

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT FOR PLANNING COMMISSION  
**FEBRUARY 14, 2019**

**PROJECT TITLE**

Southeast Greenway Revised Draft EIR

**APPLICANT**

Southeast Greenway Community Partnership (including the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma Land Trust, LandPaths, and the Southeast Greenway Campaign)

**ADDRESS/LOCATION**

No address. Caltrans right-of-way located between Farmers Lane/Highway 12 and Spring Lake Regional Park, in Southeast Santa Rosa

**PROPERTY OWNER**

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER**

Multiple

**FILE NUMBER**

ST14-003

**APPLICATION DATE**

Initiated by the City Council on October 6, 2015

**APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE**

N/A

**REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS**

General Plan Amendment and Rezoning

**FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Certification, General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments, and Rezoning

**PROJECT SITE ZONING**

Existing: None

Proposed:

- Open Space Recreation (OSR);
- General Commercial (CG); and
- Neighborhood Commercial (CN), and Multi-Family Residential (R-3-18)

**GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION**

Existing: None

Proposed:

- Parks and Recreation
- Medium High Density Residential/Retail and Business Services (mixed designation, 18-30 units/acre); and
- Medium Density Residential (8-18 units/acre)

**PROJECT PLANNERS**

Jessica Jones

**RECOMMENDATION**

Conduct public hearing and receive comments on Revised Draft EIR

Agenda Item # 10.3  
For Planning Commission Meeting of: February 14, 2019

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR CISCO AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

FROM: JESSICA JONES, SUPERVISING PLANNER  
GARY BROAD, PLANNING CONSULTANT

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST GREENWAY REVISED DRAFT EIR

AGENDA ACTION: HOLD PUBLIC HEARING AND RECEIVE COMMENTS ON  
REVISED DRAFT EIR

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RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Economic Development Department recommends that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and receive comments on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Southeast Greenway project.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southeast Greenway Community Partnership, including the City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Water Agency, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Sonoma Land Trust, LandPaths, and the Southeast Greenway Campaign, are planning for the acquisition of 57 acres of land owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and originally planned for a Highway 12 extension. The City Council initiated a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning in fall 2015 to designate land uses for the land.

A Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Southeast Greenway project was prepared and made available for public review from August 21, 2017 through October 4, 2017. The traffic analysis for the Draft EIR considered potential future traffic impacts of the project assuming that the Farmers Lane extension is completed. During the 45-day public review period, the City received public comments stating that, because the future extension of Farmers Lane is a long-term project, the Draft EIR traffic analysis should also consider potential project impacts **without** the extension. Additional traffic analysis has been prepared and incorporated into a Revised Draft EIR, released January 28,

2019 for a 45-day public review. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive comments on the Revised Draft EIR.

## BACKGROUND

### 1. Project Description

The proposed Southeast Greenway project (project) would establish General Plan land uses and associated zoning districts within a 57-acre area that spans a 1.9-mile linear path from Farmers Lane/Highway 12 to Spring Lake Regional Park. Implementation and adoption of the project would result in new development potential of up to 47.2 acres of parks and recreational uses/open space, 244 multi-family housing units, and 12,000 square-feet of commercial space. No physical changes to the site are proposed at this time; future park master planning and private development of the housing and mixed-use sites will be required to go through their own planning and supplemental environmental review process.

The proposed General Plan text amendment includes changes to three elements: Land Use and Livability, Transportation, and Public Services and Facilities. The text amendments include the addition of new goals and policies specific to the Southeast Greenway area that were designed to implement the Preferred Land Use and Circulation Alternative (identified as the “Illustrative Map”, attached to this report), which came out of the community engagement process. The Illustrative Map would also be included as a figure in the Land Use and Livability Element.

Because the Southeast Greenway area is Caltrans right-of-way planned for a Highway 12 extension, it does not have a General Plan land use designation or zoning district assigned to it. As such, the project includes designation of General Plan land use and zoning districts that would implement the preferences that came out of the outreach process, which are listed below:

- Approximately 47.2 acres located from Matanzas Creek, east to Spring Lake Regional Park (excluding a 1.2-acre site on the west side of Yulupa Avenue):

**Proposed General Plan Land Use** – Parks and Recreation  
**Proposed Zoning District** – Open Space Recreation (OSR)

- 1.2-acre site on the west side of Yulupa Avenue:

**Proposed General Plan Land Use** – Medium High Density Residential (18-30 units per acre) / Retail and Business Services (mixed)  
**Proposed Zoning District** – Neighborhood Commercial (CN)

- 4.7-acre, triangular site at the terminus of Highway 12, bordered by Farmers Lane, Hoen Frontage Road and the Highway 12 on-ramp:

**Proposed General Plan Land Use** – Medium High Density Residential (18-30 units per acre) / Retail and Business Services (mixed)

**Proposed Zoning District** – General Commercial (CG)

- 3.7-acre site located between Vallejo Street and the Highway 12 on-ramp, on the east side of Farmers Lane:

**Proposed General Plan Land Use** – Medium Density Residential (8-18 units per acre)

**Proposed Zoning District** – Multi-Family Residential (R-3-18)

The project includes amending the text of the Zoning Code to specifically address uses allowed in the proposed OSR, CN, CG and R-3-18 zoning districts. A number of uses allowed in the aforementioned districts would not conform to the vision of the Greenway that came out of the community engagement process. As a result, in-lieu of creating new zoning districts specific to the Southeast Greenway area, staff is proposing that minor amendments be made to the text of the proposed zoning districts that would apply to the Southeast Greenway only.

## 2. Project History

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 approximately 57 acres of land acquired for State highway purposes over a 20-year period spanning the 1950s to the 1970s. The land is owned by Caltrans.

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.”

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

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

As outlined in the Mutual Letter of Intent, the initial vision is that the highway land between Summerfield Road and Spring Lake Regional Park would be transferred to the Sonoma County Water Agency and operated/maintained by Sonoma County Regional Parks. The remaining land would be transferred to the City of Santa Rosa and would be operated and maintained by City of Santa Rosa's Recreation and Parks Department with support from community members and nonprofits.

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. This means that the land may be transferred or sold.

In late 2014, the Sonoma Land Trust joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership and is contributing expertise and effort toward facilitating the future transfer of the Caltrans land to public ownership.

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 highway land to public ownership.

The MOU states that the City of Santa Rosa would develop an Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints Report to document existing conditions on the property and opportunities and constraints resulting from existing adopted plans. This report was completed and presented to the City Council on October 6, 2015.

On that date, the Council considered the information contained in the Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints Report and adopted Resolution No. 28696, initiating a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning of the site, along with development of an EIR.

On June 14, 2016, the Council approved a Professional Services Agreement with PlaceWorks, Inc. for preparation of the General Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and EIR for the 57-acre site.

On August 6, 2016, the first community workshop was held, with participants envisioning desired uses on the site.

On October 8, 2016, the second community workshop was held for participants to consider and provide feedback regarding draft guiding principles and three land use and circulation alternatives. Greater detail about these workshops is contained in the Community Outreach/Planning Process section of this report.

On November 1, 2016, a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council was held to review the draft guiding principles, land use and circulation concept alternatives, and results from the public outreach effort. At that meeting, the Council and Commission directed staff to create a single draft land use and circulation concept alternative, as described in the Community Outreach/Planning Process section of this report.

On March 28, 2017, a second joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council was held to receive feedback on the single preferred land use and circulation alternative and proposed General Plan amendment.

On May 15, 2017, a Scoping Meeting was held at the Bennett Valley Senior Center to gather comments and guidance on the scope and content of the EIR from the community, interested public agencies, and organizations.

On August 21, 2017, the Draft EIR for the project was released for a 45-day public review period, ending on October 4, 2017.

On September 14, 2017, during the Draft EIR public review period, a public hearing was conducted with the Planning Commission to receive comments from the Commission and the public on the Draft EIR and proposed amendments and Rezoning.

During the public review period, the City received public comments requesting additional traffic analysis to address future conditions without the Farmers Lane extension. Following the October 4, 2017 closing of the public review period, staff and the consultant team began work on preparing the additional traffic analysis.

On October 8, 2017, and continuing for days thereafter, a series of wildfires burned over 90,000 acres in Sonoma County and damaged or destroyed approximately 3,000 homes and 100 commercial structures within the City of Santa Rosa.

Due to the impact on staff resources related to the fires, as well as staff's work on the Council's existing priorities, most notably implementation of the City's Housing Action Plan, work on the Southeast Greenway project was put on hold.

In November 2018, with much of the policy work related to the fires complete and significant progress made towards the Housing Action Plan initiatives, staff redirected time toward completion of the Southeast Greenway project, and finalization of the updated traffic analysis.

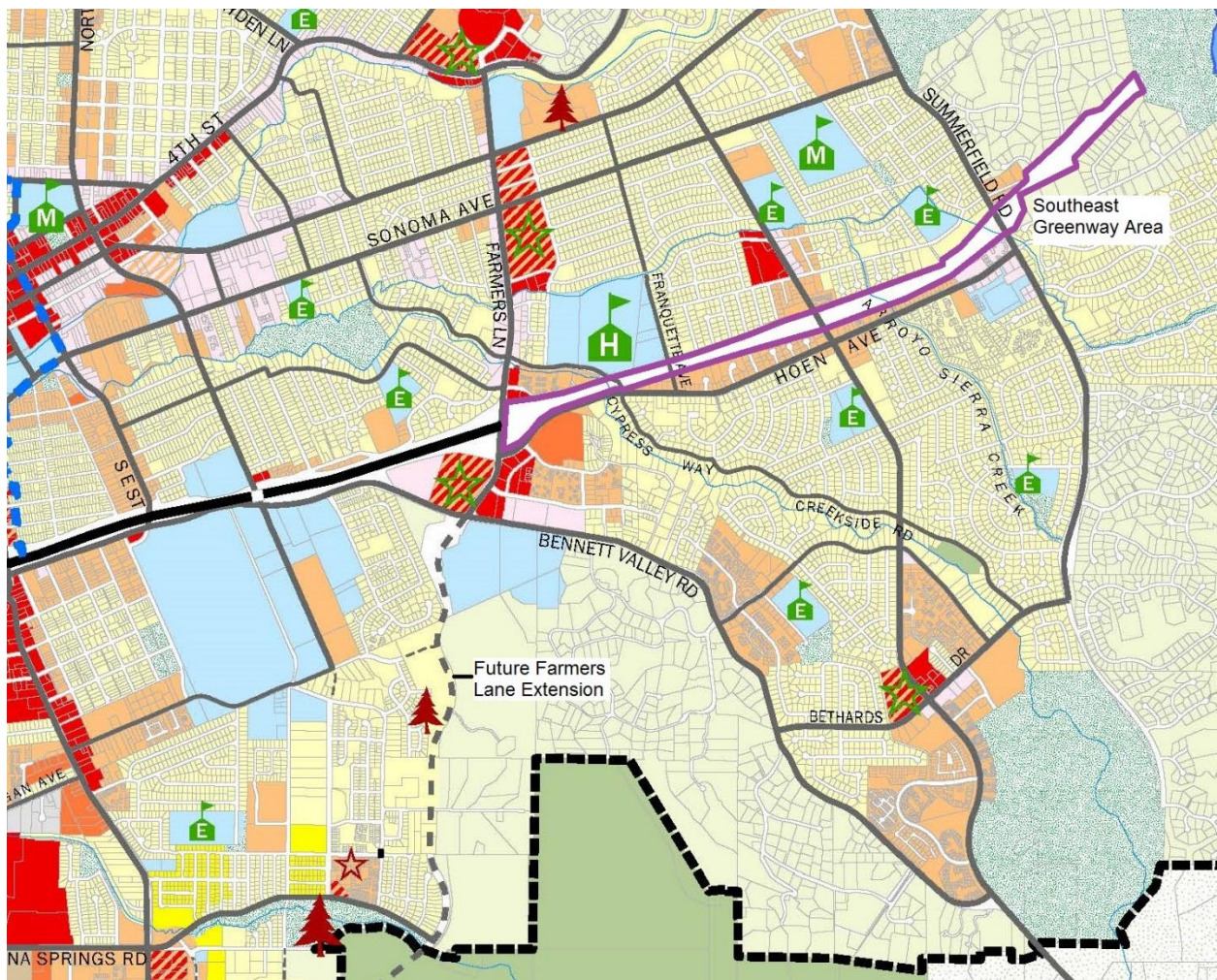
PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Prior Council actions are detailed in the Project History section above.

REVISED DRAFT EIR

A Draft EIR was prepared for the Southeast Greenway project in 2017 to assess the potential environmental effects of the proposed General Plan and Zoning Code Amendments, and the proposed Rezoning.

During the Draft EIR public review period, which was open from August 21, 2017 through October 4, 2017, the City received public comments requesting additional traffic analysis. Specifically, the Draft EIR provides analysis of the proposed project's future traffic impacts, assuming that the Farmers Lane extension is completed (the extension of Farmer's Lane, in southeast Santa Rosa, is identified as a future project in the City's General Plan 2035, see image below).



Although the extension of Farmers Lane is a long-term project, because it is identified in the General Plan as a future roadway, the analysis must identify it and consider the future project impacts as if the extension is complete. However, because completion of the extension is not expected in the near-term, the comments questioned the analysis, stating that review of the potential future project impacts **without** the Farmers Lane extension must also be completed.

The additional traffic analysis has been completed and the Draft EIR has been revised accordingly. The Revised Draft EIR, which includes two sections (Transportation and Circulation, and Noise), was released for a 45-day public review on January 28, 2019, with a closing date of March 13, 2019. The recirculation is to allow interested public agencies, groups and individuals the opportunity to review and comment on new information provided in the Revised Draft EIR.

Section 15088.5(g) of the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines requires that “[w]hen recirculating a revised EIR, either in whole or in part, the lead agency shall, in the revised EIR or by an attachment to the revised EIR, summarize the revisions made to the previously circulated Draft EIR.”

This Revised Draft EIR incorporates information originally presented in the 2017 Draft EIR. In addition, the Revised Draft EIR also includes updated traffic and noise data, included in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Revised Draft EIR. The Revised Draft EIR is a partial EIR and is limited to certain chapters of the previously circulated 2017 Draft EIR. In summary, the Revised Draft EIR includes the following revisions:

- **Introduction:** Chapter 1 has been updated to include the preparation of the Revised Draft EIR and a summary of revisions related to the new traffic scenario and traffic noise.
- **Executive Summary:** Chapter 2 has been updated to reflect that under the added study of a “Future plus Project Without Farmers Lane Extension” scenario, the intersection of Farmers Lane/SR 12 eastbound off-ramp and the Hoen Avenue Frontage Road is projected to operate unacceptably at Level of Service (LOS) E during the PM peak hour.
- **Noise:** Chapter 4.10 and Appendix 2 have been updated to reflect the noise impacts from traffic that could occur in the absence of the Farmers Lane extension, with trips generated from the project dispersed in a different pattern. No segments would experience greater than 3 decibels (dBA) over existing conditions, therefore, impacts would be *less than significant*.
- **Transportation and Circulation:** Chapter 4.13 and Appendix H have been updated to evaluate the future conditions occurring if the project is constructed before the Farmers Lane extension is completed. Under the Future plus Project Scenario (without the Farmers Lane Extension), the intersection of Farmers Lane/SR 12 eastbound off-ramp and the Hoen



Avenue Frontage Road is projected to operate unacceptably at LOS E during the PM peak hour, with the project increasing the intersection's average vehicle delay by 8.0 seconds. Because in this scenario the Farmers Lane extension is *not* assumed to be completed in the near term, the traffic relief the extension would provide would not occur and the impact to this intersection would be *significant and unavoidable*.

- **CEQA-Mandated Assessment:** Chapter 6 has been updated to reflect the additional Transportation and Circulation related significant and unavoidable impact (Impact TRANS-1e).
- **Organizations and Persons Consulted:** Chapter 7 has been updated to reflect additional City staff that were consulted.

### PLANNING COMMISSION'S ROLE

The Planning Commission's ultimate role is to review the Revised Draft EIR, Final EIR, proposed General Plan and Zoning Code amendments, and proposed Rezoning, and make recommendations to the City Council. The Planning Commission is holding this public hearing to allow members of the public to comment on the Revised Draft EIR. The hearing is being conducted during the public review period for the Revised Draft EIR.

All comments received on the Revised Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period, both written and oral, will be responded to in a separate Final EIR document. At a subsequent meeting, following the close of the public hearing and end of the public review period, the Planning Commission will consider making a recommendation to the City Council for certification of the EIR, as well as a recommendation on the approval of the amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Code, and Rezoning.

### NOTIFICATION

The public hearing notice for the February 14, 2019 Planning Commission meeting and notice of the 45-day public review period for the Revised Draft EIR were posted as follows:

- 1/8 page ad in the Press Democrat newspaper
- Mailed to a list of approximately 1,800 addresses composed of property owners and residential/business tenants located within 500 feet of the Southeast Greenway site
- Posted in three locations at City Hall
- Posted on the project website (<http://planthegreenway.com/>)
- Posted on the City website (<https://srcity.org/2571/Southeast-Greenway>)
- Posted on the City's Nextdoor, Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Emailed to the project distribution list (approximately 960 e-mail addresses)

- Through Southeast Greenway Campaign outreach efforts

In addition, Notice of Availability of the Revised Draft EIR, which includes information about the February 14, 2019 Planning Commission meeting (date, time and location), was posted at the County of Sonoma, provided to the State for distribution to agencies, mailed to interested parties and agencies.

### ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Southeast Greenway Illustrative Map

Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (previously delivered)

### Web Resources:

- City Website link: <https://srcity.org/2571/Southeast-Greenway>  
(Links to the Revised Draft EIR and the project website can be found on the City's website.)
- Project Website link: <http://planthegreenway.com/>  
(Links to all project documents, including Community Workshop summaries and the Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Constraints Report, and the Revised Draft EIR can be found on the project website.)

### CONTACT

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