



Santa Rosa General Plan Update
Preferred Alternative Summary



Introduction

Santa Rosa has undergone significant transformation in recent years and conditions are continuing to change quickly, along with the needs of the community. In response, the City of Santa Rosa is currently updating its General Plan to enable the community to become even more sustainable, resilient, healthy, and inclusive. This three-year process, known as **Santa Rosa Forward**, includes many opportunities for community discussions about the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing Santa Rosa.

What is a General Plan?

A General Plan is a legally-required policy document that **establishes a community's long-term vision for the future** and contains goals and policies that will shape future housing development, support job growth, foster healthy and resilient neighborhoods, protect and manage natural resources, ensure community safety, and promote social and economic equity. All future City decisions related to land use are required to be consistent with the adopted General Plan, and all other City documents and reports (like the recently adopted Downtown Station Area Specific Plan) are required to be consistent with the adopted General Plan. Additional information about the Santa Rosa Forward project can be found at: www.santarosaforward.com/about.

How Was the Draft Preferred Alternative Developed?

This summary presents the draft Preferred Alternative that will guide Santa Rosa's future growth, investment, and change over the next 20+ years. The Preferred Alternative is the culmination of a nearly two-year analysis and community engagement process that included the following major milestones (all documents and engagement summaries are available at: www.santarosaforward.com):

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

This **Existing Conditions Report** was the first major step in the General Plan Update process. This report analyzed and summarized demographic, economic, land use, community character, mobility, natural resources, infrastructure, environmental justice, community health, and other conditions in Santa Rosa, with the goal of helping the community and City planning team understand the issues and opportunities facing the community. This analysis has been used to support the planning and community engagement process conducted during development of the updated General Plan.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

The **2050 General Plan Vision Statement** (see diagram on page 5) is based on a wealth of community comments and ideas gathered during the community vision workshops, meetings with community-based organizations, discussions with individuals, meetings with City Boards and Commissions, and discussions with the City Council conducted between May and July 2021. The Vision

Statement is an aspirational expression that frames community needs and desires and serves as a foundation for all the remaining General Plan work. It helped frame the land use and transportation alternatives; informed new and updated General Plan goals, policies, and programs; and will ensure that the General Plan fully addresses the needs and desires of the community.

LAND USE AND CIRCULATION ALTERNATIVES

The three **Alternatives** provided different options for how the community could grow and change in the future to address identified challenges and opportunities. Each alternative aimed to implement the Community Vision, but offered a unique approach and choices for how we distribute future housing and improve circulation. The alternatives started with the potential for 36,000 new housing units (over the next 20+ years), equal to the number accommodated in the current General Plan, but differed in where new housing and other uses would go:

- **Alternative 1:** Central Corridors concentrated housing near Downtown and along central corridors.
- **Alternative 2:** Neighborhood Main Streets envisioned a city of neighborhoods with new housing near small neighborhood centers.
- **Alternative 3:** Distributed Housing built on what is already here, with future growth occurring across the city in proportion to what is on the ground today.



2050 General Plan Vision Statement Summary

“Santa Rosa is a diverse, equitable, and sustainable community built on civic engagement that empowers everyone to provide and support equal and affordable opportunities to obtain high quality housing, education, and jobs; enjoy vibrant cultural events and arts; and live healthy lives in resilient neighborhoods that adapt to social and environmental change.”



How Should You Use this Preferred Alternative Workbook?

As of October 2022, the Project Team has held over 90 community meetings, workshops, and events on the Santa Rosa Forward project. More than 3,400 people have participated in the process and provided over **19,000 individual comments and ideas**. Building on the Existing Conditions Analysis, 2050 Vision Statement, Alternatives Report, and the extensive community comments and ideas received to-date, the Project Team created a draft Preferred Alternative that presents the emerging desired growth pattern for Santa Rosa over the next 20+ years.

This **Preferred Alternative Summary** identifies the key features of the draft Preferred Alternative and major new goals for the city by topic:

- **Housing and Economic Development** (pages 6-7)
- **Efficient and Sustainable Development** (pages 8-9)
- **Resilience and Safety** (pages 10-11)
- **Equity and Community Health** (pages 12-13)

The summary pages are followed by a presentation of the draft Preferred Alternative diagram on pages 14-15, which identifies major mobility enhancements and **19 Areas of Change**. In the Visioning phase, many community members expressed their love for the city’s unique, inclusive, and vibrant neighborhoods. But not all areas of Santa Rosa have access to essential amenities and services, some need special attention to better serve their residents. The Areas of Change identified in the draft Preferred Alternative are areas where the City will focus efforts on addressing housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to make these complete neighborhoods.

After you have reviewed the summary pages and the draft Preferred Alternative, please think about what comments or ideas you would like to share with the Project Team about the proposed new goals and the draft Preferred Alternative. This phase of the project includes an interactive survey, community open houses, meetings, and discussions (see the last page of this workbook for more details). The survey and events will provide you an opportunity to share your comments and ideas.

How will Community Feedback on the Draft Preferred Alternative be Used?

This phase will include robust community conversations on the draft Preferred Alternative (summarized in this workbook), ultimately leading to City Council and Planning Commission direction on the Preferred Alternative in Fall 2022. **Community comments and feedback gathered during the Preferred Alternative phase will help refine the final “Preferred Alternative” that will serve as the foundation of the updated General Plan.** The diagram to the right shows the overall project timeline and specific detail on the current Preferred Alternatives phase. For more information about the project, please visit: www.santarosafoward.com.

Project Timeline



1 Economics and Housing

► KEY FEATURES OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Santa Rosa is a **city of neighborhoods**, each with its own unique character and hub for goods and services, complemented by a full-service Downtown.

New housing is focused in Downtown, around neighborhood shopping centers, and along key corridors.

Most residents have **safe access** to places that meet their daily needs, including grocery stores, parks, and small office and retail services. These businesses offer more jobs throughout the city.

Downtown Santa Rosa is enhanced and bolstered as a **vibrant urban core** with amenities that attract visitors and serve residents through implementation of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan.

Downtown development **supports local businesses and attracts well-established companies** that serve as economic anchors and cluster knowledge-based businesses and job.

Job and business growth is concentrated in locations with convenient multi-modal access for the local and regional labor force, and industrial districts continue to provide convenient goods movement options for businesses.

As many as **24,000 new homes** are built in Santa Rosa by 2050, supporting approximately **650,000 square feet of new community-serving retail**, in addition to new dining and personal service businesses.

Regional demand supports up to **2 million square feet of new office and 1 million square feet of new industrial development**, primarily in south Santa Rosa, Downtown, and along Highway 101.

Commercial growth potential could support **8,500 new jobs**: 1,500 new jobs in both retail and industrial and 5,500 office jobs.

Increased residential density drives resident-serving business growth, including retail, dining, and personal services, in **neighborhood centers and along key corridors** in all corners of the city.

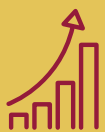
► NEW GOALS



Continue to distribute housing accessible to low- and very low-income households across the city.

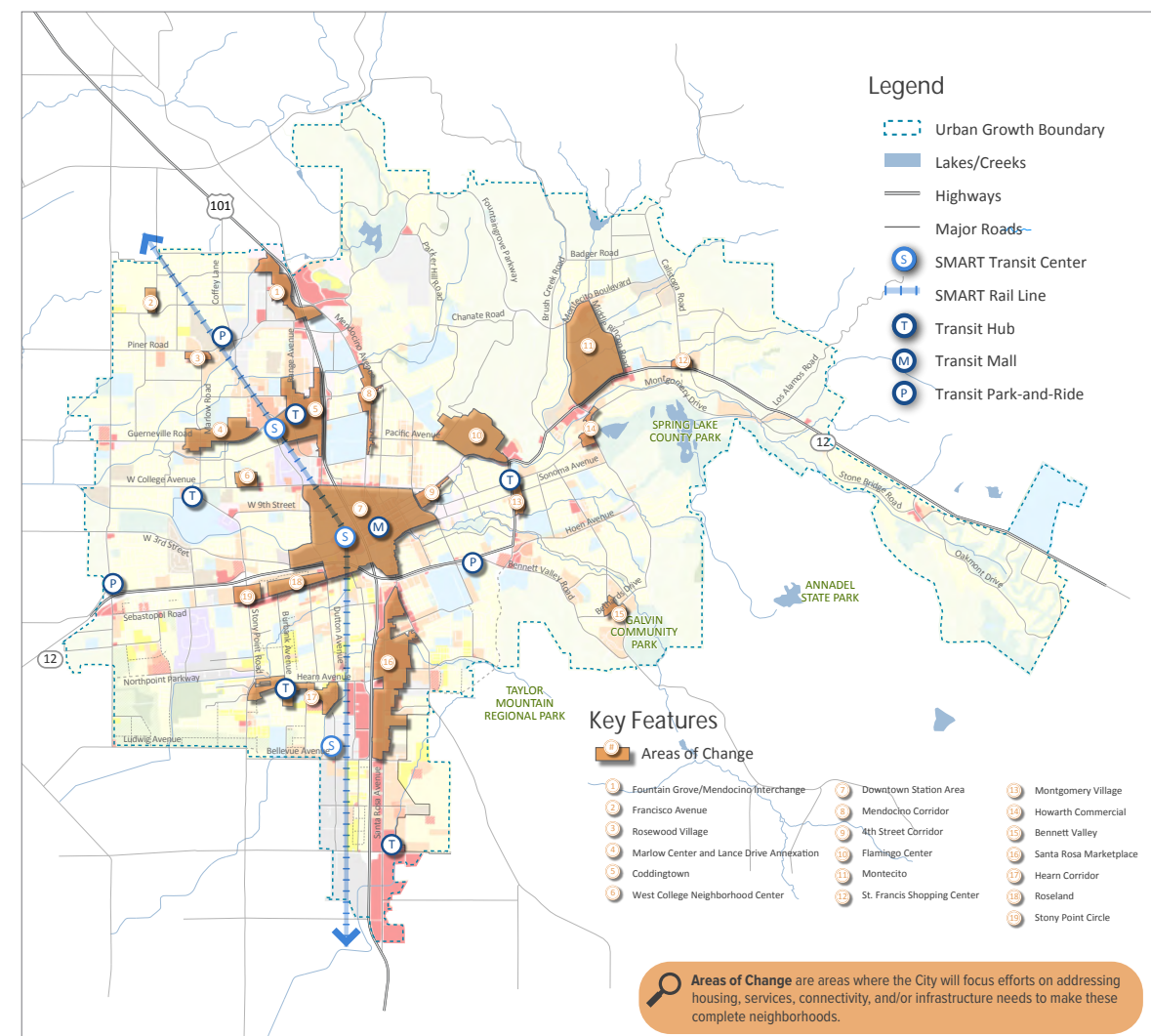
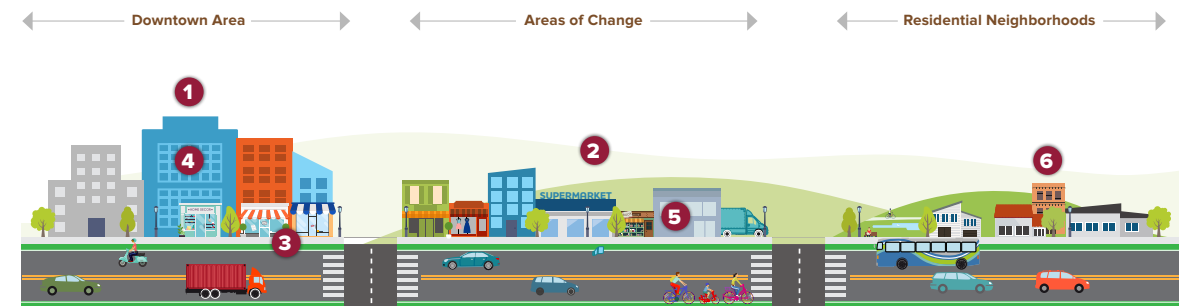


Facilitate future annexations with a thoughtfully designed and transparent strategy.



Ensure new growth and development is resilient to economic cycles and forces.

► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPTS



1 Mixed Use Downtown Neighborhood



2 Mixed Use Corridor



3 Street Dining/Retail/Activities



4 New Office Development



5 New Industrial Development



6 Infill Housing

2 Efficient and Sustainable Development

► KEY FEATURES OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The updated General Plan will include enhancements to the transportation network to **manage transportation demand** and **reduce vehicle miles traveled** by improving connectivity and reducing dependence on single-occupant private vehicles, including to access the city's priority development areas (PDAs)—Mendocino Avenue/Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor, North Santa Rosa Station, Downtown Station Area, Sebastopol Road Corridor, Roseland, and Santa Rosa Avenue—SMART stations, and neighborhood shopping centers.

East-west connections for **walking and biking and transit are improved**, and first/last mile links to SMART Corridor are emphasized.


The **transit system expands** and operates longer hours, more frequently, and serves more destinations and communities to support travel alternatives for everyone in Santa Rosa.


Evacuation is a priority consideration in all transportation network-related planning (wildfire, earthquake, flood, and other related hazards).

Growth potential accommodated in the land use diagram **does not exceed the City's capacity to meet the community's water needs** through the General Plan horizon.


► NEW GOALS

 **Achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.**

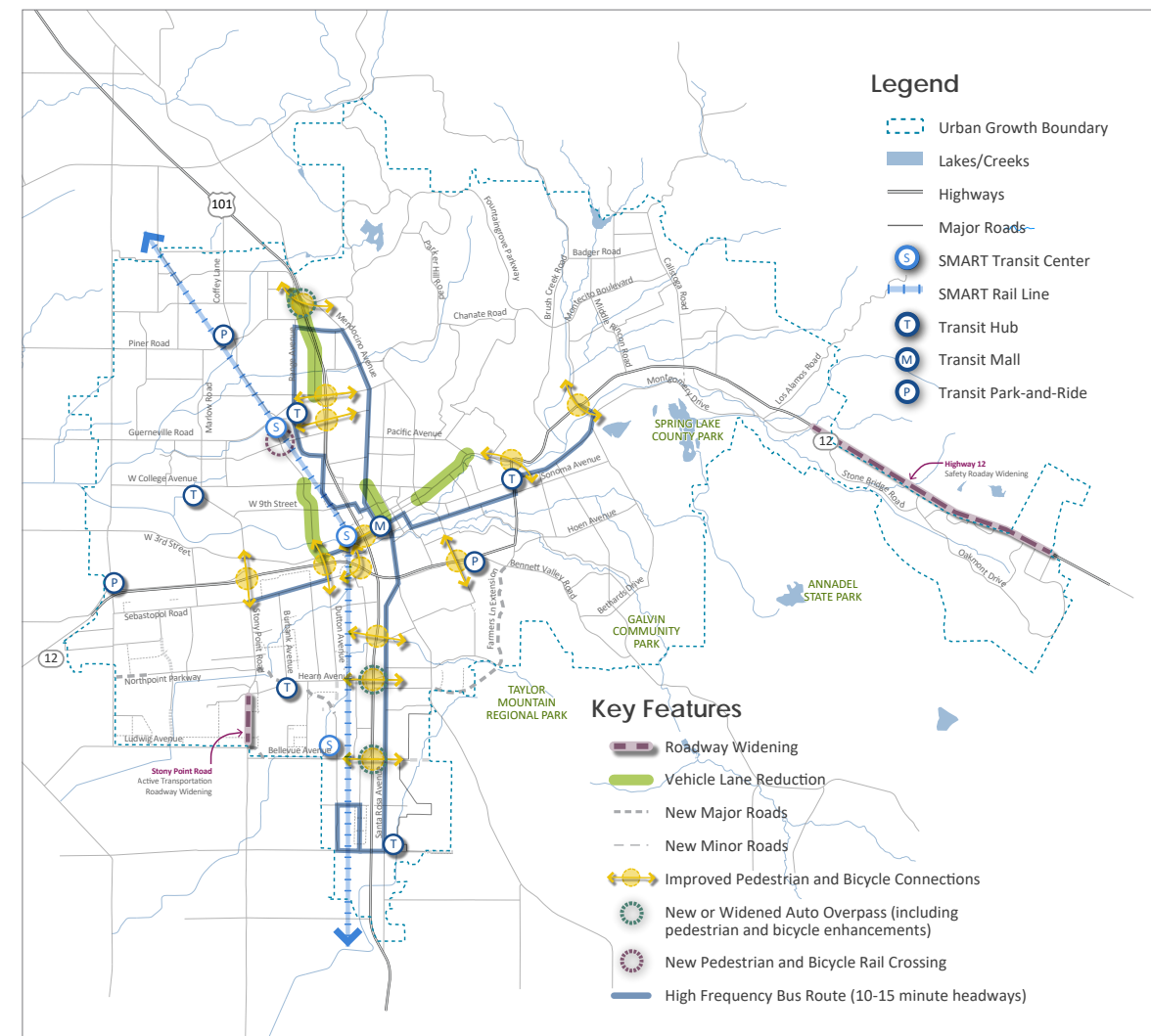
 **Improve infrastructure, linkages, and access to transit and active modes of transportation to better meet daily commuting needs and limit greenhouse gas emissions.**

 **Provide the highest-quality City services—including transit, utilities, infrastructure, parks and recreation, and more—and ensure accessibility to everyone in Santa Rosa.**



 What does “sustainable” mean for Santa Rosa? Practices and behaviors that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPTS



1 Vehicle Lane Reduction



2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections



3 Transit Routes and Stop Improvements



4 Protected Bicycle Lanes



5 Cycle Track



6 Improved Pedestrian Crosswalks

3 Resilience and Safety

► KEY FEATURES OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Development in the **wildland urban interface (WUI)** is limited to **what is currently allowed** and resilience in the WUI improves with time.

East Highway 12 expansion **improves evacuation capacity** during wildfire and other hazard events. Enhancements to other key roadways in the evacuation network, including enabling wrong-way travel, support increased capacity in emergency scenarios.

Transit system enhancements **support the evacuation needs of zero vehicle households**.

► PROPOSED NEW GOALS



Fortify the community, especially equity priority communities, against wildfires, earthquakes, floods, and other hazards and facilitate recovery from future hazard events through comprehensive planning in advance.



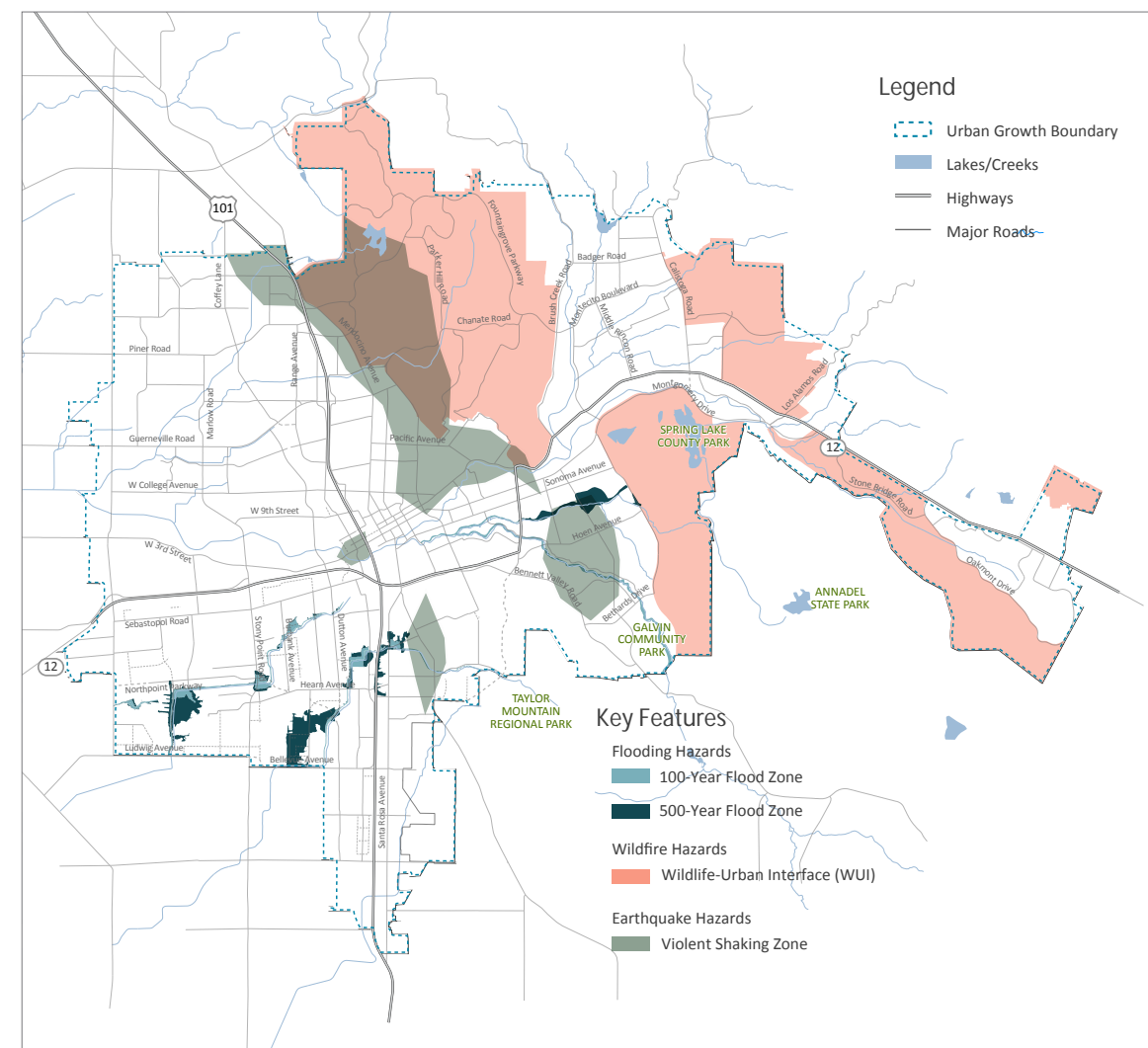
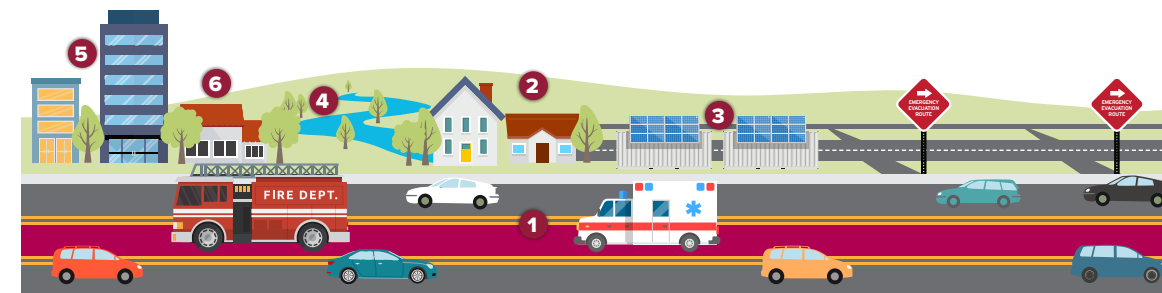
Support the potential managed retreat from the highest fire risk areas.



Institute new building standards in areas highly vulnerable to hazards, such as wildfire and earthquake, to minimize the impact of a hazard event.



► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPTS



1 EVACUATION ROUTES
Optimize Evacuation Routes



2
Firesafe Home/Property



3
Microgrid System



4
Creek Restoration



5
Earthquake Safe Buildings



6
Resilience Hub

4 Equity and Health

► KEY FEATURES OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Equity priority communities have safe, comfortable, and convenient walking or wheeling (including bike, stroller, and wheelchair) access to full-service markets and fresh foods, outdoor active and passive recreation, and a robust active transportation network.

New housing for equity priority communities is **thoughtfully designed, emphasizes visitability** (easy access for seniors and people with disabilities), and is located to **avoid exposure to environmental threats**.

Residential growth is **set back a minimum of 500 feet from Highways 101 and 12** to avoid exposure to particulate matter from these roadways.

Gaps in the sidewalks and pedestrian network are eliminated in equity priority communities.

People of all ages and abilities have barrier-free access to essential goods and services, and neighborhoods support aging in place.

► NEW GOALS



Make lifelong learning opportunities and safe spaces to gather and recreate equitably accessible to everyone.



Remove barriers to and incentivize small-scale, urban agriculture to expand economic opportunity to community members and access to healthy foods.



Prioritize funding for services, amenities, and infrastructure in equity priority communities.



Recognize and reconcile historic and existing land-use patterns that perpetuate racial and socioeconomic segregation.



Engage a diverse and wide range of opinions, representative of Santa Rosa residents, in city decision-making.



Celebrate and showcase the community's diversity and promote it as a strength.



Bring art, cultural resources and activities, historic assets, and live music to all neighborhoods, accessible to everyone.

► VISUALIZING THE CONCEPTS



Park Amenities



Community Garden



Community Center/Event Space



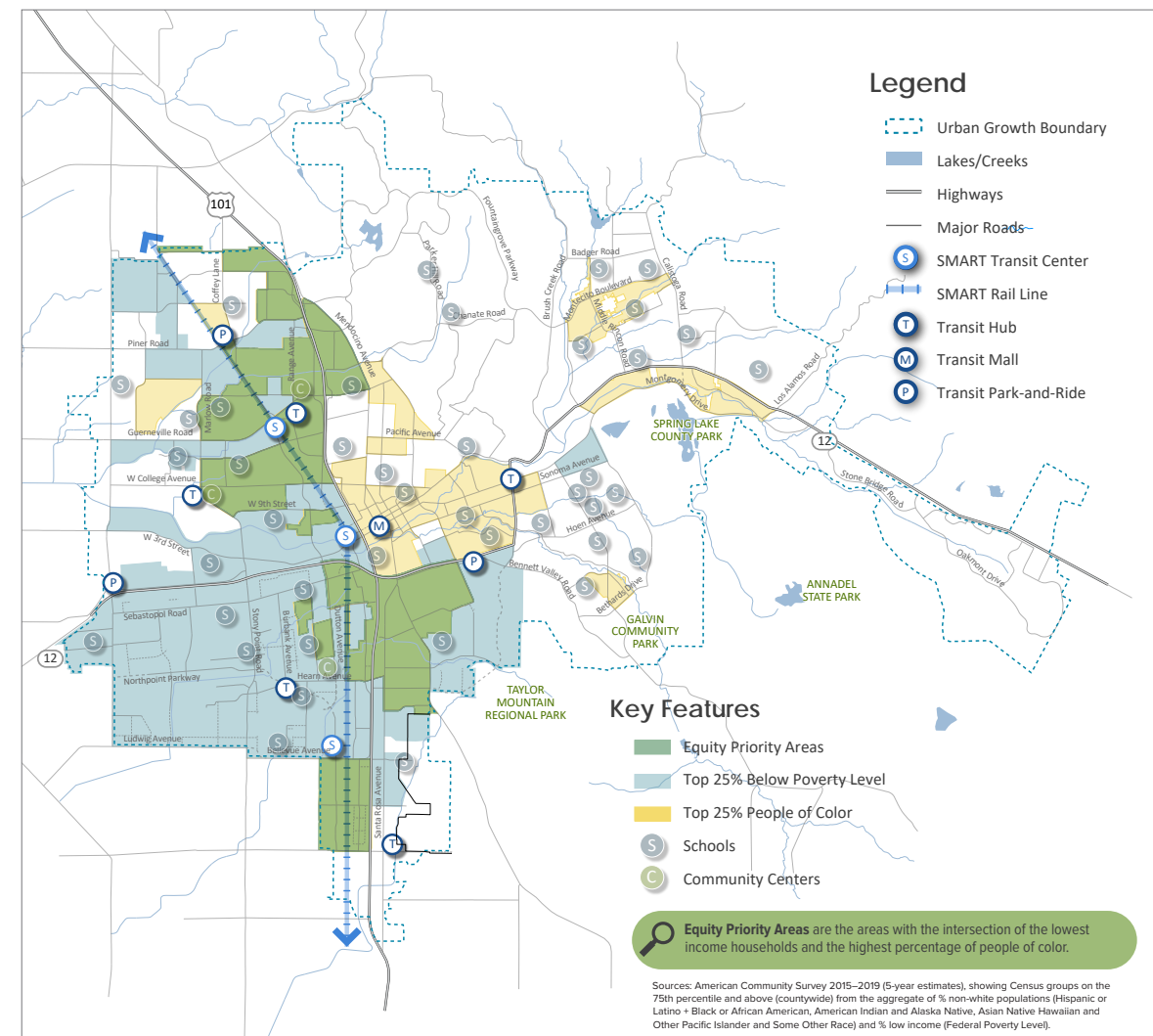
Affordable Housing



Fresh Food Access

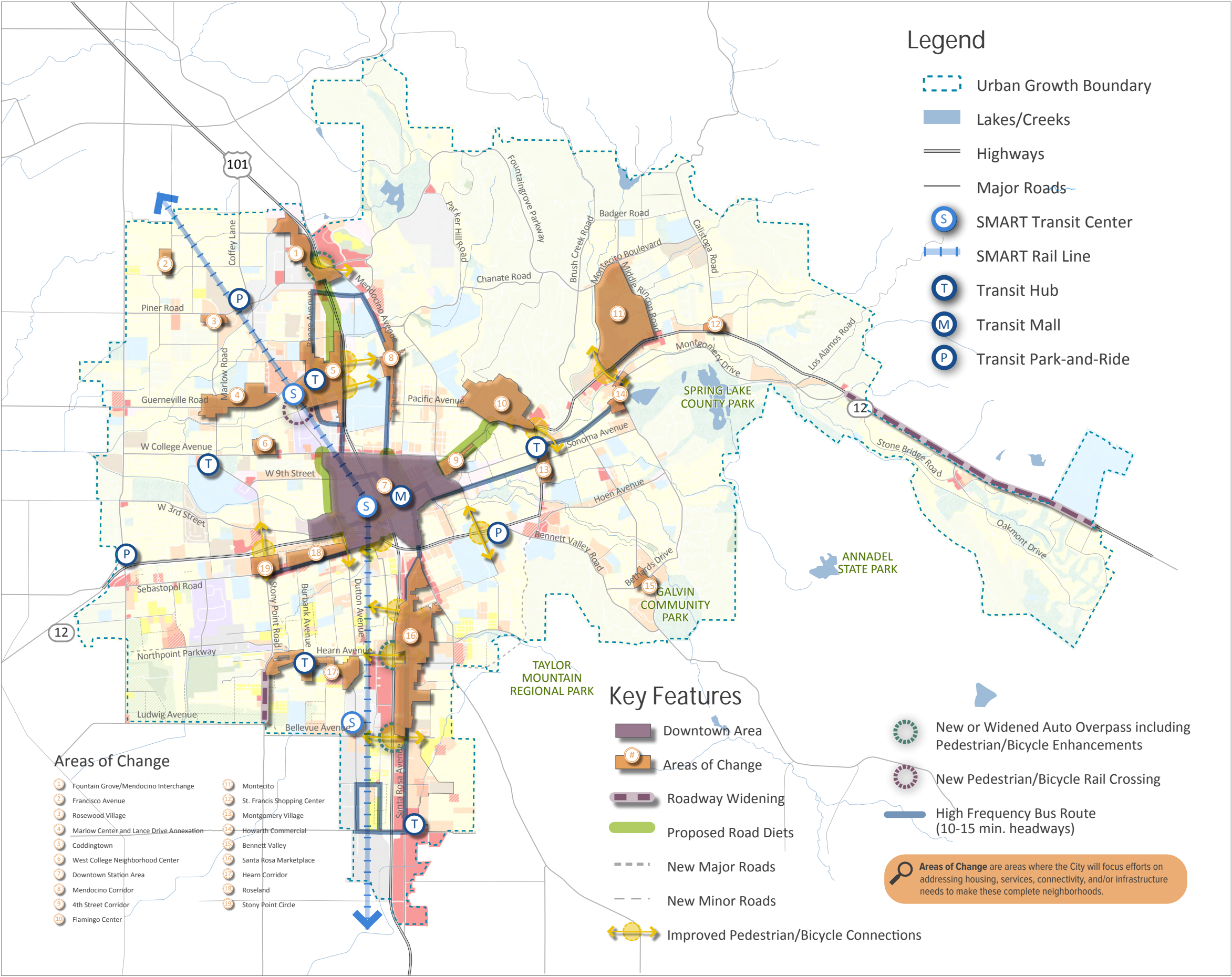


Complete Sidewalk Network



Preferred Alternative Diagram

The diagram to the right includes the major components of the draft Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative is largely focused on identifying the location of major new housing, employment, and shopping areas and mobility enhancements. It is based on a wealth of community feedback on how Santa Rosa can and should grow over the next 20+ years to meet the needs of current and future generations. And as noted on the previous topical summary pages, the location of this new growth considers key factors like access to mobility options, natural hazards, and equity priority communities.





Moving Towards a Preferred Alternative

The goal of this round of discussions is to **hear feedback from the community on the draft Preferred Alternative** presented in this workbook.

The Project Team will capture and present community feedback, ideas, concerns or suggestions and present them to the City Council and Planning Commission in Fall 2022.

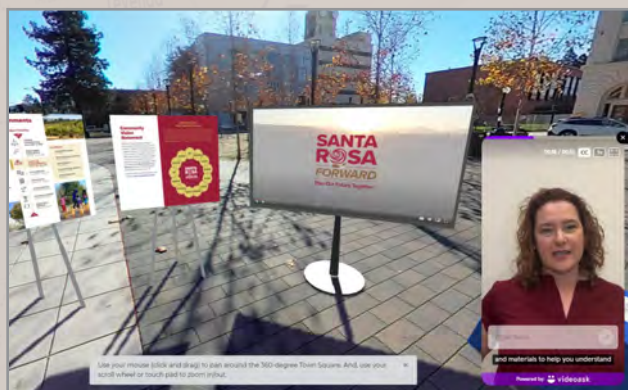


Community Discussion Opportunities

The Community Discussions on the Preferred Alternative process, which will be held between September and October 2022, will include community open houses, an online survey, meetings, youth engagement activities, and other interactions that offer a variety of ways for the community to be involved. This round of engagement is focused on gathering community feedback on the draft Preferred Alternative and includes the following key engagement opportunities:

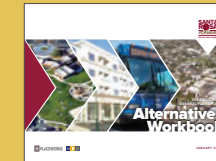
- ▶ **Online Survey**
- ▶ **Community Open Houses**
- ▶ **Community Advisory Committee Meeting**
- ▶ **Equity Priority Community Focus Groups**
- ▶ **Community Organization Meetings**
- ▶ **Youth Activities**
- ▶ **City Board and Commission Meetings**
- ▶ **Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions**

Please visit www.santarosaforward.com for more information on the project and upcoming community discussions and events.



Additional Info

Other Project Reports and Summaries



Alternatives Workbook

The Alternatives Workbook presented and analyzed three land use and circulation scenarios for Santa Rosa that provide different options for how the community can grow and change in the future. Each alternative aimed to implement the Community Vision, but offered a unique approach and choices for how we distribute future housing and improve circulation. The alternatives start with the potential for 36,000 new housing units (over the next 20+ years), equal to the number accommodated in the current General Plan, but differ in where new housing and other uses would go. The full report is available at: www.santarosaforward.com/Alts



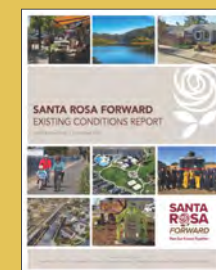
Community Vision Statement

The Vision Statement is based on a wealth of community comments and ideas gathered during the community vision workshops, meetings with community-based organizations, discussions with individuals, meetings with City Boards and Commissions, and discussions with the City Council conducted between May and July 2021. The Vision Statement is an aspirational expression that frames community needs and desires and serves as a foundation for all the remaining General Plan work. It will help frame the land use and transportation alternatives; inform new and updated General Plan goals, policies, and programs; and ensure that the General Plan fully addresses the needs and desires of the community. The full Vision Statement is available at: www.santarosaforward.com/VS



Briefing Book on the Existing Conditions

This document is a high level summary of the major findings and take-aways from the detailed Existing Conditions Report (see below). This summary includes important background information and emerging opportunities, organized into six key topical areas. The full summary is available at: www.santarosaforward.com/BB



Existing Conditions Report

This report analyzes and summarizes demographic, economic, land use, community character, mobility, natural resources, infrastructure, environmental justice, community health, and other conditions in Santa Rosa, with the goal of helping the community and City understand the issues and opportunities facing Santa Rosa. This analysis will be used to support the planning and community engagement process conducted during development of the updated General Plan. The full report is available at: www.santarosaforward.com/ECR

Key Terms

Carbon Neutrality: Balancing carbon dioxide emissions with carbon offsets—the process of reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions or removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to make up for emissions elsewhere.

Density: The average number of homes on one acre of land in a given area.

Environmental Justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Equity: The just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

Equity Priority Community: The City identified areas in Santa Rosa that have the highest concentration of under-served populations based on current Census and demographic information.

The Santa Rosa Forward process is focusing tailored engagement and policy solutions to these communities to help improve equity, address environmental justice issues, and provide everyone with the opportunity to attain their full potential. More information on this effort is available at: www.santarosaforward.com/equity

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA):

An estimate based on State of California projections of population growth and housing unit demand and assigns a share of the region's future housing need to each jurisdiction in the State. These housing need numbers serve as the basis for the update of the housing element in each California city and county.

Resilience: The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties or hardships, typically associated with natural or human-made disasters, droughts, economic recessions, social unrest, or housing uncertainty.

Retail: The sale of goods to the public in relatively small quantities for use or consumption rather than for resale.

Sustainable: Practices and behaviors that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT): The total distance traveled in miles by all motor vehicles of a specific group within a given area at a given time.

Zoning: A method in which a municipality divides land into areas called zones, each of which has a set of regulations for new development that differs from other zones.



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