

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: JESSICA JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR - PLANNING  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
SUBJECT: APPROVE SUBMITTAL OF PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA  
GRANT APPLICATION AND DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO  
ACCEPT AND EXECUTE GRANT DOCUMENTS FOR SOUTH  
SANTA ROSA SPECIFIC PLAN AND EIR

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council, by resolution, 1) approve and ratify City staff's submittal of an application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments for a Priority Development Area Grant for \$1,200,000 to prepare the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report; 2) authorize the City Manager or designee, to accept the grant award and execute all Agreements, all related award documents and any amendments thereto required for receiving such grant funds; and 3) appropriate grant funds received to a project key to be established by the Chief Financial Officer.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On February 23, 2023, staff submitted an application to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG) for a Priority Development Area (PDA) grant to prepare the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The potential PDA grant was discussed during the Santa Rosa Annexation Opportunities study session item, which was presented to Council on January 24, 2023. The PDA grant would provide up to \$1,200,000 in funding to develop a specific plan and EIR for the specific plan in south Santa Rosa. The area would include the Santa Rosa Avenue corridor, south from Highway 12, as well as both sides of Highway 101, south from Bellevue Avenue to the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UBG); the area would encompass the Moorland, Todd Creek and General Plan "2010" areas, including both incorporated City and unincorporated County land. The deadline for submittal of the PDA grant application was February 23, 2023, although additional information, including a resolution of support from the City Council,

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can be submitted by April 14, 2023. Staff is seeking support from the Council through the adoption of a resolution for the submittal of the application to the MTC/ABAG.

## BACKGROUND

In September 2008, the City applied for a new PDA for the Mendocino Avenue/Sebastopol Avenue corridors. At that time, the PDA was established primarily to create gateways into the downtown area, create a “sense of place” along both Mendocino and Santa Rosa Avenues, and to connect the Santa Rosa Junior College in a substantial way to the downtown area through improved transit infrastructure.

In September 2019, the City re-established the PDA in order to analyze residential density and non-residential intensity, as well as multi-modal circulation, along these corridors during the General Plan Update process. Also in 2019, Sonoma County established the South Santa Rosa Area PDA in order to gain access to regional funding dedicated to planning and infrastructure improvements.

The PDA program is a voluntary partnership between local governments and MTC/ABAG. Through the PDA program, local governments identify areas envisioned for future housing and job growth that are served by transit. Bay Area cities have nominated 218 PDAs since 2007.

PDAs facilitate coordinated regional planning for future growth and transportation investment. In addition to shaping the location of anticipated growth and major transit investments, PDAs receive a dedicated share of funding for local planning and for transportation improvements such as complete streets, bikeways, and parking programs. This is reflected in [Plan Bay Area 2050](#), the region’s current long-range land use and transportation plan.

On December 1, 2022, MTC/ABAG released a Call for Projects for PDA Planning Grants open to local governments with one or more existing PDA; the application deadline was January 23, 2023 (with additional supporting documents to be submitted by April 14, 2023). This round of funding supports three types of planning activities:

- Full plans that, at a minimum, establish development standards and identify public improvements, informed by community engagement and resulting in an adopted plan, CEQA analysis, and zoning and general plan amendments (maximum grant amount: \$1,200,000).
- Plan amendments that update an already adopted plan to reflect changing community priorities, state and regional policies, and economic trends. Plan amendments typically involve revising part, but not all, of a plan, and result in updates to the zoning code and, if applicable, an EIR and general plan land use designations (maximum grant amount: \$600,000).

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- Plan implementation, which includes technical assistance to develop and adopt policies or programs that facilitate the implementation of an already adopted plan for one or multiple PDAs (maximum grant amount: \$200,000).

On January 24, 2023, the City Council held a study session to consider whether or not to proceed with a City initiated annexation, and, if annexation was to proceed, to provide direction on the boundary for annexation and key principles, and direct staff to bring back a workplan and cost estimate for the annexation process. Part of the study session included discussion regarding the need for a specific plan in the south Santa Rosa area, which was one of the areas being considered for annexation. At that time, the Council indicated general support for pursuing a grant to cover the cost of the specific plan and associated EIR in this area.

On January 30, 2023, the County of Sonoma's Moorland Annexation Ad Hoc Committee met and confirmed their support for the City's submittal of a PDA grant application for a specific plan in south Santa Rosa, to include the Moorland area. County staff will be taking a resolution of support for adoption by the Board of Supervisors on April 4, 2023.

On February 23, 2023, City staff submitted a PDA grant application to MTC/ABAG for development of the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan and EIR. The plan area includes both a portion of the City's Mendocino Avenue/Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor PDA and the County's South Santa Rosa Area PDA.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

See Background section above.

#### ANALYSIS

The City has submitted an application for the PDA grant program for the full amount of \$1,200,000 for the development of a new specific plan and EIR that would modify the City's Mendocino Avenue/Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor PDA, and encompass a portion of the County's South Santa Rosa Area PDA.

The boundary of the Specific Plan area would include the Santa Rosa Avenue corridor, south of Highway 12 and east of Highway 101, extending to Petaluma Hill Road. At Bellevue Avenue, the boundary would extend to both sides of Highway 101, encompassing the Moorland area on the west side of the Highway and the Todd Creek/"2010 Area" (as defined in the City's General Plan) on the east side of the Highway. The boundary would then extend east, west and south to the City's UGB, and includes both incorporated City of Santa Rosa and unincorporated County land (see Exhibit A to the attached Resolution).

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To ensure both local and regional benefits, specific plans funded through MTC/ABAG's PDA program must meet minimum requirements, but can do so in a way that addresses community priorities. At a minimum, plans must include the following:

- Development standards;
- Standards for public rights of way and other public spaces;
- Capital improvements;
- A funding strategy;
- Actions to expand equity;
- Any necessary environmental analysis; and
- Updates to zoning and the general plan to achieve consistency with the grant-funded Plan.

By receiving funding, grant recipients are committed to ensuring that plans are consistent with any applicable State and regional laws and policies, such as MTC's Transit-Oriented Communities Policy. MTC/ABAG staff will support City staff in ensuring minimum requirements are met and will offer technical resources and best practices.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact related to this item at this time. If awarded, the PDA grant would cover the cost for the City to hire a consultant to prepare the Specific Plan and EIR, as well as City staff time to manage the consultant.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Adoption of the resolution contemplates the receipt of a PDA Planning Grant and is exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines sections 15061(b)(3) (the common-sense exemption) and 15378(b)(4) (the creation of government funding mechanisms) because it can be seen with certainty that this application will have no possibility for causing a significant direct or indirect effect on the environment. Should the City be awarded the grant funding, the Specific Plan developed using that funding will include necessary environmental analysis as required by CEQA.

#### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No prior Board/Commission/Committee review.

#### NOTIFICATION

Notification for a Council consent item is not required. Should the City be awarded the PDA grant funding for the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan and EIR, and as noted in the

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attached Preliminary Scope and Budget, community engagement will be a key part of the Specific Plan and EIR process.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 - Preliminary Scope of Work/Budget - South Santa Rosa Specific Plan
- Resolution/Exhibit A (PDA Grant South Santa Rosa Specific Plan Maps)

PRESENTER

Jessica Jones, Deputy Director - Planning  
[jjones@srcity.org](mailto:jjones@srcity.org)