

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: SUE GALLAGHER, CITY ATTORNEY  
STEPHANIE WILLIAMS, CITY CLERK  
MAGALI TELLES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT  
SUBJECT: OPEN GOVERNMENT ORDINANCE IMPLEMENTATION  
UPDATE

AGENDA ACTION: NO ACTION REQUIRED

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the City Attorney, City Clerk and Community Engagement that the City Council hold a Study Session to receive an update on the implementation of the Open Government Ordinance. The Council may, at its discretion, provide direction as to next steps. No formal action is required.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 8, 2020, the Council enacted the Open Government Ordinance to enhance openness, transparency and public participation in City government. The Ordinance included provisions for (1) the early posting of Council agendas; (2) expansion of the contents of Council agendas; (3) Spanish translation of Council agendas; (4) live Spanish translation of Council meetings; (5) management of Council meetings to facilitate public participation; (6) enhanced procedures for public records requests; (7) website posting of City data; and (8) preparation of a Citizens Guidebook to support and encourage public participation. Council set an effective date of July 1, 2021. Council, however, directed staff to begin implementation of the Ordinance in the interim and to report back to Council in March as to progress and operational impacts. By this Study Session, staff will provide that update on the implementation of the Open Government Ordinance.

BACKGROUND

In January 2014, former Mayor Scott Bartley convened the Open Government Task Force, a group of dedicated and engaged Santa Rosa Residents, to study and provide recommendations on how to improve openness and transparency in City government. The Task Force issued its recommendations to the Council in December of that year. Included in the Task Force's recommendations was the adoption of a "Sunshine

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Ordinance” to establish new City standards of transparency and open government that exceeded the minimum requirements of state law. A draft Sunshine Ordinance was prepared by staff and presented to Council in March of 2016. A Sunshine Ordinance Ad Hoc Committee was formed (later reconstituted as the Open Government Task Force Implementation Subcommittee) and, in the fall of 2018, the Committee began a detailed and comprehensive review of the draft Ordinance. Meetings were held monthly, rotating to locations throughout the City.

On December 1, 2020, the Subcommittee’s recommendations were presented to the full Council. After lengthy discussion and deliberation, the Council introduced, and the following week adopted, the Open Government Ordinance, instituting many new procedures and standards to enhance openness and transparency.

The Council set an effective date for the Ordinance of July 1, 2021. The Council directed staff to begin implementation in the interim to the extent feasible and to report back to Council on the Ordinance’s operational and financial impacts.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On December 1, 2020, the Open Government Ordinance was introduced.

On December 8, 2020, the Open Government Ordinance was adopted.

### ANALYSIS

In accordance with Council direction, staff will provide an update to Council on the implementation of the Open Government Ordinance to date. Staff welcomes and invites Council feedback and direction on next steps.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The study session is for information only and no action will be taken. There is, therefore, no fiscal impact at this time.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This study session is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15378 in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and that no further environmental review is required.

### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On October 29, 2020, the Open Government Task Force Implementation Subcommittee reviewed the Draft Open Government Ordinance and provided feedback.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

CONTACT

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