

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: GABE OSBURN, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: FIRST 2026 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PACKAGE

AGENDA ACTION: ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Department recommend that the Council, by two resolutions and one ordinance: 1) adopt an Addendum to the General Plan 2050 Environmental Impact Report (EIR); 2) adopt amendments to the land use diagram and text of the General Plan 2050 and to the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan land use figure; and 3) approve the first reading and introduce an ordinance entitled Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Rosa approving the rezoning of 10 properties to implement the General Plan Land Use Designation - File Number PLN25-0650. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Per State law, General Plan Amendments may be considered up to four times per year. This amendment package includes City-initiated updates to the General Plan and Downtown Station Area Specific Plan land use diagrams, a text amendment to the General Plan 2050, and corresponding Zoning Map amendments needed to maintain consistency between General Plan land use designations and zoning classifications.

The recommended land use amendments reflect property owner input received and additional staff analysis conducted as part of General Plan 2050 Implementation project. In total, land use changes are proposed for 30 properties, including 7 properties located within the boundaries of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. Of these 30 properties, 10 require rezoning to align with the proposed General Plan land use designations. The General Plan text amendment adds the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Improvement Figures from the City's Active Transportation Plan to the Circulation Element of the General Plan. The Council will also consider adoption of an Addendum to the General Plan 2050 EIR to satisfy the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed project.

On January 22, 2026, the Planning Commission unanimously adopted three resolutions recommending that the Council adopt the Addendum to the EIR, the amendments to the General Plan 2050 and the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, and the corresponding Zoning Map amendments.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Goal #3 – Promote Citywide Economic Development and Goal #5 - Plan for and Encourage Housing for All and Reduce Homelessness by supporting existing or new opportunities for housing and economic activity in strategic areas of the City.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

The City of Santa Rosa initiated the General Plan 2050 update in March 2020, culminating in City Council hearings on the proposed General Plan and EIR and a unanimous vote to certify the General Plan EIR (RES-2025-090), adopt the General Plan 2050 and approve associated Specific Plan amendments (RES-2025-091) on June 3, 2025. Following adoption of General Plan 2050, staff identified that previously proposed land use modifications for the two parcels west of the SMART rail along Sebastopol Avenue were inadvertently omitted. The proposed change was intended to add the Retail and Business Services designation in combination with the existing Medium Density Residential land use. The southern portion of the site, designated as Light Industry, would remain unchanged.

On July 8, 2025, the City Council adopted the City's Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which establishes a long-term vision for improving walking, bicycling, and rolling citywide, with a focus on creating an active transportation network for users of all ages and abilities. The ATP includes recommended bicycle and pedestrian network improvements proposed for inclusion as reference figures within the Circulation Element of General Plan 2050.

As part of General Plan implementation, staff reviewed zoning for consistency with adopted land use designations and initiated Zoning Map amendments where inconsistencies were found, notifying affected property owners. During outreach and at the Planning Commission public hearing on September 25, 2025, residents in the Memorial Hospital neighborhood expressed concern that rezoning to Office Commercial would make existing homes nonconforming and alter neighborhood character. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Planning Commission made a separate motion for the Council to consider directing staff to exclude these parcels from the rezoning effort and initiate a General Plan amendment to redesignate the properties as Low Density Residential.

Additional concerns were raised by property owners on Giffen Avenue and at the Mountain Hawk Shopping Center regarding inconsistencies between existing uses,

zoning, and General Plan land use designations. Separately, the property owner of 1266 Janet Drive contacted staff regarding development potential for the parcel. Staff determined that the parcel lacked a General Plan land use designation and that designation as Medium Density Residential, with corresponding zoning consistent with the adjacent property, would allow for development compatible with the surrounding area.

Staff also identified seven parcels along Maxwell Drive and W. College Avenue within the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan area that were designated as Neighborhood Mixed Use when the Specific Plan was adopted in October 2020. Upon further evaluation, staff determined that redesignation to Maker Mixed Use would better align with surrounding land uses and support long-term compatibility and development opportunities in the area.

During the November 4, 2025, Council meeting, the Council adopted Ordinance No.ORD-2025-015, approving the Zoning Map amendments for 2,089 properties to implement the existing land use designation, excluding the properties located in the Parker Drive neighborhood, on Giffen Avenue, and Mountain Hawk Drive, and further directed staff to pursue a General Plan land use amendment to resolve the above identified land use issues.

On January 22, 2026, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed General Plan Amendment Package. Following the hearing, the Commission voted unanimously on three resolutions recommending that the City Council approve the Addendum to the General Plan 2050 EIR, the General Plan amendments, and the Zoning Map amendments.

ANALYSIS

1. General Plan and Downtown Station Area Specific Plan Land Use Amendments

The General Plan 2050 land use diagram establishes land uses for every parcel within the City's Urban Growth Boundary. The comprehensive update to the City's General Plan (General Plan 2050) resulted in land use changes to a total of 14 properties.

In Fall 2025, Planning staff brought forward a General Plan Implementation Package to the Planning Commission and City Council. As part of that project, staff performed an analysis to review the consistency between Zoning and General Plan land use Citywide. As part of this effort, a total of 2,119 parcels within the City were proposed to be rezoned to implement the existing General Plan land use designation to reduce confusion for property owners and bring the City into compliance with State law.

The engagement for the General Plan Implementation item included direct mailed notices for properties proposed to be rezoned for General Plan consistency. Through this process, numerous property owners raised concerns about the

proposed rezoning creating non-conforming issues given the existing development (detailed in the Project History Section above).

The result of the public process, and additional staff analysis of land use in targeted areas throughout the City has resulted in the recommendation to change the General Plan land use of 30 properties, indicated in the table below.

These proposed amendments would modify the General Plan Land Use Diagram, and for the seven properties on Maxwell Drive and W. College Avenue, the Downtown Land Use Map (Map LU-3) in the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan would also be amended.

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	Address	Existing Land Use	Proposed Land Use
009-146-003	1520 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-151-009	265 Doyle Park Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-002	309 Talbot Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential
009-146-004	1526 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-151-008	257 Doyle Park Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-146-021	1536 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-008	1420 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-012	1416 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-009	1428 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-147-002	301 Alderbrook Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-146-011	306 Talbot Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential

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009-146-001	300 Talbot Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-014	300 Doyle Park Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-001	303 Talbot Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential
009-153-003	315 Talbot Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential
009-146-002	1516 Parker Drive	Office	Low Density Residential
009-147-001	304 California Avenue	Office	Low Density Residential
153-180-029	5761 Mountain Hawk Drive	Very Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential/Retail Business Services
153-180-028	5755 Mountain Hawk Drive	Very Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential/Retail Business Services
010-421-011	50 W College Avenue	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-132-014	1060 Maxwell Drive	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-132-017	1040 Maxwell Drive	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-421-004	50 W College Avenue	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-132-018	1038 Maxwell Drive	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-132-011	1056 Maxwell Drive	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
010-132-012	1044 Maxwell Drive	Neighborhood Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use
035-610-015	2616 Giffen Avenue	Low Density Residential	Very Low Density Residential
125-181-023	100 Sebastopol Road	Medium Density Residential / Light Industry	Medium Density Residential/Retail and Business Services and Light Industry/Retail and Business Services
125-181-008	80 Sebastopol Road	Medium Density Residential	Medium Density Residential/Retail Business Services
014-283-024	1266 Janet Way	None	Medium Density Residential

2. General Plan Text Amendments

Circulation Element – Chapter 3

The General Plan 2050 includes a Circulation Element which includes a Planned Transportation Network Improvements diagram (Figure 3-3), which provides a high-level overview of planned pedestrian and transportation improvements. The Element addresses City’s circulation network and how people meet daily transportation needs while emphasizing a shift to active transportation and transit use.

The City’s Active Transportation Plan (ATP) was updated concurrently with the General Plan 2050. As a result, staff anticipated bringing forward the ATP figures for incorporation into the General Plan at a later stage. The ATP includes more detailed and refined pedestrian and bicycle network improvements, which are now proposed for inclusion in the General Plan 2050 Circulation Element as Figures 3-3(a) and 3-3(b), as described below and shown in Attachment 2 to this staff report.

- Figure 3-3 (a) Active Transportation Plan Figure 13 – Pedestrian Recommendations
- Figure 3-3 (b) Active Transportation Plan Figure 19 – Bicycle Recommendations

3. Zoning Map Amendments

As discussed in the Project History of this Staff Report, a total of 10 properties, described in the table below, are proposed to be rezoned to implement the proposed General Plan land use designation amendments.

Assessor’s Parcel Number (APN)	Address	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning
010-421-011	50 W College Avenue	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-132-014	1060 Maxwell Drive	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-132-017	1040 Maxwell Drive	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-421-004	50 W College Avenue	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-132-018	1038 Maxwell Drive	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-132-011	1056 Maxwell Drive	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)
010-132-012	1044 Maxwell Drive	NMU (Neighborhood Mixed)	MMU (Maker Mixed Use)

125-181-023	100 Sebastopol Road	IL (Light Industrial)	CN (Neighborhood Commercial) and IL (Light Industrial) with MMH-S (Missing Middle Housing Small)
125-181-008	80 Sebastopol Road	R-3-15 (Multi-Family Residential)/ MMH-S (Missing Middle Housing Small)	CN (Neighborhood Commercial) with MMH-S (Missing Middle Housing Small)
014-283-024	1266 Janet Way	R-1-6 (Single-Family Residential)	R-3-15 (Multi-Family Residential) and MMH-S (Missing Middle Housing-Small)

4. Housing Crisis Act Analysis (Government Code Section 66300)

Government Code Section 66300, the Housing Crisis Act, restricts local agencies from taking any action that would reduce the allowable residential density, intensity, or overall housing development capacity unless specific findings related to the protection of public health or safety are made. Staff has evaluated the proposed General Plan land use amendments for compliance with these requirements.

Based on this evaluation, the proposed amendments result in a net increase of 21 potential housing units compared to existing General Plan land use designations. As shown in Table 1, many properties experience small reductions in allowable capacity; however, the collective effect of all proposed changes is a net gain. Therefore, the amendments do not reduce residential development capacity and do not constitute a downzoning or a reduction in allowable residential intensity under the Housing Crisis Act.

Because the proposed General Plan amendments increase the overall residential capacity within the city, the action complies with the Housing Crisis Act, and no health or safety findings under Government Code Section 66300 are required.

Table 1. Summary of Residential Capacity Changes Associated with Proposed General Plan Land Use Amendments

Property Grouping	# of Parcels	Existing Capacity (Units)	Proposed Capacity (Units)	Change (Units)
Properties with Increased Capacity (Sebastopol Road, Janet Way, Mountain Hawk Drive)	5	—	—	+101

Properties with Reduced Capacity (Parker Drive, Alderbrook Drive, Talbot Avenue, Doyle Park Drive, California Avenue, Giffen Avenue)	17	—	—	-80
Properties with No Change (Maxwell Drive, W. College Avenue)	7	Number of units governed by Floor Area Ratio of 6.0	Number of units governed by Floor Area Ratio of 6.0	0
Total (All 30 Properties)	30	—	—	+21 (Net Increase)

5. No Net Loss Analysis (Government Code Section 65863)

None of the 30 parcels subject to the proposed General Plan land use amendments or Zoning Map amendments are identified in the City’s adopted Housing Element sites inventory, nor were they rezoned pursuant to the Housing Element to accommodate the City’s Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). As such, the proposed amendments do not reduce the residential capacity of the City’s identified housing sites under Government Code Section 65863.

When considered collectively, the General Plan land use and Zoning Map amendments include changes that increase residential opportunity, including:

- Redesignation of parcels to include the Medium Density Residential and Retail and Business Services land uses; and
- Introduction of residential land uses to parcels where none previously existed.

The City remains in substantial compliance with its adopted Housing Element and continues to maintain adequate sites to accommodate its remaining RHNA.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed General Plan Amendment Package, including amendments to the General Plan 2050 land use diagram and text, amendments to the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan land use figure, and corresponding Zoning Map amendments, has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

On June 3, 2025, the City Council certified the General Plan 2050 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (Resolution No. RES-2025-090), which evaluated the environmental impacts associated with citywide growth, land use changes, circulation improvements, and development anticipated under the General Plan.

The proposed amendments are within the scope of the land use patterns, development intensities, and infrastructure assumptions analyzed in the General Plan 2050 EIR. The amendments do not approve specific development projects, but rather modify land use designations, policy text, and zoning classifications to maintain internal consistency, address implementation issues, and incorporate figures from the City's adopted Active Transportation Plan.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, no subsequent or supplemental environmental document is required because the proposed amendments would not result in new or more severe significant environmental impacts beyond those previously disclosed and evaluated in the General Plan 2050 EIR, and no substantial changes to the project or circumstances have occurred that would require further environmental review.

An Addendum to the General Plan 2050 EIR has been prepared in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15164 to document the analysis supporting this determination. The Addendum concludes that the proposed amendments would not result in any new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

Accordingly, adoption of the Addendum satisfies the requirements of CEQA, and no additional environmental review is required.

Implementation of the amended land use designations and zoning classifications will occur through future discretionary projects, which will be subject to separate environmental review as required by CEQA.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During a public hearing on January 22, 2026, the Planning Commission unanimously recommended to the City Council approval of the General Plan amendments, Zoning Map amendments, and the Addendum to the General Plan 2050 EIR. After the Commission's action, staff reevaluated three properties on Montgomery Drive that had been proposed for a land use change from Office to Low Density Residential. Because none of the property owners requested a Low Density Residential designation, and because the existing Office designation is more appropriate given the properties' frontage on Montgomery Drive and proximity to other Office-designated parcels, staff recommends retaining the Office land use for these sites. As a result, the total number of properties included in the proposed General Plan land use amendments has been reduced from 33 to 30.

NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 20-66.020(D), Alternative to Mailing, if the number of property owners to whom notice would be mailed would exceed 1,000, the City may, as an alternative to mailing and on-site posting, provide notice by placing an advertisement of one-eighth page in at least one newspaper of general circulation 10 days prior to the hearing. Provided that the number of direct mailed notices for this Project would far exceed 1,000, the noticing requirements for this Project were satisfied by the publication of a one-eighth page advertisement in the Press Democrat.

In addition, electronic notice to parties that had expressed interest in projects taking place in this geographic area of Santa Rosa, and bulletin board postings at City Hall and on the City website. Pursuant to Government Code Section 65091, where necessary, the City has incorporated notice procedures to the blind, aged, and disabled communities. These procedures include audio amplifier/assistive listening device support at public meetings, closed captioning, and optical character recognition conversion of electronic notices.

LEVINE ACT

This project is exempt the Levine Act (Gov. Code Section 84308) which prohibits city officials from participating in certain decisions regarding licenses, permits, and other entitlements for use if the official has received a campaign contribution of more than \$500 from a party, participant, or agent of a party or participant in the previous 12 months. The Levine Act is intended to prevent financial influence on decisions that affect specific, identifiable persons or participants. For more information see the FPPC website: www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/pay-to-play-limits-and-prohibitions.html

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – General Plan Land Use Amendments
 - Attachment 2 – General Plan Text Amendments
 - Attachment 3 – [General Plan 2050 Draft EIR](#)
 - Attachment 4 – [General Plan 2050 Final EIR](#)
 - Attachment 5 – Planning Commission Resolution PC-RES-2026-002
 - Attachment 6 – Planning Commission Resolution PC-RES-2026-003
 - Attachment 7 – Planning Commission Resolution PC-RES-2026-004
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- Resolution 1/Exhibit A
 - Resolution 2
 - Ordinance 1

PRESENTER(S)

Amy Nicholson, Supervising Planner