

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION

September 24, 2020

PROJECT TITLE

Downtown Station Area Specific Plan and
Final Subsequent Environmental Impact
Report

APPLICANT

NA

ADDRESS/LOCATION

Various

PROPERTY OWNER

Various

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

Various

FILE NUMBER

ST18-002

APPLICATION DATE

NA

APPLICATION COMPLETION DATE

NA

REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

NA

FURTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Council action to certify the
Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and
approve the California Environmental
Quality Act Findings of Fact and
Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting
Program, and approve the Specific Plan
and General Plan Amendments

PROJECT SITE ZONING

Various

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION

Various

PROJECT PLANNER

Amy Lyle

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Approval to City Council

For Planning Commission Meeting of: September 24, 2020

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: CHAIR CISCO AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING
COMMISSION

FROM: AMY LYLE, SUPERVISING PLANNER
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN STATION AREA SPECIFIC PLAN AND FINAL
SUBSEQUENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

AGENDA ACTION: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS RECOMMENDING APPROVAL
TO THE CITY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission receive the presentation on the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, open a public hearing to receive public comment, and if appropriate, recommend to the City Council certification of the Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report; approval of the Mitigation and Monitoring Program and CEQA Findings of Fact; adoption of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan with recommended changes based on public comment; and approval of General Plan Amendments for consistency.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (DSASP) addresses land use, circulation, urban design, infrastructure, and environmental considerations for the approximately 720 acres surrounding the Downtown Station Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) site in the heart of Santa Rosa. The Plan Area is roughly bounded by College Avenue to the North, Sebastopol Road to the South, Santa Rosa Avenue and Brookwood Avenue to the East, and North Dutton Avenue and the Imwalle Gardens area to the West.

The Draft DSASP is an update to the 2007 DSASP intended to facilitate high density mixed use residential and commercial development in proximity to transit facilities, including the Downtown SMART rail station, the Downtown Transit Mall, and major bus routes. It involves updates to the regulatory framework that guides Downtown development, and it identifies improvements to public facilities needed to support the

growth envisioned. The main objectives of the Draft DSASP are to enhance the role of Downtown as an energetic commercial and cultural center; increase the number of residents and employees within a half mile of high frequency transit; strengthen sense of place by providing enhanced bicycle and pedestrian amenities and improving the public realm; and leverage City-owned properties to catalyze redevelopment that can help to address the city's unmet housing need.

On August 13, 2020, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) and Draft DSASP. Staff is returning to the Planning Commission to: provide responses to comments received at the August 13th meeting and during the public comment period of July 15, 2020, to August 31, 2020, regarding the Draft SEIR and Draft DSASP and to recommend that the Planning Commission receive input on topic areas related to the Final SEIR and Final DSASP; and, by resolutions, recommend City Council adoption of the DSASP, General Plan Amendments, and Final SEIR.

BACKGROUND

On October 9, 2007, the City Council adopted the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (2007 Specific Plan). The primary objective of the Specific Plan is to increase the number of residents and employees within walking distance (1/2 mile) of the SMART station through the intensification of land uses in the Plan area.

The EIR for the 2007 Specific Plan was certified in October 2007 (SCH #2006072104). That EIR described and disclosed the environmental effects associated with adoption of the existing Specific Plan. As evaluated in the 2007 EIR, the 2007 Specific Plan involved changes to land use and zoning regulations intended to foster a vibrant mix of housing, shopping, and jobs in proximity to transit, as well as a range of circulation and infrastructure improvements needed to support the densification and intensification of uses downtown.

On December 14, 2017, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) notified local governments in the Bay Area of the availability of grant funding for the Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant Program for up to \$800,000 (with a 12% local match). The PDA Grant Planning Program provides financial support for planning processes that seek to intensify land uses by increasing housing supply, including affordable housing, and jobs, boosting transit ridership, increasing walking, bicycling, carpooling and car-sharing, and retaining and expanding community assets.

On March 5, 2018, based on Council Policy 000-62, which authorizes the City Manager or his designee to submit grant applications, the City submitted an application to MTC for the PDA Planning Grant Program to amend the existing Specific Plan. The grant would allow the City to comprehensively address land use and transportation issues, as well as infrastructure needs, associated with intensification of housing development in the downtown.

On April 25, 2018, MTC approved a grant in the amount of \$800,000 to the City of Santa Rosa to update the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. A match of 12% (\$109,090) was required, which is be provided as in-kind staff time from the Planning and Economic Development Department's existing budget.

On November 27, 2018, the Council, by resolution, authorized the Mayor to sign a Professional Services Agreement with Dyett & Bhatia Urban and Regional Planners, a California corporation based in Oakland to assist the City in preparing the Specific Plan update.

On January 8, 2019, the City Council considered the scope and visioning of the Specific Plan update and adopted a Community Engagement Strategy.

On January 17, 2019 the DSASP was presented at a joint meeting of the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board to solicit feedback on the proposed scope and visioning.

On March 3, 2019, the first meeting of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was held, with the purpose of outlining the project's goals and objectives and developing a strategy and methodology to maximize community engagement.

On May 1 and May 4, 2019, Community Workshops numbers 1 and 2 were held at the Central Library Branch and Chop's Teen Center, respectively. The workshops represented a culmination of Phase I: Outreach and Opportunities.

On May 30, 2019, representatives of City departments, outside agencies, and other technical experts met for Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting number 1. The purpose of the meeting was to consider two potential project alternatives and develop additional items of consideration that should be tested toward preparation of a preferred alternative.

On June 20, 2019, at a joint meeting, the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board received a summary of Phase I and provided feedback regarding potential land use and circulation alternatives to be considered. On July 16, 2019, at a joint meeting, the Planning Commission and the Council received a summary of Phase I and provided feedback regarding potential land use and circulation alternatives to be considered.

On July 29, 2019, Community Workshop number 3 was held at the Central Library Branch. More than 120 attendees participated in a small-group exercise designed to gather feedback and preferences regarding the draft alternatives.

On October 2, 2019, representatives of City departments, outside agencies, and other technical experts met for Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting number 2. The purpose of the meeting was to review the draft preferred alternative concept prior to it being presented to decision makers.

On November 6 and 7, 2019, a Draft Preferred Plan Concept intended to guide the update to the Specific Plan was presented to the Cultural Heritage Board and the Design Review Board, respectively.

On December 3, 2019, the City Council reviewed for the Draft Preferred Plan Concept and expressed strong support.

On December 19, 2019, the City published an Initial Study and Notice of Preparation for the SEIR which initiated a 30-day review and comment period.

On January 15, 2020, the City held a public scoping meeting at the Central Library Branch to gather additional input.

On May 20, 2020, representatives of City departments, outside agencies, and other technical experts met for the TAC meeting number 3. The purpose of the meeting was to review the certain policy decisions for the Draft DSASP before public release.

On June 29, 2020, a virtual CAC meeting was held, with the purpose of reviewing and providing comments on the community engagement plan.

On July 15, 2020, the City released the Draft DSASP and Draft SEIR for public review, initiating a 45-day comment period that ran through August 31, 2020.

On July 23, 2020, the Draft DSASP was presented to the Waterways Advisory Committee.

On August 13, 2020, the Draft DSASP and Draft SEIR was presented to the Planning Commission.

On August 19, 2020, the Draft DSASP was presented a joint meeting of the Design Review and Cultural Heritage Boards.

Project Description

The project includes an update of the 2007 Downtown Station Area Specific Plan consisting of goals, policies, standards, guidelines, and diagrams to guide the future development of the Planning Area. The Draft DSASP will legally function as a Specific Plan for regulating land use and coordinating the provision of public services and infrastructure. The Draft DSASP serves the following purposes:

- Establish a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community and outlines steps to achieve this vision;
- Establish long-range development policies that will guide City departments, Planning Commission, and City Council decision-making;
- Provide a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with plan policies;

- Plan in a manner that meets future land needs based on the projected population and job growth;
- Allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the small-town character of the community, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, specific and master plans, and the Capital Improvement Program.

The Draft DSASP would replace the existing 2007 Specific Plan in all elements. The Draft DSASP would establish a planning and policy framework that would extend to horizon year 2040.

Objectives

The Draft DSASP provides the basis for the City's land use and development policy and represents the basic community values, ideals, and aspirations that will govern development and conservation. Specific objectives established for the project include the following:

- Enhance the role of Downtown Santa Rosa as an energetic commercial and cultural center with a range of housing, employment, retail and restaurant options in a vibrant, walkable environment;
- Facilitate the production of housing that provides a range of options for people of all incomes, abilities, and stages of life;
- Enhance connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users within in the Planning Area and to/from key destinations;
- Increase the number of residents and employees within one half mile of high frequency transit options;
- Strengthen sense of place by providing welcoming civic spaces, public art, and uses and design that promote day and nighttime vitality;
- Leverage City-owned properties in the Planning Area to catalyze redevelopment that can provide for the community's unmet housing needs within the Planning Area;
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through improved jobs-housing balance within the Planning Area.

Draft Station Area Specific Plan Contents

The Draft DSASP contains six chapters, with each presenting guiding goals and accompanying policies; design standards and guidelines; and recommendations for implementation. Each chapter is described below.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Introduction Chapter primarily includes background and context including the objectives and goals of the Specific Plan effort, an overview of the community engagement process, and a strong statement of vision and guiding principles that will assist in decision making throughout the life of the DSASP.

Chapter 2: Land Use

The Land Use Chapter provides a land use and development framework to guide the evolution of the Downtown Station Area. It includes land use designations and standards for development intensity, as well as policies to support economic vitality and the creation of new housing for all income levels, lifestyles, family types, and ages. Key topics in this chapter include existing land uses; development potential; a land use map; permitted uses and intensities; and policies to promote vitality, walkability, art and culture. The Draft DSASP includes three key moves to achieve land use goals and vision. These include:

New Land Use Designations: The Draft DSASP introduces four new land use designations including Core Mixed Use, Station Mixed Use, Maker Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Mixed Use. It also identifies “Opportunity Areas” where there are clusters of vacant and under-utilized land where change is foreseeable. Overall, the Draft DSASP reduces the number of downtown land use designations from 14 to 9 and provides descriptions intended to recognize and enhance the character of various distinct downtown districts.

Regulating Height and Density with Floor Area Ratio: In order to increase flexibility for developers, the Draft DSASP establishes a system that regulates Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in and around Opportunity Areas, replacing existing height and density regulations. Existing height and density regulations would remain in place for the majority of established residential neighborhoods within the Plan area. FAR is the ratio of total building space in relation to lot size. FAR does not directly limit the height or number of stories of a building; it simply controls the amount of building space allowed on a given lot. The Draft DSASP would calculate FAR as the total area of all floors in a building as measured to the outside surfaces of exterior walls or to the center line of common walls. Calculations exclude crawl spaces, structured parking, carports, breezeways, attics without floors, porches, balconies, terraces, below grade structures, and open space (common, public, or private). Additionally, for ceilings over 20 feet above floor height, the gross floor area of these areas would be doubled for the purpose of calculating floor area ratio, but not for the purpose of determining actual floor area. This is to ensure that double-height lobbies, ballrooms, and similar spaces are adequately accounted for in the FAR calculation.

Ground Floor Activation: A primary goal of the DSASP is to create a vibrant and safe environment for pedestrians and street frontages. The Draft DSASP requires that new development activate the ground floor of buildings in a flexible way with uses and/or design techniques that promote an enhanced pedestrian environment. Active ground floor uses include retail and service establishments, restaurants, cafes, bars and brew pubs, co-working spaces, art and craft studios, and other substantially similar uses on certain streets. Building design that optimizes pedestrian access; facade length and articulation; and window coverage will be required. The intent is to provide developers with a menu of options from which two or more items are selected. The overlay would apply at locations within mixed use areas where retail currently exists and where enhanced walkability and vitality is desired.

Chapter 3: Mobility

The Mobility Chapter articulates a strategy to improve connections to and within the Downtown Station Area, with an emphasis on improvements that support transportation choices beyond the car. These policies present a range of transportation improvements and programs to support downtown development and make it safe, easy, and convenient to get to and through the Downtown Station Area. Key topics in this chapter include the roadway network, the bicycle and pedestrian network, the transit network, and parking. The Mobility Chapter includes the following key moves:

Elimination of Minimum Parking Requirements: The Draft DSASP waives minimum parking requirements for development within the entire Downtown Station Area. This move increases the flexibility for developers to provide parking amounts in line with market demand and the lending requirements of financial institutions. This effectively “unbundles” parking relying on viable alternatives to the automobile. The parking policy structure includes a holistic parking management strategy that includes shared parking between adjacent land uses with different peak parking demand times; a residential parking permit program in existing neighborhoods; on-demand bike share and scooters; among other tools.

Parking Agreements to Incentivize Development: Unbundled parking also incentivizes participation in a City shared parking program, which makes surplus spaces available to residential and commercial developments. Most of the Downtown Station Area is within 1,000 feet (or a 5-minute walk) of a City-owned parking lot or garage; however, occupancy count data indicates that a significant portion of the spaces in several municipal lots and garages is available during peak midday hours. These spaces could be made available to nearby development, potentially offering significant savings that can assist with the financial feasibility of high-density and affordable residential developments. The Draft DSASP also contains a policy encouraging the redevelopment of City-owned surface lots

through a public-private partnership to further incentivize and promote housing in the Downtown Station Area.

East-West Connection Through the Mall: A bicycle and pedestrian connection along Fourth Street through the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall will strengthen and facilitate connectivity between Courthouse and Railroad Squares. This will be achieved by exploring different programs with key property owners to enhance the existing connection through the Mall, such as extending hours of operation, adding high-visibility wayfinding signage, and locating certain shops to activate the connection.

Transit Downtown Loop: A strengthened transit connection along Third Street will link Courthouse Square and the SMART station, with a circulator bus or trackless trolley, with enhanced CityBus service, or on-demand electric vehicle.

Chapter 4: Urban Design and Civic Spaces

The Urban Spaces and Civic Spaces Chapter provides urban design principles, policies, standards, and guidelines to guide development in a way that respects our existing heritage and creates a vibrant sense of place while providing development flexibility. Topics in this chapter include urban design principles, the public realm, site and building design, and historic resources. Key moves in this chapter include:

Urban Parks and Civic Spaces: The Draft DSASP creates a new designation called Civic Spaces. These are envisioned to be publicly accessible open spaces programmed or improved with green space and recreational amenities.

Design Guidelines for Active ground Floors and Transition Areas: The Draft DSASP provides standards and guidelines for building placement and transitions; building design; ground level design; environmental sustainability; and trees and landscaping. In general, transitional standards apply where development immediately abuts uses designated as Preservation Districts or Low Density Residential, Low-Medium Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential. The intent of transitional standards is to ensure that new development fits into existing neighborhoods with a cohesive urban form, to provide transition between higher-density and lower-density neighborhoods, and to facilitate new infill development with respect to neighboring properties. Setback and street frontage standards also ensure a continuously active and engaging street frontage in certain locations, supporting vibrancy, activity, and safety. The Draft DSASP establishes two different transition areas to ensure adequate daylight and neighborhood scale are achieved: Downtown Transition and Neighborhood Transition.

Historic Resources: The Draft DSASP recognizes historic resources as an important part of downtown character and City heritage and aims to integrate

designated historic resources while accommodating new development and intensification of uses. Policy language continues the existing protections of historic structures and preservation districts and includes incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic properties. In addition, the DSASP directs the City to conduct an historic survey for the Opportunity Areas to identify historic resources requiring designation and streamlining development for non-historic properties.

Chapter 5: Public Services and Sustainability

The Public Services and Sustainability Chapter's goals and policies emphasize careful stewardship of natural resources and public services to ensure that the Downtown Station Area evolves into an attractive place to live, work and play. Topics in this chapter include public services (schools, libraries, police/community safety, fire, and utilities); noise and hazardous materials; environmental hazards and emergency response; and clean air, water, and natural environment. Key moves to achieve these goals include:

Air and Noise Pollution: Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs) are generated from stationary and mobile sources in the Downtown Station Area, including Highway 101 and SR 12. The Draft DSASP requires any projects that locate sensitive receptors, such as residences, schools, daycares, or nursing and retirement homes within areas identified near TACs to include indoor air filtration systems or other design and landscaping techniques that reduce health impacts. Additionally, policies are included to reduce noise impacts from increased transportation noise, integrate noise attenuation in sensitive areas, establish feasible noise limits for mixed-use areas.

Chapter 6: Implementation

The Implementation Chapter summarizes the identified infrastructure needs, their costs, and potential funding sources. It also includes a discussion of major policies and actions that will ensure effective implementation. Key topic areas include regulatory implementation; phasing; infrastructure financing strategies; and periodic plan review. Key moves to achieve successful DSASP implementation include:

- **Phased Development and Implementation:** While ultimate phasing of development and necessary improvements within the Downtown Station Area will be based on market factors as well as costs and available financing, the Draft DSASP outlines a phased approach, including near-term actions to occur within the next five years, and intermediate/longer-term actions.
- **Funding Tools and Mechanisms:** It is anticipated that the cost of public infrastructure and service system improvements will be covered in part by the expansion of existing City General Fund revenues, which will increase as new

development contributes additional tax revenue. The remaining infrastructure obligations may require additional financing may be met through various mechanisms, most commonly impact fees, user fees, and community facilities districts (CFDs). For projects that are public priorities, tax increment financing may also be available in designated redevelopment areas.

ANALYSIS

The Draft Plan was released for public comment for 45 days between July 15 through August 31st. The following outreach meetings were conducted in addition to approximately 20 individual meetings with stakeholders.

- July 15- Virtual Public Open House
- July 23- Waterways Advisory Committee
- Aug 6- Downtown Subcommittee
- Aug 7- St Rose Neighborhood Walking Tour/Meeting
- Aug 17- Downtown Action Organization, Santa Rosa Metro Chamber
- Aug 17- Historic Neighborhood Community Meeting #1
- Aug 17- Historic Neighborhood Community Meeting #2
- Aug 18- Historic Neighborhood Community Meeting #3
- Aug 19- Joint Design Review and Cultural Heritage Board Meeting
- Aug 25- Disability Rights Center Meeting
- Sep 2- Spanish Virtual Public Open House
- Sep 3- Downtown Subcommittee

Approximately 35 comment letters and emails were submitted by multiple signatories, and form-letter submissions collected from the www.plandowntownsr.com website. City staff has evaluated all the feedback received and has prepared a list of recommended changes to the Draft DSASP, which are included in Attachment 1. All public comments are included in Attachment 3.

Many of these comments expressed support for the Draft DSASP. The majority of the public comment edits and additions are minor to clarify or correct information.

Based on these public comments staff has identified five key areas for heightened review by the Planning Commission. These include Creek Activation, Use of Floor Area Ratio, Parking, Homelessness Services, and policies focused on the St. Rose Neighborhood and Historic District.

Creek Activation Policies

The Santa Rosa Creek represents one of the key east-west connections throughout the Plan Area. The City has invested considerable resources to revitalize the creek and complete the Prince Memorial Greenway. However, public feedback indicates that public safety and maintenance along the Greenway are major concerns. Commenters

emphasized the need for specific standards applicable to properties along Santa Rosa Creek and its trails that require either uses or design features to activate the area. Other commenters cautioned requiring development to activate the creek and trails with uses and design techniques must be accompanied by features such as lighting and safety patrols.

The Waterways Advisory Committee discussed these issues at length during three separate meetings. They also requested more specific measures to be incorporated into the Draft DSASP to require activation of the creek and enhance security for pedestrians and bicyclists on the Prince Memorial Greenway.

Staff has reviewed these issues in detail and recommends the following amendments. First, three sites have been identified for activation requirements along the Northern bank of the Santa Rosa Creek as follows:

Area 1-SMART Site

- Access to creek via Prince Memorial Greenway
- Flat terrain adjacent to Greenway
- Not too many trees/foliage to block view of creek
- Access to Greenway via Pierson Street and proposed new local road



Area 2-Hyatt Regency Hotel

- Access to Greenway via Olive Street
- Flat terrain adjacent to Greenway
- Existing plaza along Greenway
- Access across creek via Orange Street bridge



Area 3 - Santa Rosa Avenue South of First Street

- Access to Greenway via Santa Rosa Avenue
- Flat terrain adjacent to Greenway
- Access across creek via a bridge
- Not too many trees/foliage to block view of creek



To activate these three locations, staff proposes the addition of the following policy, standards, and guidelines to the DSASP Parks and Public Places section of the Urban Design and Civic Spaces Chapter:

Policy UDCS-1.X Require that new development in the areas identified for creek and trail activation on Map UDCS-1 provide uses or design features that promote activity, heighten sense of security, and enhance the creek corridor as a public amenity.

DS-X New development in the areas identified for creek and trail activation on Map UDCS-1 shall provide at least one activating uses or at least two activating design features fronting the creek and trail as noted below.

<i>At least one of the following activating uses:</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>At least two of the following activating design features:</i>
1. A public space or plaza up to 5 percent of the total lot size with a minimum width of 30 feet		1. One piece of site furniture for each 100 linear feet of creek/trail frontage, which may include seating, informational kiosks, bicycle racks, and trash/recycling receptacles or outdoor fitness equipment
2. A café, restaurant, brew pub, retail space or substantially similar use		2. Integrated public art in the form of a mural, sculpture, light display, or other original work of a permanent nature as defined in the City Code

		3. Interpretive signage related to Santa Rosa Creek and its riparian habitat
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DS-X New buildings within 200 feet of the creek shall be constructed with at least one pedestrian entrance that faces the creek. Where stoop entrances to residential units are provided, these shall face the creek.

DS-X New development shall provide a pedestrian pathway of a minimum of 15' connecting the development to the creekside trail network every 600' along the river to enhance connectivity to the surrounding area.

DG-X As development occurs in the creek and trail activation areas shown on Map UDCCS-1, lighting should be provided consistent with the Santa Rosa Creek Design Guidelines.

DG-X Blank facades at ground level and above should be avoided. Windows, doors and transparent opening are encouraged to provide “eyes on the creek” and heighten sense of security. To the extent feasible, surface and structured parking should not front onto the creek or trail.

Location-Specific Land Use and FAR Designations

Comments from residents, property owners, and developers received during the public review period have revealed differing opinions regarding the appropriate land use and intensity standards for certain portions of the Downtown Station Area. Some developers and property owners desire a wider mix of land uses and more development intensity, while residents in adjacent neighborhoods are concerned about retaining community character and historic resources. Staff requests Planning Commission input on these land use and FAR changes, especially given sensitivities to adjacent residential neighborhoods and historic preservation districts. Staff is recommending targeted adjustments to a number of properties. The proposed amendments are outlined below.

B Street between Healdsburg Ave and Lincoln St

Staff proposes to designate properties along B Street between Healdsburg Avenue and Lincoln Street to “Core Mixed Use” land use designation. These properties are currently zoned Retail and Business Services. This amendment would slightly expand the range of permitted uses. Staff also recommends adding an FAR maximum base of 3.0 and the Neighborhood Transition standard which would require stepbacks and a daylight plane requirement. This area would continue to be subject to the regulations of the H Combining District reflecting their location within a preservation district.

B Street between 7th Street and Healdsburg Ave

To ensure that all new downtown land use designations have consistent FAR standards, staff is proposing an FAR maximum of 4.0 for this block. This FAR standard is consistent

with that proposed for the properties east, west, and south of the area, and considers the surrounding development, which is comprised of commercial structures.

West Third Street at Decoe Street

Staff is recommending the application of the Neighborhood Mixed Use designation to four parcels currently designated Retail and Business Services along West Third Street and Decoe Street. This would slightly expand the range of permitted uses and would be consistent with the land use designation of the property immediately west. In addition, staff is recommending adding a maximum base FAR of 2.0 to these parcels.

526 Sonoma Avenue

The change in the land use designation applicable to the parcel at 526 Sonoma Avenue from Medium Residential to Core Mixed Use would potentially allow for the development of non-residential uses on this property. This change would apply only to a single parcel immediately adjacent to two others fronting on Santa Rosa Avenue with the same designation, and as such the change would not be substantial. An application of a maximum base FAR of 4.0 would be applied to this parcel, and a Neighborhood transition standard would be applied to west facing parcel side.

St. Rose Historic Preservation District

Staff has met with residents of the St. Rose historic preservation district on a number of occasions and has received many written comments. Residents have expressed concerns over the proximity of high-density development, homelessness strategies, lack of parks, and support for historic preservation efforts.

The area of proposed high-density development is the “Opportunity Area” proposed adjacent to the St. Rose Preservation District along College Avenue. The Draft DSASP recognizes the value of the City’s historic neighborhoods and seeks to balance preservation with new development to promote a vibrancy and respecting our shared heritage. Any parcels within the Opportunity Area that are also within a Preservation District will continue to be subject to the Historic Combining District standards, including height limits and setbacks. Policy UDCS-2.2 maintains review procedures for projects that could potentially impact designated historic resources or preservation districts.

To respond to development concerns, City staff recommends application of the Neighborhood Transition to the northern boundary of the St. Rose Preservation District and the eastern-facing parcels owned by Church of the Incarnation on Cherry Street. These standards, which have already been reviewed by the public and are applied in other key locations and help to limit the potential for aesthetic impacts.

To further respond to resident concerns regarding lack of parks, staff is proposing the addition of a “potential urban park/civic place” in the St Rose District. The addition of this symbol is not binding. This provides direction to develop a park within the general area with flexibility on where and how this occurs.

Homelessness Services in the Downtown Station Area

Concerns have also been expressed about the potential concentration of social services specifically within the St. Rose neighborhood, including the Family Support Center on A Street, the Mission and St. Vincent DePaul dining hall on Davis Street, Caritas Village, and the pending County purchase of Hotel Azura property for supportive housing.

Homelessness is a growing concern for the City as whole and has been identified as one of the City Council's top priorities. Solutions require both immediate and long-term strategies, implemented in partnership with other public agencies, non-profit organizations, and community groups. The City of Santa Rosa is working with several partners to provide outreach, shelter, housing and services to persons experiencing homelessness or those who are at risk of becoming homeless, in alignment with its Housing First Strategy, in which individualized assistance is provided to people experiencing homelessness toward the goal of obtaining housing. Providing permanent and stable housing with supportive services is a proven and lasting solution for the most vulnerable and chronically homeless people, and the City has taken aggressive measures to increase this supply. The Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), operated by Catholic Charities, is a street outreach team working to engage persons experiencing homelessness into services and housing in collaboration with the Police Department's Downtown Enforcement Team (DET) and other service providers and community partners. Santa Rosa's Homeless Encampment Assistance Pilot (HEAP) program involves a multi-disciplinary team focused on a compassionate approach to address the health, safety and shelter needs of persons living in encampments and to ease the impacts to surrounding communities.

Policy LU-4.13 directs the City to continue to partner with County agencies, social service providers community organizations, and others to maintain existing emergency shelters and provide additional shelter capacity both in the Downtown Station Area and Citywide. The Draft DSASP seeks to complement other City initiatives including those in the General Plan and Housing Element, with strategies to promote access to housing at all income levels and address housing vulnerability. For example, the Draft DSASP includes the following goals and policies that address certain facets of homelessness:

- *LU-4: A diverse range of housing opportunities suitable for people of all incomes, abilities, and stages of life.*
- *LU-4.1 Increase the supply of residential units Downtown and expand the range of housing opportunities available*
- *LU-4.4 Promote the use of innovative building methods and materials and the development of alternative housing types, including co-housing, accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, single-room occupancy units, and smaller/micro units that are affordable by design*
- *LU-4.12 Facilitate opportunities to incorporate innovative design and program features into affordable housing developments, such as on-site health and human services, community gardens, car-sharing, and bike facilities. Support the development of projects that serve homeless and special needs populations.*

To address safety concerns associated with homelessness in the Downtown Station Area, the Draft DSASP includes the following policies:

- *PSS-1.3: Partner with the Downtown Community Benefit District, neighborhood associations, and other groups to prioritize safety in public spaces, including the Prince Memorial Greenway, the Downtown SMART Station, and the Downtown Transit Mall.*
- *PSS-1.4: Require that new development adequately addresses public safety considerations in building design and site planning.*
- *MOB 2-5: Extend the Prince Memorial Greenway eastward with the redevelopment of the Civic Center Complex and daylighting of underlying creeks.*
- *MOB 2-6: Design pedestrian and bicycle trails to be highly visible and accessible from creek-adjacent development:*
 - *Allow and encourage property owners to provide direct access to trails that abut their properties through the installation of access gates where fencing currently exists.*
 - *Any fencing along trails should be as low and visually permeable as possible, such as three-foot high split rail fencing.*
 - *Work with property owners and Sonoma County to address safety, security, and maintenance in selecting creek access points and designing fencing.*
- *MOB 2-7: Require new development adjacent to the creeks to employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and adhere to "eyes on the creek" development standards and design guidelines.*
- *MOB-6.6: Implement measures to improve the sense of safety and security in municipal parking garages and lots, including consistent lighting, security presence on-site, and regular maintenance.*

Staff suggests that the DSASP, or any Specific Plan, is not the best tool for implementing the nimble and responsive strategies necessary to effectively address homelessness and related issues on an ongoing basis. Direct service provision or new programs that are adequately responsive to the dynamic nature of homelessness are also required. City staff welcomes other suggestions from the Planning Commission on how the Draft DSASP can further address homelessness and public safety and on what other strategies should be considered as part of a citywide community service strategy implemented in collaboration with agency and community partners.

Parking

Today, there are over 5,000 public parking spaces in the downtown core, including on-street spaces, lots, and garages within the Downtown Station Area. The Draft DSASP articulates the value in this parking supply with a strategy that seeks to support business vitality while avoiding excessive supply that discourages transit ridership and disrupts the urban fabric.

The DSASP includes a proposal to remove minimum parking requirements for all development in the entire Downtown Station Area and allows for "unbundled" parking (Policy MOB-6.1). This does not mean that parking will not be built, but rather that the amount constructed will be dictated by lending requirements and market demand. It is anticipated that this policy shift will reduce the amount of parking constructed, reduce development costs, and result in savings for future residents who would no longer need to pay a portion of the cost of parking provided in the building where they live if they do not need a parking space.

The DSASP also includes policies encouraging shared parking agreements (policies MOB-6.2 and MOB-6.3). This would allow developers to utilize available surplus parking spaces in the vicinity of their project site and avoid unnecessary construction. This is feasible because most of the downtown core is within 1,000 feet (or a 5-minute walk) of a City-owned parking lot or garage. Based on occupancy counts collected in December 2019, nearly 40 percent of the spaces in municipal garages and 20 percent of the space in municipal lots is available during peak midday hours, which represents a significant opportunity. Therefore, the Draft DSASP parking strategy would actively promote this option as a way of catalyzing high-density residential development in the downtown core. Finally, the citywide progressive parking management will continue in parallel with DSASP implementation, in addition to other strategies recommended in the Draft DSASP (Policy MOB-6.5).

It is also important to note that parking minimums are proposed to be removed within the entire Downtown Station Area, including the residential neighborhoods. The elimination of the parking requirements in these areas may create issues within existing neighborhoods where parking capacity is already an issue. However, almost all residential areas are within half a mile from either the SMART station or the Downtown Transit Mall. The elimination of parking requirements throughout the entire Downtown Station Area is in line with the strategy to promote alternative modes of transportation and shifting the reliance from the automobile.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total DSASP budget is \$909,090. \$800,000 was awarded by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission PDA Grant with a \$109,090 local match funded by the City's general fund which covers City staff time.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A Subsequent Environmental Impact Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA). According to CEQA, lead agencies are required to consult with public agencies having jurisdiction over a Proposed Project, and to provide the general public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft SEIR. The Draft SEIR was made available for public review on July 15, 2020. The CEQA-mandated public comment period ended on August 31, 2020. The Draft SEIR

identified significant impacts associated with the Proposed Project and examined alternatives and recommended mitigation measures that could avoid or reduce potential impacts. The Draft SEIR was distributed to local and State responsible and trustee agencies and the general public was advised of the availability of the Draft SEIR through public notice published in the local newspaper and on the City website and the project website as required by law.

On Thursday August 13, 2020, a public hearing was held on the Draft SEIR during the official public review period. The meeting was held virtually, consistent with Governor's Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m. A total of one comment letter on the SEIR was received during the 45-day comment period on August 29, 2020. While several comments on the Draft DSASP were received, overall the edits and additions to the Draft DSASP, together with the revisions to the Draft SEIR, merely clarify and make insignificant changes to an adequate SEIR. As a result of these changes, there would be no new significant or substantially more severe impacts or new mitigation measures that were not already included in the Draft SEIR, and consequently recirculation of the Draft SEIR is not required. The Final Environmental Impact Report, Draft SEIR and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, will collectively constitute the Final SEIR if the Santa Rosa City Council certifies it as adequate and complete under CEQA.

NOTIFICATION

On July 15, 2020, a Notice of Availability of EIR was published in an 1/8-page advertisement in the Press Democrat.

On August 1, 2020, a Notice of Public Hearing was published in an 1/8-page advertisement in the Press Democrat.

On September 13, 2020, a Notice of Public Hearing was published in an 1/8-page advertisement in the Press Democrat.

ATTACHMENTS

Project Website Link: <https://www.plandowntownsr.com/draft-plan>

(Links to all project documents including the Draft Downtown Station Area Specific Plan and the Draft and Final SEIRs)

ATTACHMENT 1- DSASP Amendments and Maps

ATTACHMENT 2- General Plan Text and Figure Amendments

ATTACHMENT 3- Public Comments

Resolution 1- Recommending Adoption of the Findings of Fact, Final Subsequent
Environmental Impact Report, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting
Program

EXHIBIT A: Findings of Fact

EXHIBIT B: Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program

Resolution 2- Recommending Adoption of the General Plan Amendments and the
Downtown Station Area Specific Plan

EXHIBIT A: DSASP Amendments and Maps (as seen in Attachment 1)

EXHIBIT B: General Plan Text and Figure Amendments

CONTACT

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