



Attachment 4

DOWNTOWN SANTA ROSA STATION AREA SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

PHASE I OUTREACH REPORT

JUNE 2019



Table of Contents

Executive Summary and Key Findings.....2

Introduction5

Outreach Activities6

 Pop-Up Events and Neighborhood Meetings.....6

 CAC Outreach.....9

 Open Houses9

 Website and Web-Based Surveys.....18

PHASE I OUTREACH SUMMARY

Executive Summary and Key Findings

Between February and May 2019, City staff and the consultant team conducted a range of community outreach activities, including presenting at numerous neighborhood meetings, reaching out to community members for input at pop-up events around the community, hosting two public open house meetings, and conducting two online surveys. The goal of this effort was to develop an understanding of issues and opportunities from the perspective of community members and to get input on potential strategies for addressing them.

The key findings of the Phase 1 outreach are presented here, organized to highlight factors that will inform the creation of land use and circulation alternatives that will serve as the basis for the next phase of the project. A description of each of outreach activity or event is provided in the following sections of this report together with a summary of input received.

Uses and Character

1. Overall, there is broad consensus that downtown Santa Rosa should be a cultural and commercial hub for the city and the wider region, with a diverse range of attractions and places to gather that caters to a wide range of people across incomes, ages, races, and backgrounds. "Downtown for everyone" was a clear theme.
2. Historic character, human scale, walkability, restaurants, public spaces, local shops, and natural beauty are aspects of downtown Santa Rosa today that people value most highly. These are strengths on which to build in planning for the future of the area.
3. Courthouse Square is widely recognized as the heart of downtown Santa Rosa and there was a strong consensus among respondents that this location is appropriate for the most intense mix of office, commercial, retail, and residential uses. There is also agreement that this location is most appropriate for taller buildings, although there was a range of opinions as to how high buildings on Courthouse Square should be. Many favor buildings over eight stories tall on Third Street south of the Square and on City-owned properties; however, some feel that buildings up to six stories or 75 feet — in line with the tallest buildings on the Square today — would be an appropriate limit. Other voices also want to preserve the walkable, pedestrian scale of Fourth Street between B and E Streets by limiting tall new buildings along that corridor.
4. The pedestrian-scaled, commercial character of Railroad Square and the appeal of its historic buildings is recognized as a valuable asset for downtown Santa Rosa. Several participants envisioned the preservation and enhancement of these qualities through the creation of a public plaza or park that extends east from the existing depot, with outdoor seating at restaurants and bars nearby.
5. There is broad support for fostering mixed use centers at various locations downtown with shops and services catering to the daily needs of local residents. The SMART site west of the Downtown SMART Station and the cluster of former industrial buildings between Wilson and Donahue on either side of the tracks were generally considered appropriate locations for this type of development and redevelopment. However, there



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

are differing opinions as to building heights at these locations. Desired heights for buildings on the SMART site ranged from three stories to more than eight, with robust support for taller buildings. For the Wilson-Donahue area, the range was much wider (from one story to more than eight) and more evenly split.

6. There is support for significant change along the Santa Rosa Avenue corridor from Maple Avenue north to Julliard Park. Generally, respondents wanted to see a transformation from the existing auto-oriented, strip retail to a pedestrian-oriented character with minimal setbacks, space for outdoor dining, and a much-enhanced public realm. There is notable disagreement as to appropriate building heights along this corridor (opinions ranged from one story up to over eight), and the intensity and height needed to make redevelopment feasible to effectuate the desired transformation will need to be assessed in the next phase of the work.
7. There is also support for significant change along Sebastopol Road between Dutton and Olive, South of Highway 12. Respondents generally support buildings 5 stories and higher at this location, as well as intensification of uses with the objective of transforming this auto-oriented corridor into a walkable mixed-use neighborhood integrated with the surrounding Roseland area.
8. There are differing opinions regarding the future of Maxwell Court. Many expressed interest in seeing the area take on a mixed use village feel, and residents of the West End neighborhood in particular expressed concern for the compatibility of existing industrial uses with nearby residential uses. However, the vision of a mixed-use neighborhood at this location is not universally shared by Maxwell Court property owners.
9. There is a general consensus that any development in the area surrounding Imwalle Gardens should respect the agricultural heritage of that important landmark, although there is a difference of opinion as to how the vacant parcels to the west and south of the Gardens should be treated. There was some support for lower density housing development and some voices in favor of providing substantial open space on those properties.
10. College Avenue is generally seen as an opportunity for small-scale residential and commercial infill development, including professional office space and bed and breakfast accommodations.
11. The number one attraction desired for downtown is performance and music venues, followed by food-oriented retail, and restaurants. An interesting idea that emerged from the community conversation is around providing pop-up spaces for farmstands or community supported agricultural produce pick up, which link an urban downtown with the agricultural activity that Sonoma County is known for.

Connectivity and Parking

1. The biggest challenge to connectivity downtown relates to east-west connections. Respondents cited US 101 and the Santa Rosa Plaza mall as the biggest obstacles to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. There is overwhelming support for reconnecting Fourth Street between Morgan Street and B Street through the mall, as envisioned in the 2007 Specific Plan; however, whereas some wanted a multi-modal roadway, others envisioned a pedestrian promenade lined with shops and restaurants, and others envisioned a 24-hour publicly accessible connection through the mall.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

2. There is also a strong desire for safer and more attractive underpasses at Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Streets. Lack of bicycle lanes and the perceived threat from individuals experiencing homelessness were frequently mentioned as barriers to walking and cycling.
3. Different opinions exist regarding connectivity across B Street in the vicinity of the mall. Some voices advocated for on-demand crosswalks that prioritize pedestrians, while others were concerned that prioritizing bicycles and pedestrians over cars at this location could exacerbate congestion on this important arterial.
4. There is also interest in improved bicycle and pedestrian access to the Santa Rosa Creek Trail and the Prince Memorial Greenway, particularly from Railroad Square and Santa Rosa Avenue.
5. With respect to parking management strategies, respondents tend to favor an approach that offers carrots as opposed to sticks. There is broad support for real-time signage that guides motorists to available off-street parking spots, incentives for employees to park away from areas of high demand, and bike share as strategies that encourage efficient use of parking resources.
6. One of the most controversial ideas discussed at the open house meetings and via the online surveys is the concept of Premium Zones, where a fee is charged for parking in high demand areas, and Value Zones, where parking is less expensive but located a few minutes' walk from high demand areas. Support among respondents was split 50/50 on this idea.
7. Interestingly, the concept of valet parking generated some opposition from survey respondents and workshop participants, who disliked the cost involved and viewed the concept as somewhat elitist.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

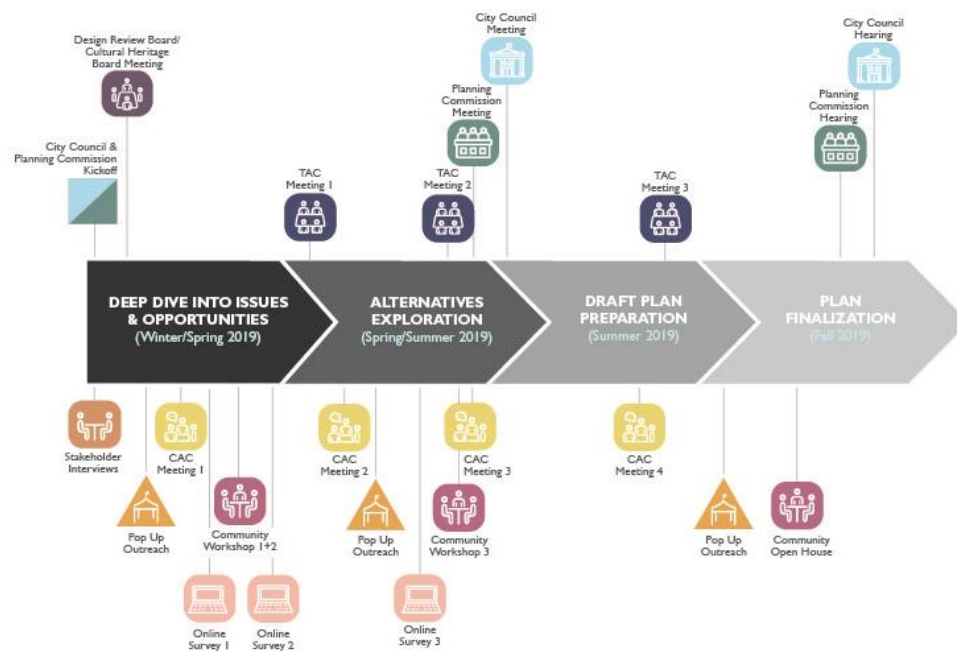
Introduction

The Santa Rosa Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (DSASP) is the blueprint for development and preservation in a 650-acre area at the center of the city, with a vision of a vibrant urban center with a distinct identity and character, a diverse mix of uses, transit-oriented development, and pedestrian-friendly connections.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of the DSASP Update, and the Santa Rosa City Council approved the Community Engagement Strategy ('Strategy') in December 2018 to establish a multi-faceted approach to collaborative planning, with the goal of engaging a representative cross-section of the community's population and interests. The Strategy aims to provide opportunities for discussion and meaningful input and build public ownership of the DSASP over multiple phases, shown in the figure below.

This report summarizes outreach techniques and synthesizes feedback received as part of **Phase I** (Winter 2018-Spring 2019); an intensive "deep-dive" to identify and understand stakeholder priorities and concerns, and to establish a coordinated and realistic direction for the future of the plan founded on community vision. Key themes, areas of agreement, and outliers arising from this phase will shape development of several "alternatives," which represent different scenarios for land use mix, connectivity, and neighborhood character and design downtown.

Santa Rosa Downtown Station Area Plan
Community Engagement Process



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Outreach Activities

City staff and the consultant team engaged in multiple outreach and engagement activities and techniques ranging from digital engagement via the internet and social media; community open houses; neighborhood meetings; and pop-up engagement at events around the community. Additionally, community advisory committee members used an outreach toolkit to solicit input through their networks.

Each section in this chapter will detail the timeframe for each outreach activities; what efforts were used to promote the activity; audience type and/or size reached; and key findings or trends emerging from input gathered.

POP-UP EVENTS AND NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

City staff attended various community events and meetings to share information about the DSASP Update and discuss community concerns /visions. These included:

Tomorrow's Leaders Today Event (February 25th)

The Santa Rosa Planning and Economic Development Department hosted TLT members for a Government and Planning Day at City Hall. The 11th graders were asked to imagine the future for several hypothetical downtown properties. Each group proposed the following:



Group 1 – Vacant Building, Santa Rosa Avenue

- New 5-6 story mixed use development with amenities like laundry, a gym, and proximity to Juilliard Park and public transit
- Affordable units above street-activating retail to create “eyes on the street”
- Encouragement of transit, but some parking provided through garage contracts
- Affordability could allow some people to move out of transitional housing

Group 2 – Vacant Building, B Street

- 3-story renovation of the existing building, with an engaging arts and culture center (The Santa Rosa Experience, or SRXP) on the first floor, restaurant on the second floor, and a bar/lounge/outdoor space with nightlife on the 3rd floor (inspired by Hopmonk Tavern)
- New uses would boost foot traffic to the mall
- Arts and cultural center exhibits would be interactive, sharable on social media, and a celebration of Sonoma County’s industries
- Renovation and no added parking would save on construction costs and reduce environmental impact

Group 3 – City-Owned Parking Structure

- 7-story building with residential and rooftop amenity added to existing garage structure, with three stories reserved for resident parking



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

- Reduction of public parking means less people driving downtown
- Proposed space for local small business or ground floor grocery store with internal coffee shop
- Varied rents, with affordable units on lower level for Junior College students, and rents offsetting higher construction costs associated with a garage retrofit.

Audience Engaged: Youth

Santa Rosa Together Quarterly Meeting (February 2nd)

City staff met with Santa Rosa Together, a neighborhood activist group, to discuss the Specific Plan Update. Members discussed the following points:

- Need for more pocket parks, gardens, and bike share
- Concerns about how denser/higher downtown development would affect parking and character in Luther Burbank Gardens; step down height could be a solution
- Better, more attractive connections needed between Railroad Square and Courthouse Square; and SMART Station and transit mall.
- Need for better bicycle connections/"the last mile" issue
- General feeling that height is acceptable downtown; affordable housing needed

Audience Engaged: Neighborhood groups

Santa Rosa Avenue Community Meeting (March 20th)

The City joined neighbors to hear community input regarding the proposed hotel at the EconoInn site on Santa Rosa Avenue, as well as the existing Santa Rosa Corridor Plan and how it might change as a result of the Specific Plan update.

Residents were concerned about height next to single-story homes, noting that the rooftop deck made the five-story hotel seem more like six stories. Residents also expressed concerns about shadows and privacy, and how a structure of its size would influence parking in the neighborhood.

Audience Engaged: Neighborhood groups

Preservation Districts Community Meeting (April 18th)

City staff introduced the Specific Plan update and gathered feedback from residents of the West End, Cherry Street, St. Rose, Olive Park, and Ridgway Preservation Districts, and answered questions about the plan update process.

Audience Engaged: Historic preservation advocates, neighborhood groups



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Earth Day on Stage (April 27th)

City staff attended the Courthouse Square event and provided information on the DSASP Update purpose, process, and timeline.

Audience: General public

Cinco de Mayo in Roseland (May 5th)

City staff attended the Cinco De Mayo celebration in Roseland and provided information on the DSASP Update purpose and process. They also distributed a bilingual (English and Spanish) flyer with to encourage participants to take the Connectivity and Parking Survey.

Several participants filled out comment cards with what they love about Santa Rosa, and what they wanted to see more of, available in the Appendix.

Audience Engaged: General public, Latino community, monolingual Spanish-speakers



Other Public Comments

Comments from the public are welcome at all stages of the DSASP Update process. Twenty-eight comments from the public were received between December 2018 and May 2019 and reflected a range of topics, including:

- Support for height, parklets, play structures, pedicabs, and grocers.
- Desire for accessibility in design- high rises with elevators,
- Request for a gun range
- Free parking, curbside parking for businesses, and dissatisfaction for parking charges after 6pm
- Preference for shops, rather than offices, near the square
- Concerns about neighborhood commercial zoning designation and requests for other zoning changes



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Comprehensive comments are available in the Appendix.

CAC OUTREACH

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is an advisory body formed to engage community members and stakeholders and act as “community ambassadors” in the development of the DSASP Update. After a successful kickoff meeting, CAC members began engaging their networks, talking with their neighbors, sending out the link to the first survey, inviting people to the open houses, and more.

Several CAC members led activities with their peers:

- CAC Member Abril Inocencio asked classmates at Santa Rosa Junior College to provide input on what they enjoy about downtown, and what they would like to see more of.
- CAC member Lyndsey Burcina guided her class at Elsie Allen High School through the character and height exercises described in the Open House subsection, Urban Design and Built Form.

OPEN HOUSES

The City hosted two community open houses on May 1st at the Central Library and May 4th at Chop’s Teen Club. The objectives of the open houses were to communicate status of the plan, impetus for the update, and overall project process; get feedback from community members on issues, opportunities and strategies to consider in updating the plan; and get input from community members to inform the alternatives that will be the subject of the next phase of work. The flexible, open format created a forum where people could provide meaningful input and provided flexibility for busy schedules.



Outreach for the open houses included a flyer in English and Spanish, information on the website, an email blast to Santa Rosa residents subscribed to various mailing lists, social media and other online networks like NextDoor, and outreach conducted by the CAC.

At the start of each open house, City staff and consultants gave a short presentation that provided context for the DSASP Update, including history of the plan, impetus for the update, and overall project process. The same presentation played on a loop for people arriving at later times and is now available on YouTube. Following the initial presentation, participants



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

were free to circulate to any of the six topical activity stations for interactive activities and a chance to provide input on key areas.

Audiences Reached: ~90 attendees



Station 1: Welcome Station

As an ice breaker activity, participants were asked to fill out comment cards noting (1) what they love about downtown and (2) what they wish downtown had more of, and then post them on the wall at the station.

The top five things people loved most about Santa Rosa included walkability (14 responses); the variety of local businesses and restaurants (12 responses); people and diversity (9 responses); Santa Rosa history and historic features (8 responses); and greenery, trees, and parks (6 responses).

The most frequently mentioned suggestions for what people wished there were more of downtown included grocery stores (16 responses); more music venues (11 responses); free parking (10 responses); more public art, murals, and galleries (10 responses); and more affordable housing (9 responses).

Comprehensive comments are available in the Appendix.

Station 2: Future Downtown Users

At this station, participants were prompted to think about what groups downtown should be planned for in the future. Participants submitted their ideas by smartphone to create a live word cloud, projected on the wall. The more responses each group received, the larger it appeared. Participants were then asked to consider these future downtown users and then fill out comment cards/post about amenities, activities, and options needed to attract or support them.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Discussion questions:

Question 1: Who are we planning downtown for?

Question 2: Thinking about these groups of people, what kinds of activities, amenities, and options will be needed to attract them downtown?

Participants at the May 1st workshop suggested that downtown should be planned for groups shown in Figure 1. The most frequently suggested group was residents, followed by families, future residents, tourists, businesses, and teens.

Figure 1.

Who are we planning downtown for?



At the May 4th workshop, participants made similar suggestions for groups, with current residents being the most popular, followed by future employers, young people, and young families, shown in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2.

Who are we planning downtown for?



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Next, respondents answered the question, “Thinking about these groups of people, what kinds of activities, amenities, and options will be needed to attract them downtown?” Emerging themes included more entertainment; housing; schools, jobs, and tourism; community resources and the public realm; safety and bike/pedestrian infrastructure; and meeting daily needs.

Comments related to entertainment:

- Symphony halls and downtown music venues
- Street fairs/art walks/foodie events/festivals
- More music and movies in the park

Comments related to housing:

- Housing for future workers
- More affordable housing options

Comments related to schools, jobs, and tourism:

- Consideration for needs of emerging tech industry (people moving out of SF)
- Good schools
- Businesses that hire college grads to encourage a younger population to move to SR
- More hotel options

Comments related to community resources and the public realm:

- More public art and city murals
- Designs, setbacks, and height limits along Santa Rosa Ave. must conform to the historic quality of the surrounding neighborhoods
- Appealing architecture urban/historic mix
- Dog parks
- Change locations of homeless services

Comments related to safety, accessibility, and bike/pedestrian infrastructure:

- Better pedestrian safety, improved crosswalks
- Better bike infrastructure
- ADA accessibility

Comments related to meeting daily needs:

- Grocery stores (suggested conversion of the Sears building)
- A dependable energy grid, electric car chargers
- Free parking
- More service stores

Comprehensive comments are available in the Appendix.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Station 3: Land Use Mix

At this station, participants were introduced to the opportunity areas with boards that explain how the areas were identified and what the existing character is like. Participants were asked to post comments about the type and mix of activities and uses they envisioned in each of the opportunity areas in the future.

Discussion question: *What's the right mix of uses and activities for Downtown Santa Rosa in 2040? Share your vision for the future of downtown.*

Courthouse Square

Participants envisioned Courthouse Square much like it exists today-- as a hub for jobs (particularly office jobs), dining, and shopping—but with more multifamily housing and services to support livability, like grocery stores, drugstores, and parks. For visitors, participants wanted more hotels close to the action. For residents and visitors alike, more concerts, nightlife, activities, and attractions would enliven and activate the area around the clock.

Santa Rosa Ave

In this area, participants described denser housing that complemented the character of adjacent historic properties. Santa Rosa Avenue would be a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly corridor, with mixed uses fronting either side of the street. Residents and visitors would shop and dine al fresco.

Sebastopol Road

Participants envisioned the Sebastopol Road area as a neighborhood unit, where new multifamily housing blends with existing smaller homes. Residents living in mixed use or live-work buildings would have access to stores and commercial uses that support daily living, and children would be free to play at nearby parks. There were no comments about industrial uses.

SMART Station

Participants described a vision for a higher density, transit-oriented village with housing and restaurants, a grocery store, and other commercial uses throughout the area. Participants also described a vision for a public plaza or park that extends the existing depot, with SMART Train users and new residents enjoying outdoor seating at restaurants and bars nearby.

Imwalle

The vision for the Imwalle area was one that preserved its bucolic character and agricultural history. A permanent farmers market, community farm, vertical agriculture, and public park were proposed as supportive additions.

Wilson-Donahue

Participants envisioned denser, multi-story affordable housing along the Wilson corridor, studded with green space and parks. The area would offer neighborhood services, like coffee shops or corner markets, and other service-oriented shops like a bicycle repair shop, shoe repair, and small merchants.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Maxwell Court

Maxwell Court is envisioned as an area where small-scale design and manufacturing, tasting rooms, caterers and other creative industries exist alongside new housing. Mixed uses and live-work spaces support artists, makers, musicians, and entrepreneurs.

College Avenue

Along College Avenue, participants envisioned a housing-rich area. College Avenue would support medical offices and other small office types, and commercial/retail would be service- and daily-needs oriented.

Comprehensive comments for each Opportunity Area are available in the Appendix.

Station 4: Connectivity and Mobility

Participants completed a map-based survey and table map exercise and answered questions to two prompts.

- 1) *How can we make it more attractive to walk, bike, or get around without a car downtown?*

Comments related to safety:

- Improved Fourth Street crosswalk visibility; make pedestrian signals consistent with timing and walking of square
- Better lighting, traffic lights for bikes, and security cameras
- Enforce traffic safety laws and maintain 15 mph speed limits through downtown
- Protection from vehicles (trees, planters, other barriers)
- Provide more resources to help unhoused move encampments outside of downtown (and away from Prince Memorial Greenway) and give residents feeling of safety

Comments related to the public realm:

- Preserve charm and history, keep historic structures
- Add colorful murals and lighting to the underpasses, streets, and trails
- Need for more green space and outdoor seating (street trees, pocket parks, parklets, and sidewalk dining)
- Add a playground on Fourth Street
- Wider sidewalks
- Bike parking

Comments related to parking:

- More free parking will attract more people, who will then walk around
- Build another parking garage to get parked cars off the street
- Add a free electric shuttle bus to and from “near remote” parking lots
- Remove parked cars from downtown (make it pedestrian only) and build another parking garage



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Comments related to traffic flow, infrastructure, services:

- Add more protected, separated bike lanes; make sure bike lanes don't just end
- Separate, demarcated bike and pedestrian paths
- Create more pedestrian-only alleys, narrow streets, and corridors
- Add more buses and trams
- Consider how downtown development will affect traffic flow
- Buy out the mall or make it easier to walk/bike through it at any time of day, mall destroys connectivity of downtown and acts as blockade between downtown and Railroad Square

2) *How can we improve connections between destinations on either side of the freeway?*

Comments related to trolleys and shuttles:

- Allow a small trolley train through Plaza or add a connection that goes over it
- Trackless trolley between RR Square and Courthouse Square
- Connect east and west along Sonoma Ave (past Luther Burbank to the Prince Memorial Greenway) with a shuttle
- Add trolley between Railroad Square and Courthouse Square

Comments related to over- and underpasses:

- Build a pedestrian overpass at College Ave
- Build a cable ski lift over the Plaza
- Add more overhead ramps and underground tunnels
- Create a SRJC-Coddington Bridge
- Add green space to underpasses
- Add better lighting under freeway towards Railroad Square and the Third Street underpass, opportunities to add food trucks, vendors, lanterns, and public art

Comments related to the Plaza Mall:

- Open up the center of the mall; shops could line open air corridor
- Add grocery store or housing to the mall

Comments related to pedestrian corridors:

- Pedestrian walkways and alleys through the Mall parking lot; and between Mall and Museum of Sonoma County; Mall and SoFA District
- Enhance Sixth Street crossover with restaurants/mini coffee shops

Comments related to safety:

- Move homeless service locations out of the downtown area to improve sense of safety, better incentive to walk around downtown
- Crack down on bike thefts, more police patrols along Prince Memorial Greenway
- Clear designated biking and walking areas, protection from vehicles

Comprehensive comments are available in the Appendix.



P H A S E I

O U T R E A C H S U M M A R Y

Station 5: Urban Design and Built Form

This station featured two activities: one about building heights and another about the desired character of the opportunity areas where change is foreseeable downtown.

For the building heights activity, participants placed colored stickers on map to indicate what they thought was the appropriate building height for different areas downtown. Five colored stickers corresponded to the following high ranges:

- 1 story or less (light blue)
- 1-2 stories (blue)
- 3-4 stories (yellow)
- 5-6 stories (red)
- 7 stories or more (pink)

Results

Participants generally identified the Courthouse Square (especially at City Hall), Maxwell Court, and Sebastopol Rd Opportunity Areas as locations where taller buildings made sense.

Contested areas with healthy disagreement on height included Santa Rosa Avenue and Wilson-Donahue, with heights ranging from 1-2 to above 7 stories. Height disagreement at the SMART Station was likely the result of sensitivities to Railroad Square development on the eastern side of the SMART Train tracks, but other participants supported height. Each height activity map is available in the Appendix.

To respond to character participants fill out comment cards describing their vision for the opportunity areas, with reference to precedent projects shown on a board.

Courthouse Square

Courthouse Square's role as a public gathering place and 24-hour heart of the city also reflects a preservation of historic character. Historic buildings and architecture inspire design of newer buildings. Mixed-use and office buildings are at a larger scale, but includes intimate, pedestrian-scaled spaces like parklets, courtyards, and al fresco dining for meeting and gathering. Retail builds on the historic charm and utilizes converted one story or previously industrial buildings.

Santa Rosa Ave

Santa Rosa Avenue is envisioned to be a highly bikeable and walkable retail corridor, with shaded trees, wide sidewalks, and green roofs. Retail, restaurants and shops line the street in a continuous fashion, a departure from the strip, auto-oriented design of past. Housing steps down to smaller scale historic homes.

Sebastopol Road

The character of Sebastopol Road embraces its industrial past while creating a neighborhood feel. Diverse housing options like row homes (residential and mixed use), townhomes, and higher residential coexist among converted industrial buildings used as retail. Mini parks with playgrounds for children and activated public plazas create community gathering places.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

SMART Station

The SMART Station area will honor the existing character, history, and significance of Railroad Square. A mixed-use area throughout, with height suggestions ranging from four to eight stories. Higher buildings have setbacks at upper level. The street will feel vibrant, with outdoor dining, parklets and larger public plazas. Area will make use of large brick warehouses for mixed use, retail, and office.

Imwalle

Imwalle maintains its agricultural character but advances a more pedestrian-friendly vision, with community gardens and farms.

Wilson-Donahue

Wilson-Donahue area reuses large industrial buildings for retail or residential, with 4-story multifamily with sunken parking suggested as an example. Residents can enjoy mini parks and other green spaces throughout.

Maxwell Court

Maxwell Court maintains its industrial character but is softened by trees and public artwork on buildings. Has opportunities for adaptive reuse for retail and mixed-use buildings, large and small.

College Avenue

Themes: College Avenue is envisioned as a vibrant, dense neighborhood with high-rise residential and mixed-use buildings (5-6 stories). The street is amenable to bikes and pedestrians and connects the junior college with downtown. Mixed use buildings face the street or are centered around courtyards to provide neighborhood green space. Pedestrian-scaled office buildings and other retail departs from the strip mall look of today.

Comprehensive comments are available in the Appendix.

Station 6: Parking

At this station, participants read about the parking dilemma downtown: while it can be a challenge to find an on-street parking space during peak periods around Courthouse Square and Railroad Square, City-operated lots and garages nearby remain under-utilized. Participants rated several parking strategies and provided comments in an online survey (shown in Table 1, below; open-ended results summarized in the Online Survey section).

Results:

Most participants were generally in support of most parking strategies, especially those that were viewed as incentives rather than punitive. Participants were split on their support for parking zones, with a few citing challenges for people with accessibilities. Many participants voiced their disapproval for parking charges after 6pm, with many calling for free parking throughout downtown. A few residents were interested in the downtown valet idea but were unclear on who would be paying. Other comments reflected the need for more information, as some felt they could either be beneficial or detrimental depending on implementation.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Table I. Parking Strategies (Total Across Open House I and 2):

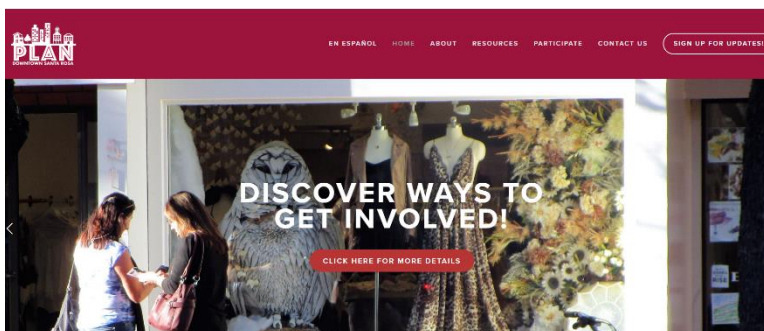
Strategy	Support	Don't Support
Signage	31	6
Residential/Employee Incentives	38	1
Parking Zones	19	20
Metered Parking Hours	12	24
Valet	5	12
Branding and Wayfinding	23	2
Shared Parking	29	2
Bike Share, Car Share, or Dockless Scooters	31	3
Mobile App for Parking	27	0
Residential Parking Permits	33	3

Comments for this section and frequency of prioritized indicators are combined with the Connectivity and Parking Survey results section of the Appendix.

WEBSITE AND WEB-BASED SURVEYS

Plandowntownsr.com and pleanearelcentro.com.

The DSASP Update's official webpage, available in English and Spanish, was launched in December 2018. This primary information portal serves five purposes: 1) Provides general information about the project, such as purpose, schedule, and FAQs; 2) Serve as a regularly updated library of project documents, presentations, and meeting materials as they are completed; 3) Alerts the public to upcoming meetings and other means of participation; (4) Allows people to subscribe the mailing list to receive updates on the project; and 5) Provides opportunities to engage and provide input in creative and convenient ways at any point in the process.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

Audience Engaged: General public

Pliny the Younger Line Survey, February 2nd

Russian River Brewing Company's annual Pliny the Younger release draws visitors from all over the world. After a short conversation about the DSASP Update's purpose and vision, the consultant team asked those waiting in line if they would be willing to take a short survey. Participants opened the survey on their smartphones with a QR code and responded to three questions.

Audience Engaged: Fifty people answered the survey; 76 percent of respondents were visitors/non-residents, likely resulting from the "special release" nature of the event.

Responses:

1) *How would you describe downtown Santa Rosa now in three words?*

For residents, common words tended to reflect issues framed as problems: Homeless (3); Not enough [parking; trees] (2)

For non-residents, common words included: Busy (4); Quaint (3); Cool (3); Nice (3).

Many non-residents noted that they did not know downtown Santa Rosa very well and chose words based on their perception of Fourth Street.

2) *How would you describe your ideal FUTURE downtown in three words?*

Both residents and non-residents expressed desire for free parking. Residents wanted more public events.

For residents, most common words included: Parking (5); Friendly (3); Events (3); Free (3)

For non-residents, common words included: Free (5); Parking (4)

Survey I: Downtown Santa Rosa Survey (April 12th-30th)

The first Downtown Santa Rosa survey solicited responses to several questions about people's vision for downtown. The bilingual (English and Spanish) survey link was disseminated by Community Advisory Committee members and was available on the website.

Audience Reached: Of the 389 survey respondents, 87 percent were Santa Rosa residents.



OUTREACH SUMMARY

Responses:

1) *What do you like about downtown now?*

Top responses for what people like about downtown now include restaurants; shops; Courthouse square, including the newly reunified plaza; walkability; events; and the historic buildings. The figure below shows the most frequently used words in responses to this question.

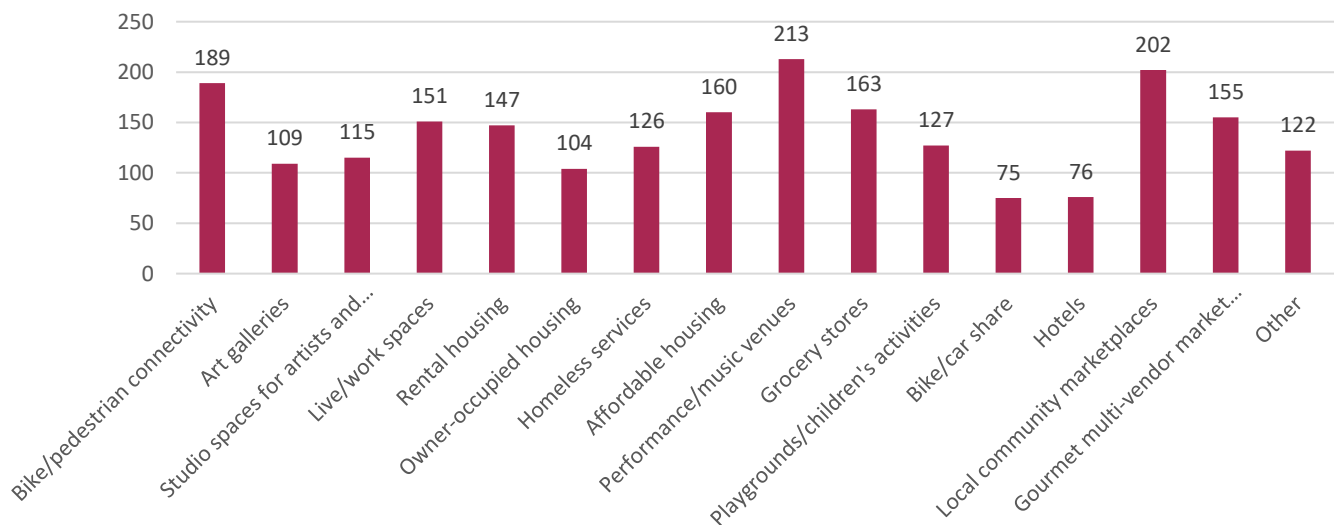
Figure 4.



2) *What do you wish there was more downtown?*

The top responses for what people want to see more of downtown include performance and music venues, local community marketplaces, and bike/pedestrian connectivity (see Figure 5). Most frequently used words for “other” include free parking; addressing homelessness; trees, plants, and greenery; and stores and services that support daily needs.

Figure 5. What do you wish there was more of downtown?



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

3) *What role should downtown play in the life of the city?*

Top descriptions for the role of downtown include the “heart, hub, or center” of the city; a place that fosters and caters to the community; a place for people to congregate or meet; and a place with events (shown in Figure 6).

Figure 6.



4) *Who are the future users of downtown that we should consider in updating the Plan?*

Users mentioned with the highest frequency include Santa Rosa residents; young people, professionals, and families; tourists; and people experiencing homelessness (shown in Figure 7).

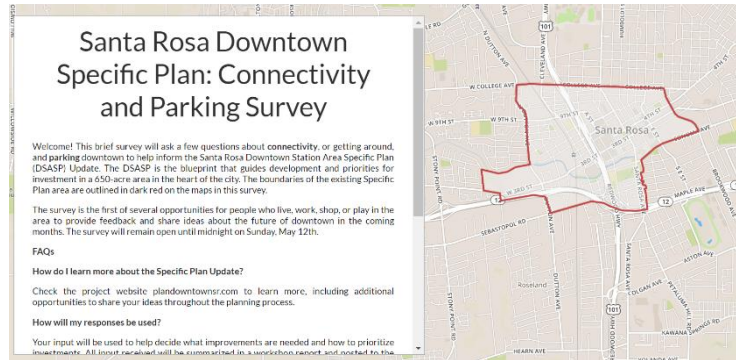
Figure 7.



PHASE I OUTREACH SUMMARY

Survey 2: Map-Based Connectivity and Parking Survey (May 2nd-May 12th)

The Connectivity and Parking Survey was an interactive, map-based online survey that asked participants how to make it easier and more attractive to get around downtown, and how to make better use of existing parking lots and garages. Survey questions included use of an interactive “draw” feature, open ended questions, and a ranking exercise.



The Connectivity and Parking Survey was offered in two parts for the community open house Connectivity and Mobility and Parking stations, and as a combined survey for those who could not attend the open houses. 66 people took the survey in total. The survey was promoted on a bilingual flyer distributed at Cinco de Mayo and was available on the website.

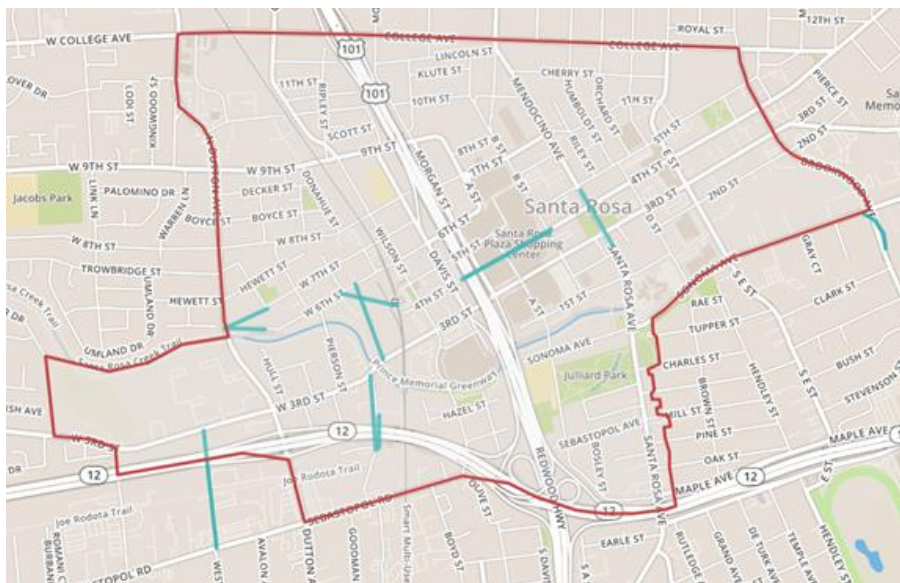
Audience reached: Primarily people ages 35-44

Findings (combined from open house and full survey results)

1) *Where do you want to see new roadways downtown? Draw them on the map.*

As shown in Figure 8, respondents drew desired new roadways through the Plaza Mall at Fourth Street; between the SMART Station and West Sixth Street; connecting West Sixth, West Seventh, and Dutton Ave; between Roberts Avenue through Route 12; and between West Avenue and West Third Street through Route 12. Another respondent drew a desired roadway through Old Courthouse Square despite the recent reunification.

Figure 8.



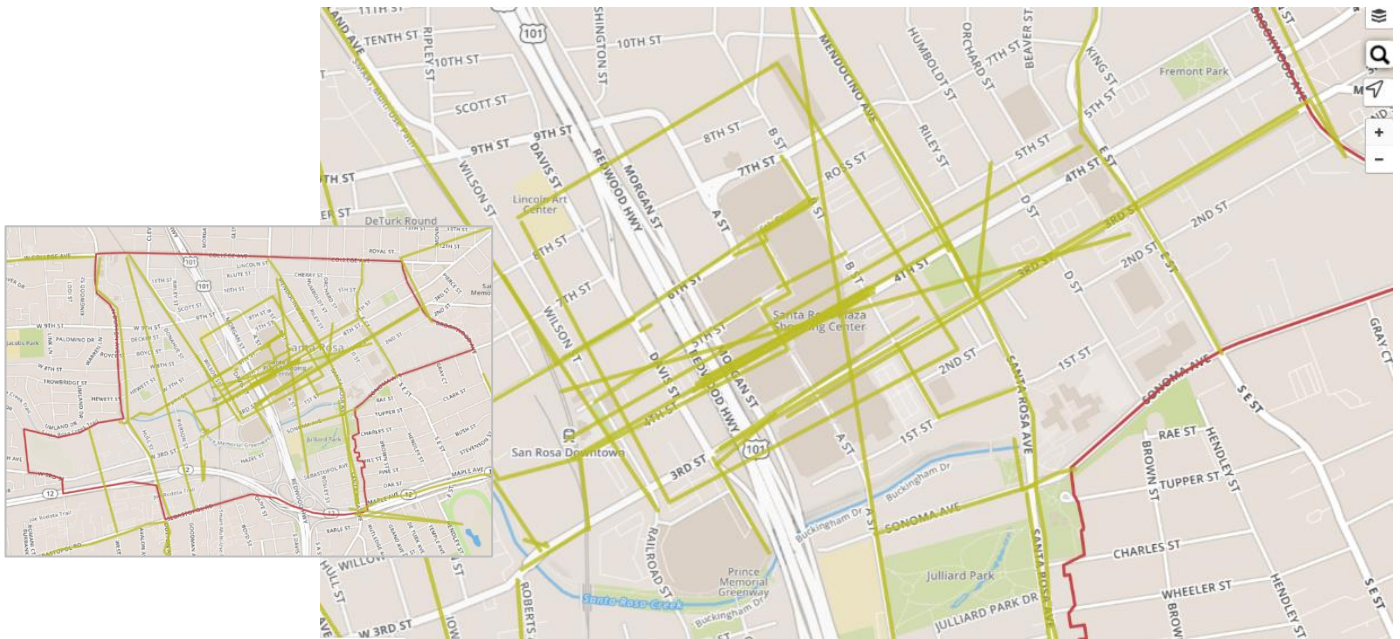
PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

2) *Where do you want to see new bike and pedestrian connections downtown? Draw them on the map.*

As shown in Figure 9, respondents drew many more desired new bike and pedestrian connections than roadways, suggesting that pedestrian infrastructure might be a higher priority. The most popular desired connection was through the Plaza Mall at Fourth Street to Railroad Square, followed by the Third Street underpass at Highway 101; Third Street between Morgan Avenue and Santa Rosa Avenue; and Sixth Street between Fifth Street and B Street.

Figure 9.



3) *Where are improvements needed? Draw them on the map, and explain why.*

As shown in Figure 10 on the next page, respondents identified the following areas as needing improvement, with most comments focused on the Railroad Square area, the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall, and Third Street.

- **Railroad Square:**

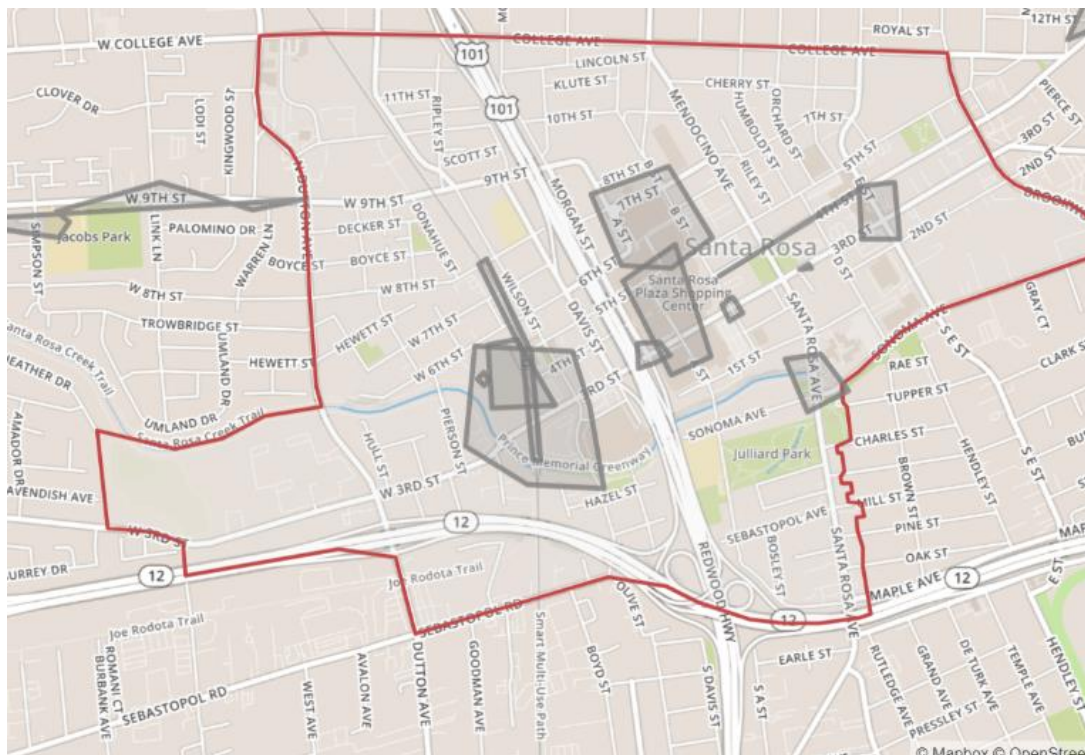
- Improved connections between SMART and Prince Memorial Greenway
- Connecting road between Third and Fifth Streets
- New multistory garage with bus stop and add right turn only to keep traffic out of West End;
- Improved bike/ped connection from SR Creek Trail to Eighth Street;
- Improved access to SR creek trail at Third street and Dutton needed;



OUTREACH SUMMARY

- **Connections at Fifth and Sixth Street:** connecting walkway, improved connections through the mall; wider sidewalks, more bike lanes, fewer vehicular lanes
- **Third and B Street:** southbound B needs dedicated right turn lane
- **Third street and Ross Street:** needs safer pedestrian crosswalk
- **Santa Rosa Plaza:** mall should be externally accessible/should have more of a storefront appearance; street trees/furniture/better lighting needed around the area.
- **Third Street and Morgan Street:** improve traffic light timing
- **“Instant” crosswalks on B Street:** some want more of these for safety; other oppose because it backs up traffic
- **Fourth Street between B and E Streets:** close to car traffic; more bike racks/bike share
- **Santa Rosa and Sonoma Ave:** better connection between the Prince Memorial Greenway and Sonoma Avenue bike lanes and Santa Rosa Avenue bike lanes.

Figure 10.



PHASE I

OUTREACH SUMMARY

4) *How would you rank these parking strategies?:*

Among parking management strategies, survey participants selected signage (17 counts for top 5 strategies); followed by residential and employee incentives, valet, and bike share the 2nd most selected for the top 5 (16 counts for each).

Most survey respondents rated signage and shared parking as their top priority parking management strategy (14% of all strategies rated as #1). Residential parking permits was the #2 strategy (21% of all strategies rated as #2).

The following were listed as a few reasons for prioritizing or not prioritizing each strategy:

- Shared parking would be good to fill City Hall parking lots unused on weekends.
- Needs to be more wayfinding. Off-street parking should be prioritized.
- Courthouse square is a great place for bikeshare.
- Not sure how bike share would take cars off the road
- There aren't enough loading zones downtown to support parking zones.
- Premium/metered zones- ADA discrimination, won't change car dependent culture.
- Parking for short stays in lower demand should be free.
- People respond best to incentives.
- Valet is a cool idea, but suspect it will increase general hourly parking rate.
- Cell phone app use while circling could be dangerous.
- Easy/real-time information is critical to low-frequency users.
- Residents already face high rents and other issues as it is.

5) *What other strategies should be considered?*

Garage suggestions:

- Free parking on top levels, at certain times, etc. Offer top level to people living in cars
- More garage security
- Make garage rates and lot rates the same.

Street parking suggestions:

- Roll back meters to 6pm; create more spots with time limits but without meters.
- Business parking lots could be rented to overnight parkers
- Reduce fines but increase prices for high-use periods for high-use areas.
- Provide more short term (30-min) parking
- More handicap/passenger pickup spots

Other suggestions:

- Validate parking with transit companies
- Shuttle service that serves SMART
- Fun modes of transportation, like the free horse carriage rides during the holidays
- Park and ride lot

Comprehensive comments are provided in the Appendix.

