active program of community involvement produces more informed decision-making and municipal service levels reflective of community need. In January 1987, the City Council adopted a goal confirming its commitment to community involvement and input on municipal issues. Effective July 1, 2026, the Ralph M Brown Act added similar provisions.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidance to City staff as to expected methods of community involvement, including notification. Because of the variety of programs undertaken by City departments, no one approach to community involvement will be effective in all cases. The nature and objectives of each program will determine the appropriate methods of community involvement.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the City Council to actively solicit the involvement of community members in the public decision-making process. This can be accomplished through public notification, social media, the City website, neighborhood and community meetings, public meetings, public hearings, and, when possible, media coverage.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- A. When a City-initiated or City-permitted project, program, or issue may have identifiable impacts on a neighborhood or community group, a Public Involvement Plan shall be submitted to the City Manager's Office or designee at the beginning of the program. The Plan shall be designed (a) to ensure responsiveness to the level of interest and concern expressed by the public, (b) to ensure transparency and understanding by the agencies, groups, and individuals who may participate, and (c) to ensure that community involvement is carefully and systematically included as a part of the decision-making process. The Public Involvement Plan shall be prepared by the department responsible for the project, program, or issue, and the Community Engagement Manager shall be consulted to ensure best practices are incorporated.
- B. When a project may affect a neighborhood, historically underrepresented group, and/or populations with limited English proficiency, community meetings will be scheduled early in the project planning process to the extent feasible Notices will be sent to organized neighborhood

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groups, other identified groups, and any individual who has requested notification. This may include, but not be limited to, government, civil rights, civic engagement, neighborhood, other community organizations, and media serving the affected population in their preferred language.

- C. All public hearing notices shall be written in clear, concise, and understandable language and incorporate maps or other graphics when possible. The notices will be clearly identified as a City of Santa Rosa notice. In addition to required legal notices, additional notices on major community issues may be issued through social media, the City website, direct mail, doorhangers, or other media outlets to attract the attention of interested community members.
- D. Except as set forth in the City’s Internet and Telephonic Service Disruption Policy, the City will continue to broadcast and live stream all open portions of City Council meetings held in Council Chamber. The City will also continue to broadcast and live stream meetings of Boards/Commissions when an item has broad community interest.
- E. Where appropriate staff shall include in staff reports a summary of the public outreach conducted and results of that outreach, including feedback received from community members.