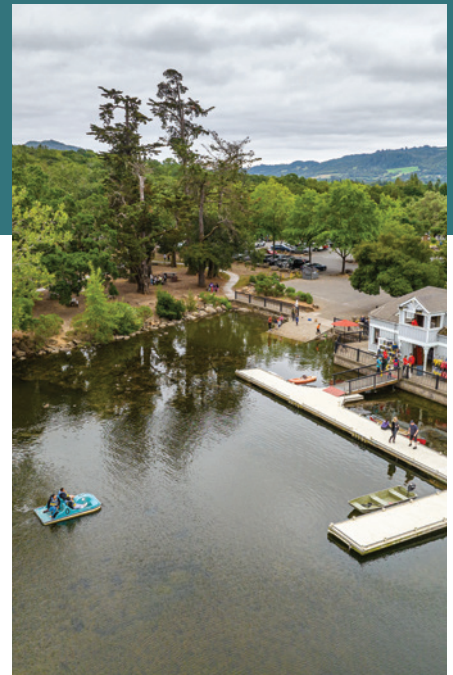


Creating Economic Growth, Vitality, and Fiscal Stability for Santa Rosa



Economic Development Strategy



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Message from the City Manager:



I am pleased to unveil the City of Santa Rosa's Economic Development Strategic Plan. This comprehensive guide has been crafted to foster sustainable economic growth, community vitality, and ensure financial resilience. It serves as an invitation for new enterprises to join our thriving community and contribute to our collective prosperity.

The vision is rooted in the commitment to long-term economic success, driving our mission towards equitable and sustainable development. This plan is harmoniously integrated with the Aligned City's General Plan, offering a dynamic strategy to revitalize Santa Rosa's economic fabric.

The formulation of this plan was a holistic process involving a broad spectrum of stakeholders from both the local and regional arenas. This collaborative dialogue has provided us with a deeper understanding of our community's needs and ambitions, leading to a comprehensive and forward-thinking strategy. As the heart of Sonoma County, we recognize the importance of uniting around common economic objectives and maintaining fiscal health. This plan is our roadmap to meet these challenges head-on and extends an inviting hand to prospective businesses considering Santa Rosa as their new base.

Central to our strategy are three foundational pillars: Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion; Economic Vibrancy and Resiliency; and Community Investment. While each pillar is crucial, we place a special emphasis on attracting new businesses, nurturing an ecosystem that supports innovation, and propelling our local economy forward.

However, our measure of success extends beyond traditional economic indicators. It will be reflective in the vibrancy of our community, the well-being of our residents, the robustness of our partners, and the financial health of Santa Rosa. As we set forth on this path, we are united by a common goal: to forge a prosperous and resilient future, brimming with opportunities for our community.

Sincerely,



Maraskeshia Smith
City Manager
City of Santa Rosa

Acknowledgements

Santa Rosa City Council:

Mayor Natalie Rogers - District 7

Vice Mayor Mark Stapp - District 2

Councilmember Eddie Alvarez - District 1

Councilmember Dianna McDonald - District 3

Councilmember Victoria Fleming - District 4

Councilmember Chris Rogers - District 5

Councilmember Jeff Okrepkie - District 6

Partners

Sonoma County Economic Development Board Staff

Sonoma County Tourism

Santa Rosa Metro Chamber

Visit Santa Rosa



Economic Development Subcommittee

Councilmember Eddie Alvarez District 1

Councilmember Chris Rogers District 5

Councilmember Jeff Okrepkie District 6

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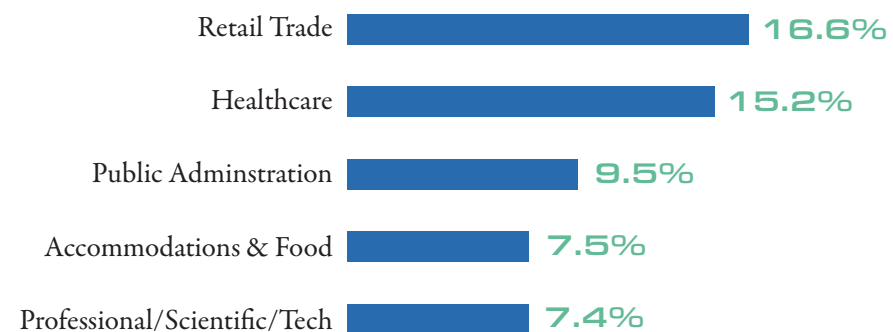


Demographics

Santa Rosa is the fifth-largest city in the San Francisco North Bay Area and the largest city in Sonoma County. It is home to roughly one-third of Sonoma County residents and businesses. The City has the North Bay's largest concentration of office, industrial, and retail space, making it the economic center of the region and the default destination for healthcare and government services.

8,416 Businesses

Top Industries by Employment



Unemployment Rate



Labor Force Participation Rate



Age 65+



Community life in Santa Rosa

Residents and visitors alike can enjoy diverse entertainment, events, culinary delights, and natural wonders. Santa Rosa is the home of Charlie Brown and Snoopy at the Charles M. Schulz Museum and Snoopy's Home Ice, the place where Wine Country meets Beer City, the home and gardens of world-renowned horticulturist Luther Burbank, and offers not only a vibrant, urban downtown atmosphere full of culinary delights but also thousands of acres of rolling hills, seasonal streams, Spring Lake, meadows and woodlands for hiking, biking, fishing, and trail riding.

178,026 People



35.9%

of residents are of Hispanic origin



38.8

Median age



\$47,820

Per capita income



23.2%

of residents have a Bachelor's degree



37%



Bachelor's/
Graduate
Degree

31.1%



Some
College

15.9%



Only High
School

12.9%



< High
School



\$761,268

Median home sales price



The Vision

In pursuit of economic prosperity, the City envisions a future guided by principles of innovation, sustainability and inclusivity. Our strategic focus centers on leveraging these pillars to foster growth, attract investment, and cultivate a vibrant business environment that enriches our community

1. Business Growth

We recognize that an environment conducive to business growth and attraction is built on clear communication and supportive policies. By aligning operational procedures and strategies, identifying and optimizing land opportunities, fostering collaboration, and actively promoting our region as an attractive business destination, we aspire to establish a flourishing ecosystem for existing enterprises while extending a warm invitation to new ventures.

2. Economic Vibrancy and Resiliency

The City's goal is to sustain a vibrant, livable environment while understanding the paramount importance of resiliency. It will do this by investing in and creating innovative infrastructure, supporting tourism, and identifying and supporting redevelopment opportunities.

3. Community Investment

By investing in and supporting our diverse community, we aim to understand and fortify against the economic challenges of today and tomorrow.



1

Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion:

Large Business Attraction

Create a business-friendly, sustainable, and strong economy by attracting new businesses and expanding, retaining, and supporting existing businesses



Goals:

- Create fiscal stability for the City, businesses and property owners
- Support a thriving workforce
- Establish Santa Rosa as a business-friendly city
- Develop a communication strategy for the promotion of services and interactions with business owners
- Increase the number of medium and large businesses in key industries
- Create a business retention and expansion strategy for existing industry
- Conduct a business gap analysis, existing cluster industry analysis, and key emerging industry sectors analysis
- Identify key opportunities and land development sites and work with outside partners to prepare and market
- Align policies, procedures, and standards with plans to encourage mixed-use and innovative uses of commercial properties
- Establish site visits and open communication with businesses
- Strengthen and support partnerships with educational organizations and business associations to support workforce development needs
- Develop incentive packages to attract identified key industries
- Create a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan to attract identified key industries
- Create a streamlined re-tenanting program with clear pathways for re-tenanting retail, restaurant, or office spaces
- Align efforts with Sonoma County to create a tandem approach to attraction efforts

Actions:

- Create a virtual one-stop-shop online portal of virtual tools to start or expand a business, customized to meet diverse cultural and language needs, building from partnerships with the County, State, and Sonoma Small Business Development Center.
- Obtain software platforms for tracking and reliable demographics

Entrepreneurship and Small Business

Actively support and empower the existing small business ecosystem while establishing clear pathways to enable successful and fulfilling small business ownership

Goals:

- Support and grow existing small business
- Support and promote opportunities for entrepreneurship
- Understand and remove barriers for immigrant, BIPOC and women-owned business

Actions:

- Strengthen support for entrepreneurship through incubator organizations
- Identify and promote available funding sources for small business owners
- Create Ombudsman program for technical assistance and process support
- Partner and connect students for training opportunities, mentoring and work force development upskilling
- Meet with Immigrant, BIPOC and women-owned businesses to identify barriers and build pathways for assistance and support
- Analyze opportunities to support home-based and work from home entrepreneur trends



Business Attraction, Retention and Expansion Measurements:

- % change in the number of business licenses, compared to base year
- % change in startups
- % change in the number of businesses in key industries
- % commercial property vacancy rate
- Website analytics for virtual portal
- Monetary tracking for incentive packages
- # of site-visits
- % business demographics
- Track BIPOC and women-owned business support through an annual survey



2

Economic Vibrancy and Resiliency

Create a vibrant and livable City by promoting and creating innovative infrastructure in support of economic accelerators

Goals:

- Bolster Downtown housing, commercial and retail business
- Increase revenue to businesses and the City
- Support a thriving economy
- Support walkable neighborhoods
- Promote and enhance climate action goals and sustainability principles

Actions:

- Expand Downtown Asset Strategy activating city-owned property for economic development purposes, to include housing and housing supportive amenities with an emphasis on sustainability and walkable neighborhoods
- Establish an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District in Downtown
- Ensure General Plan and Economic Development Strategic Plan alignment
- Review and amend zoning code where needed to align with economic strategies in support of development initiatives and opportunities
- Conduct a downtown infill housing economic and fiscal impact study

- Create an Economic development fund to conduct feasibility studies
- Explore, develop, and implement sports and entertainment as an economic driver for both residents and tourists
- Continue to assess City Hall Complex redevelopment opportunities
- Implement the public art program strategic plan
- Support community events and activities through direct programming and grants
- Champion sustainability and the City's Climate Action Plan

Measurements:

- Identification of potential business opportunities
- Implementation of/or monetary amount for financial fund for feasibility areas
- % of empty store front/office space in downtown compared to Year 1
- Housing construction in progress on surplus sites/ number of available sites
- Feasibility and fiscal impact studies complete, and business opportunities defined



3

Community Investment

Invest in and support our diverse community to fortify against current and future economic challenges

Goals:

- Increase economic opportunity through upstream investment
- Support diverse needs of all districts
- Address childhood poverty
- Strengthen early childhood education sector

Actions:

- Coordinate annual district-based surveys to solicit community input at a neighborhood level from all seven districts
- Advance childcare support programs
- Identify and capitalize on funding opportunities to expand upstream investment pilot programs
- Use ARPA funds to continue pilot programs addressing childhood poverty and increase advanced education opportunities – continue implementation through expenditure of funds by end of 2024

Measurements:

- Report progress on all funded programs and implementation through online dashboards
- # of programs funded, dollars provided, # of individuals impacted
- Report progress from annual surveys, year over year, through dashboards





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