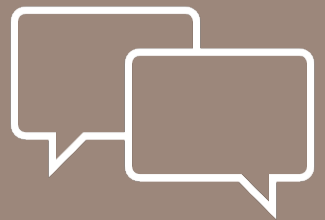




# General Plan 2050 and Environmental Impact Report

PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING | Thursday, April 24, 2025





# Agenda

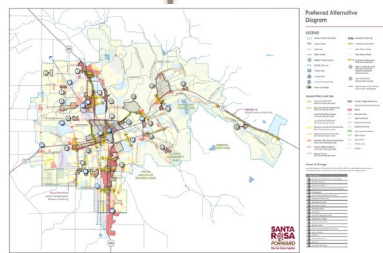
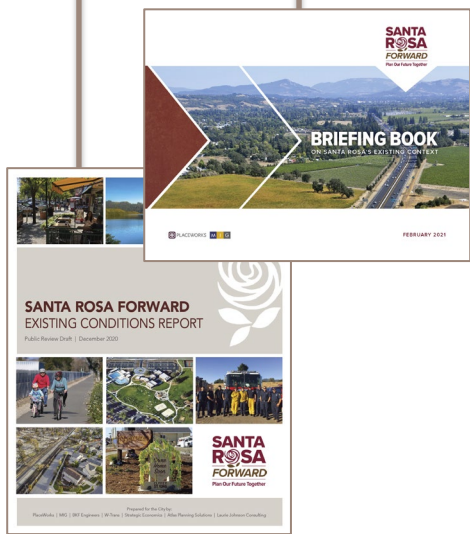
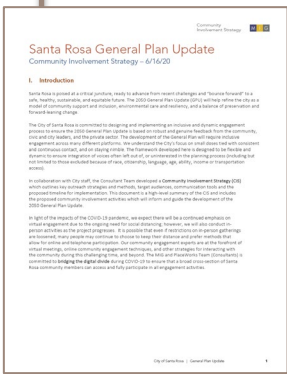
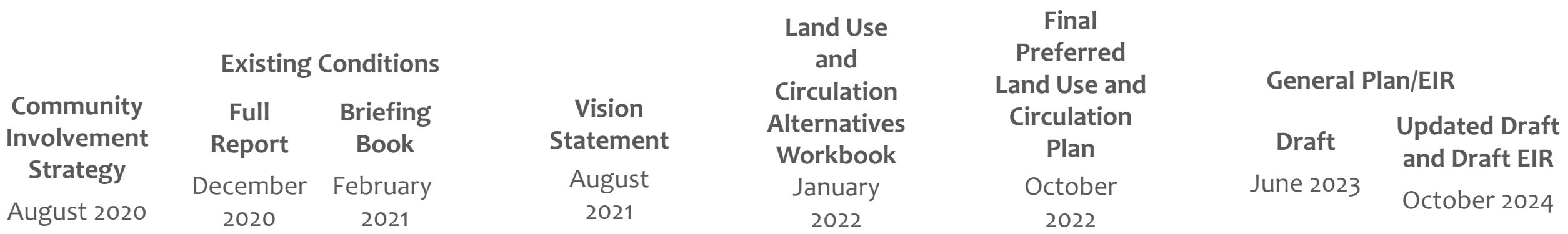
- I. General Plan 2050
  - I. Plan Process
  - II. Community Engagement
  - III. General Plan Key Features
  - IV. Proposed Revisions
  - V. Specific Plan Amendments
- II. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy
- III. Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- IV. Wrap Up

# General Plan 2050



# General Plan 2050 Process

# Milestone Documents

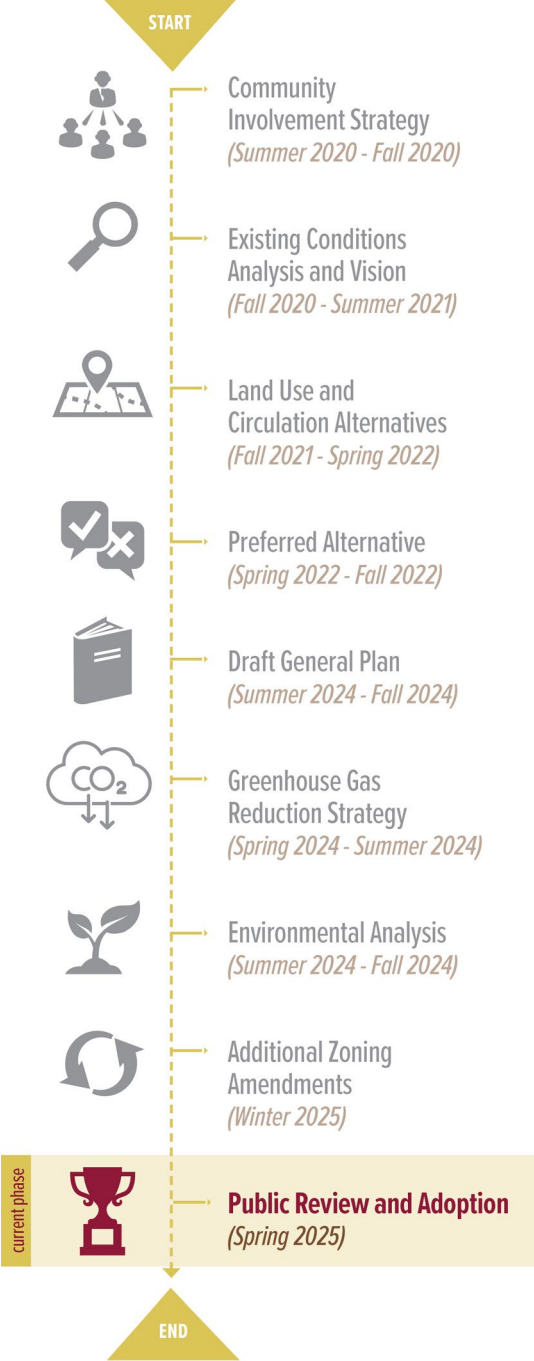


# General Plan Process

Final stage of this multi-year effort



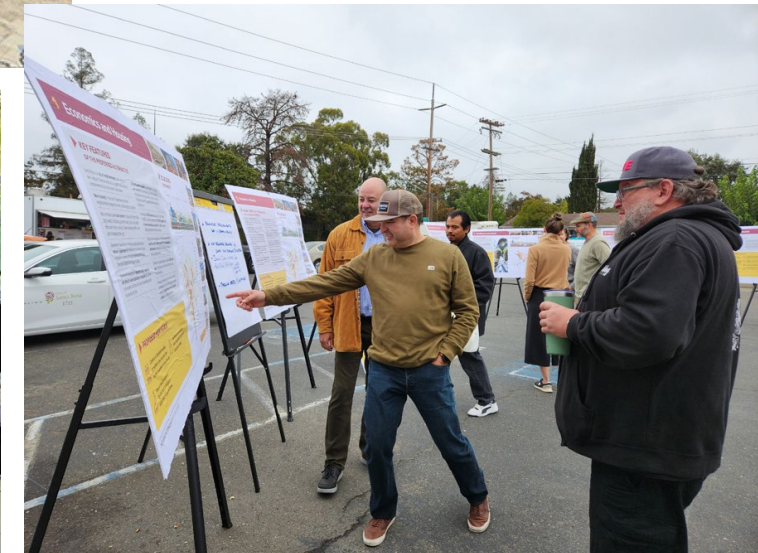
## Project Timeline



# General Plan 2050 Community Engagement

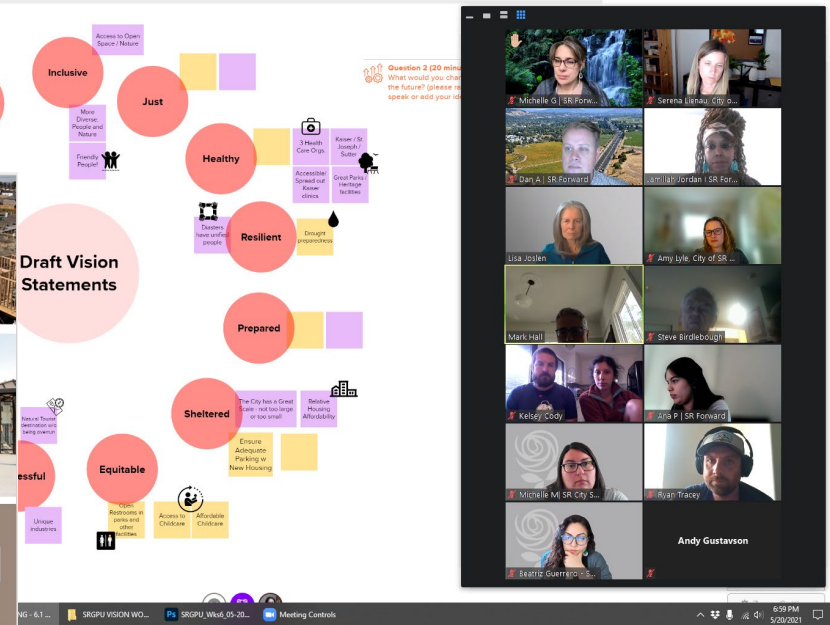
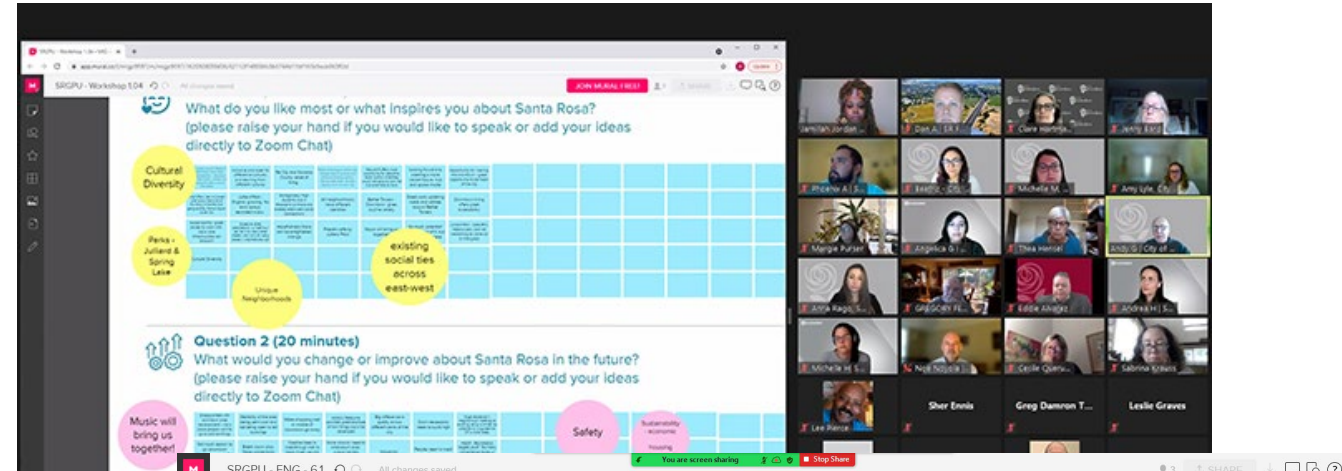
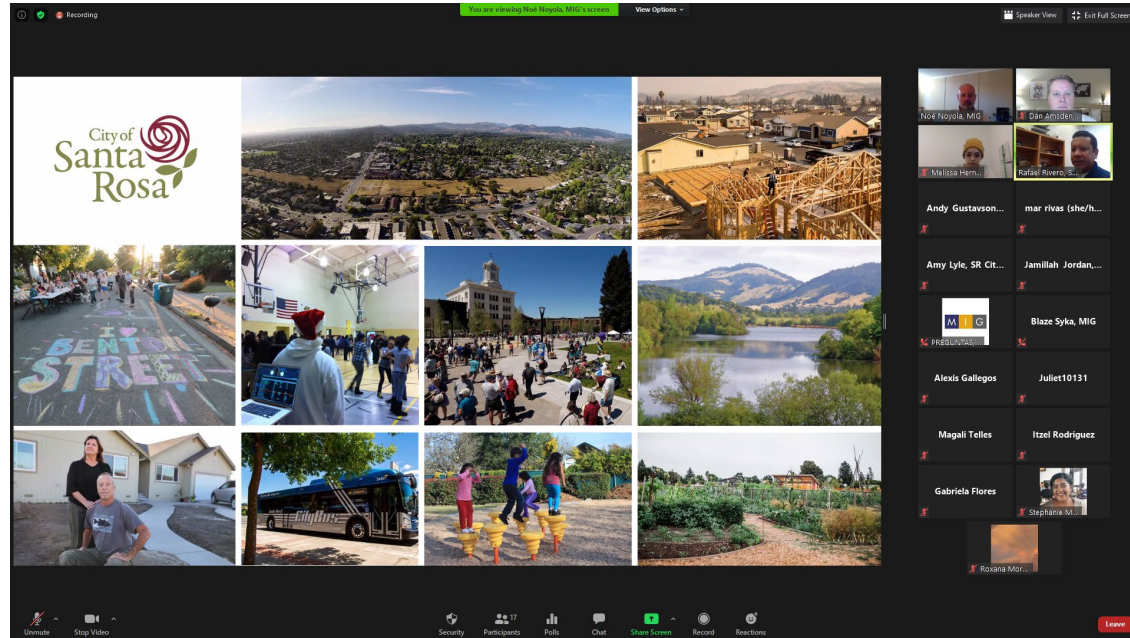


# 11 In-Person Open Houses/Workshops





# 12 Virtual Open Houses/Workshops





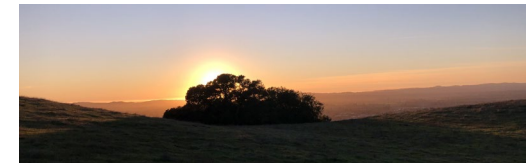
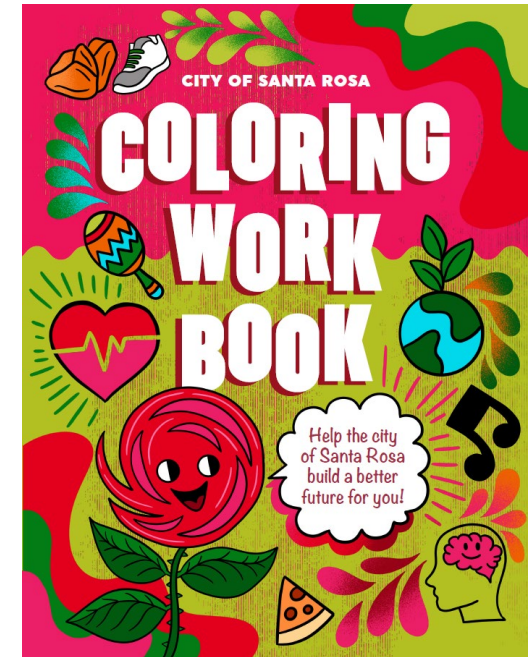
# 19 Pop Up Events





# Youth Engagement

- Youth Voice Contest
- General Plan based project with Montgomery High School students
- Engagement through Public Art
  - Public Art Installations
  - Workshops
  - Music-Based Workshops
  - Coloring Book



# General Plan

## Key Features



# Key Components

- Community Vision for the Future
- Areas of Change
- Equity Priority Areas
- Equity Priority Populations



# General Plan Objectives

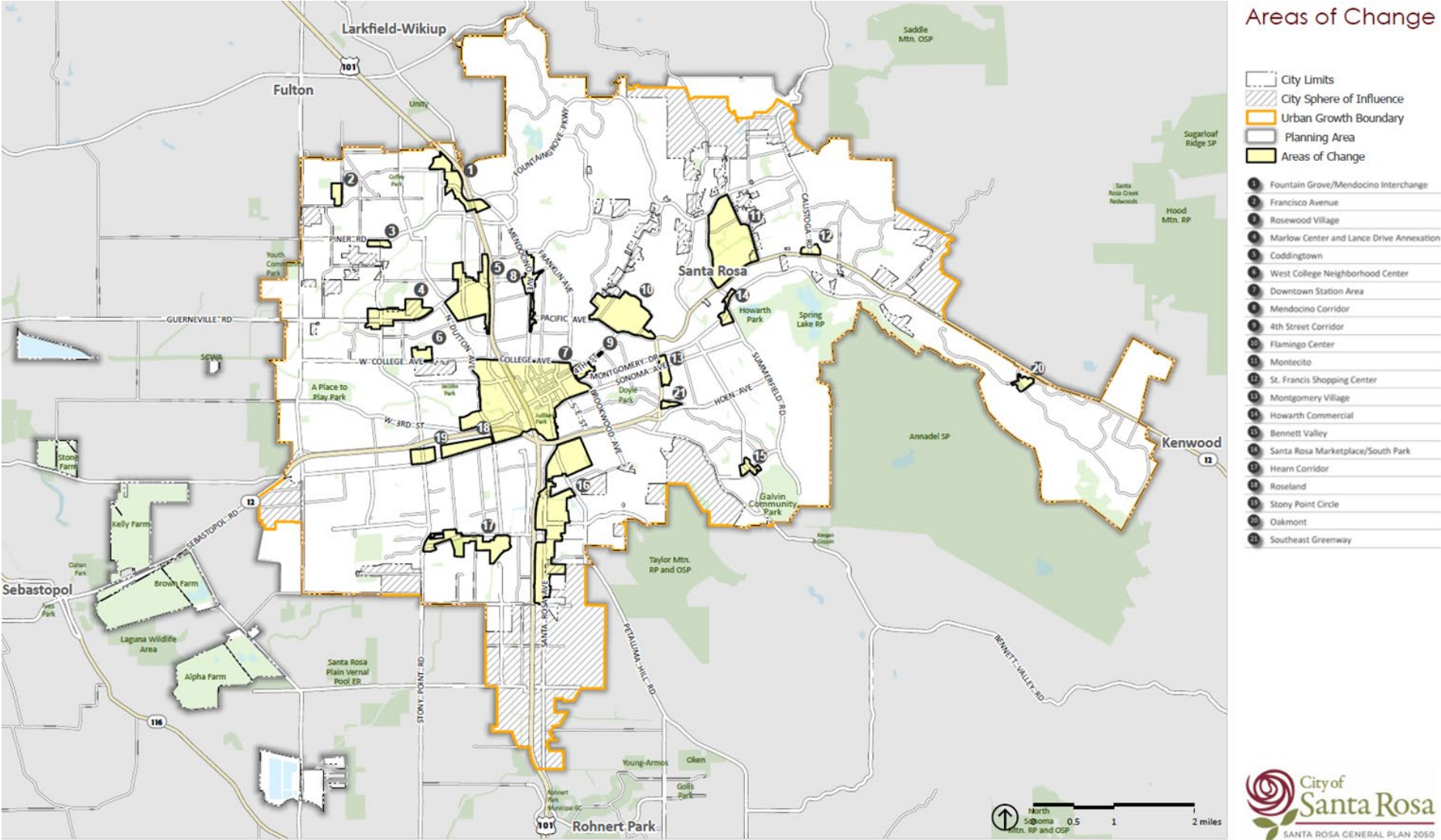
- Implement the **City's Vision**
- Ensure compliance with **changes in State Law**
- Accommodate a **level of growth over the next 2.5 decades that considers growth and conservation**
- Create a city with an **increasingly dense urban core**
- Focus development in the **21 Areas of Change** and create **complete neighborhoods**
- Provide **a range of housing types to meet the needs of all residents**, including multi-family structures, “missing middle” units, and single-family residences with accessory dwelling units
- Create a **cross-sector approach to integrating greenhouse gas reduction into all parts of the General Plan**
- Create new opportunities for a **vital, thriving downtown and entertainment district**
- Preserve **community character and environmental, historic, and cultural resources**, as the city develops and becomes denser



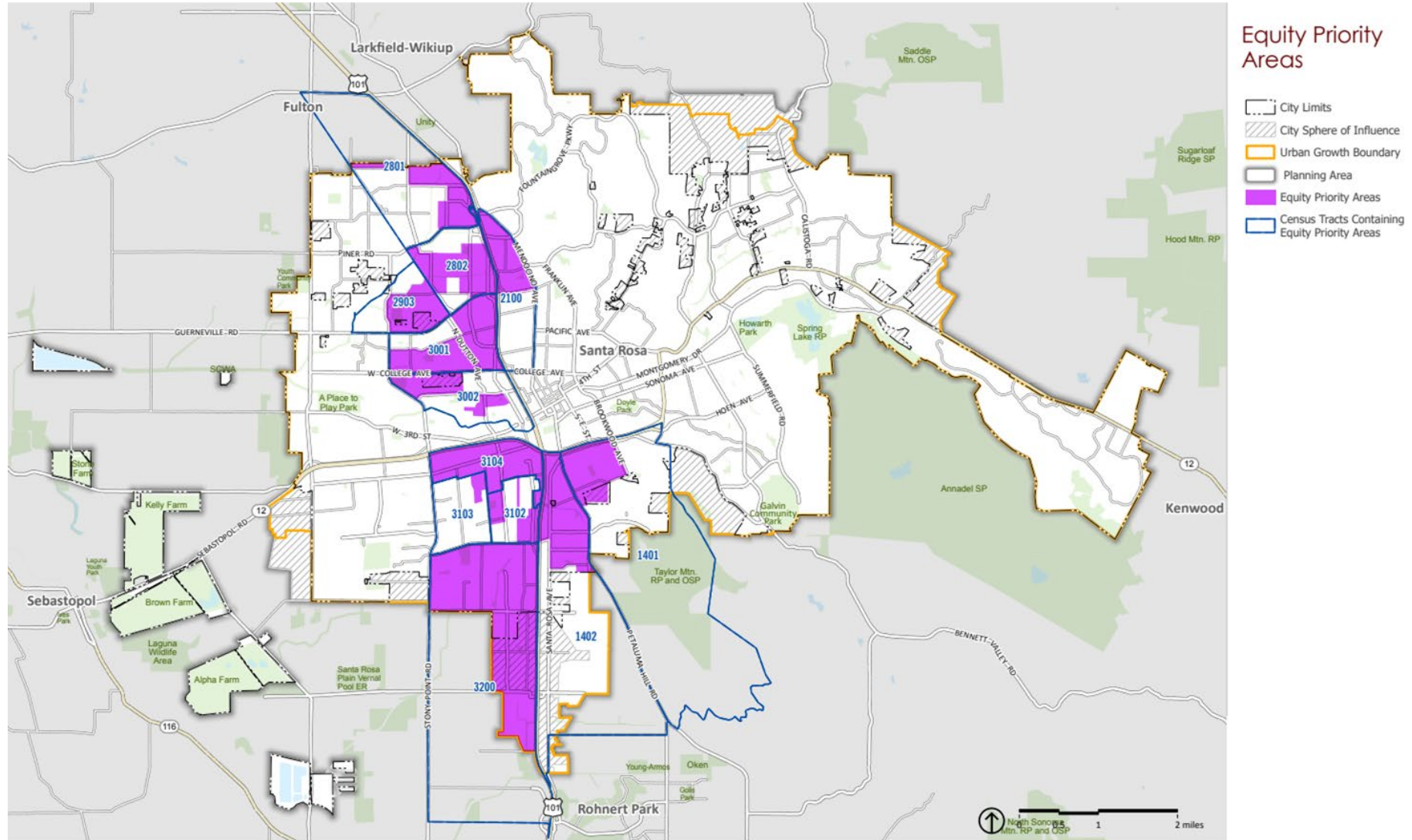
# General Plan Chapters

1. Introduction
  2. Land Use and Economic Development
  3. Circulation, Open Space, Conservation and GHG Reduction
  4. Urban Design, Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources, Historic Preservation, and Art and Culture
  5. Safety, Climate Resilience, Noise, Public Services and Facilities
  6. Health, Equity, Environmental Justice and Parks
  7. Housing (adopted in February 2023)
  8. Glossary
- (the 8 required elements are underlined)

# Areas of Change

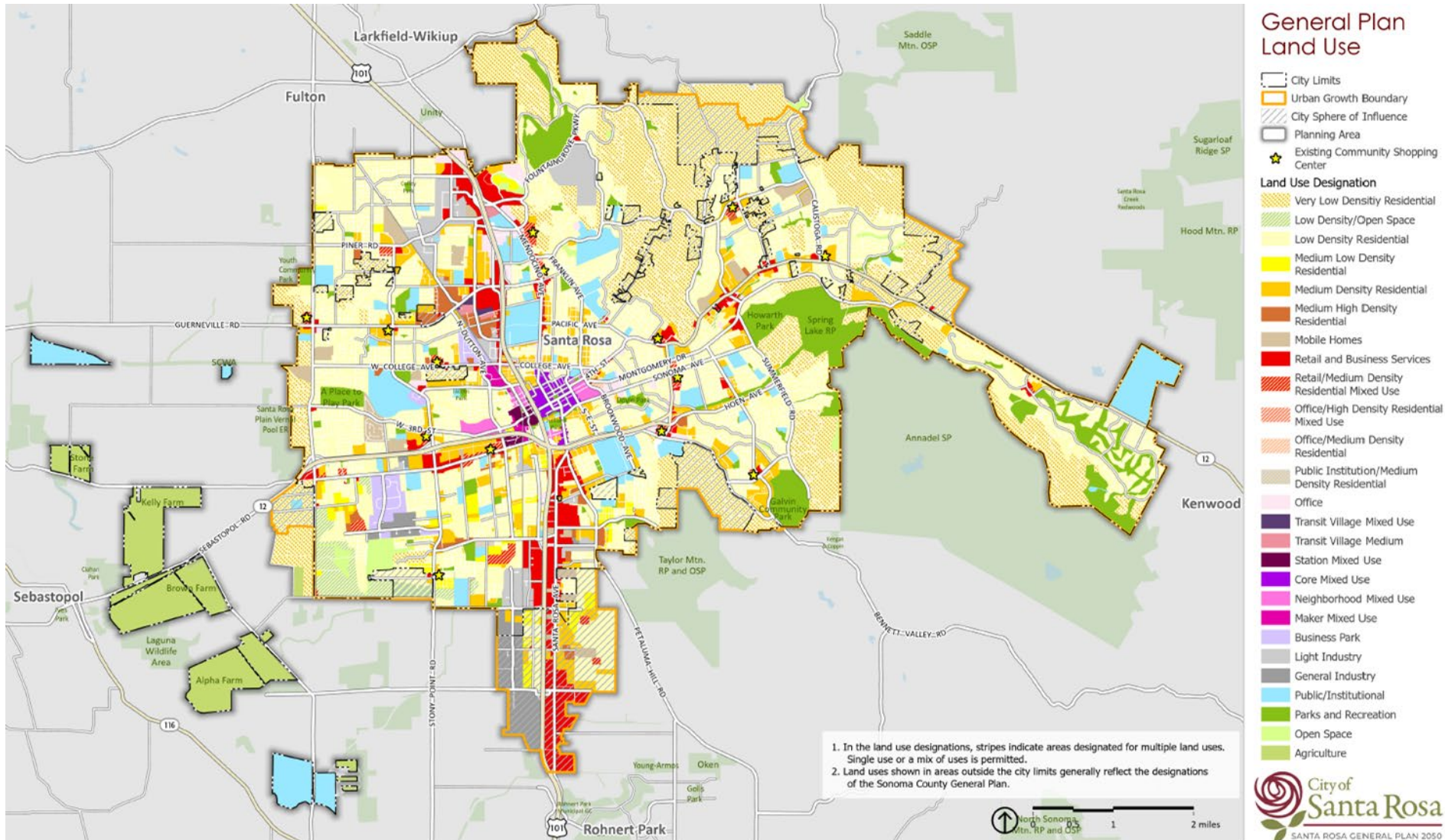


# Equity Priority Areas



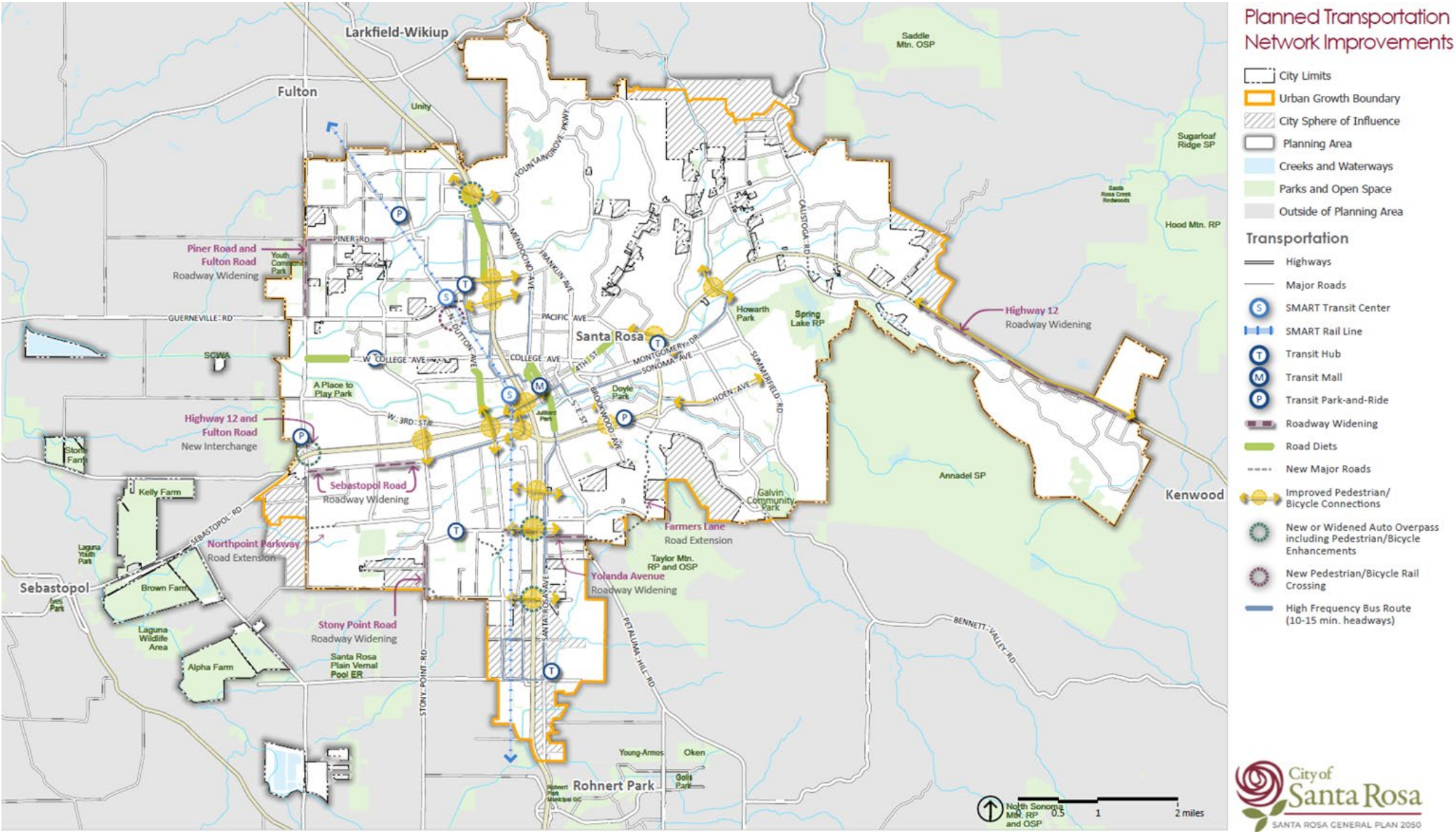


# General Plan 2050 Land Use Diagram





# Planned Transportation Network Improvements



# Revisions Made in Response to Comments



# Response to Planning Commission Comments

- Simplified chapter introductions to **remove repetition** of the key attributes of the Community Vision addressed by each element
- Refined references to **Areas of Change, Equity Priority Areas, and Equity Priority Populations**
  - Clarified language to ensure reference further prioritizing these areas/populations, as appropriate

# Response to Agency Comments

- Revised **Regional Fault Map** to be consistent with map released February 2024
- Refined language in **Mitigating Policies** and Actions pertaining to the protection of Biological Resources
- Clarified that site specific **Biological Resource Assessments** would be prepared for specific projects, as applicable, to protect biological resources

# Response to Public Comments

- **Citywide significance** level for residential Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) can be **addressed at the project level**
- Clarified some of the **road widenings address Evacuation needs**
- **Urban Agriculture Ordinance** –Revised “consider” to “develop”, to explicitly direct preparation of the ordinance



# Response to Tribal Comments

- Refined the **Tribal Acknowledgement**
- Emphasized the **Tribes' role of protecting resources** within their **ancestral tribal areas**
- Refined **Mitigating Actions** addressing **Tribal Cultural Resources**
- Confirmed **City will work with the Tribes to develop internal policy** to protect tribal cultural resources in the city.

# Response to CAL FIRE Comments

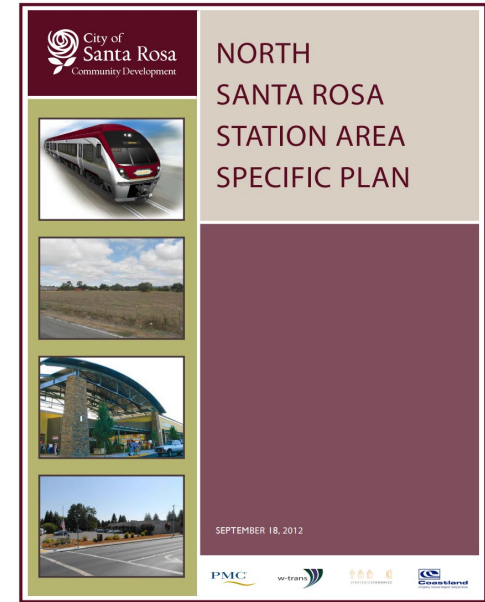
- Added language to assure long-term maintenance of **community fire breaks and public and private road clearance**
- Added definition for **Evacuation Constrained Parcels**
- Replaced Cal FIRE map in the General Plan, **showing moderate, high and very high fire hazard severity zones**
- **Board of Forestry and Fire Protection acceptance April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025**



# General Plan Consistency Specific Plan Amendments

# Specific Plan Amendments

- Updated the **North Station Area Specific Plan** and **Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan** to be consistent with the General Plan 2050
- Eliminated references to proposed local streets in the Plans' circulation/mobility figures and text



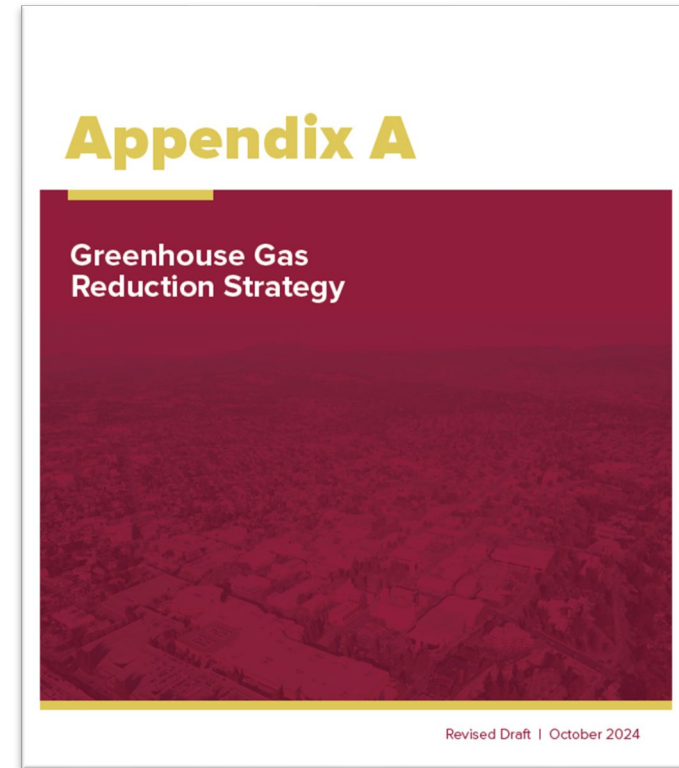
# Community-wide Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy





# GHG Reduction Strategy - Path to Carbon Neutrality

- Meets **the State's goals for 2030 and 2045** GHG levels:
  - 40% below 1990 levels by 2030
  - 85% below 1990 levels by 2045
  - **Carbon neutrality by 2045**
- The GHG Reduction Strategy is **integrated with the General Plan** to ensure a cross-sector approach to reducing GHGs.
- The GHG Reduction Strategy is a **“CEQA Qualified Plan.”**
- Presented as Appendix A of the General Plan and has been **reviewed as part of the Draft EIR.**



# GHG Reduction Strategy Objectives



1. Decrease community-wide vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase the use of zero-emission vehicles and equipment.



2. Reduce community-wide energy use and transition to carbon-free energy sources.



3. Achieve a zero-waste future for Santa Rosa.



4. Use water efficiently and enhance drought resilience.



5. Enhance sustainable and carbon-free practices community-wide.

A large crowd of people is gathered in a city plaza. In the background, there are multi-story buildings and trees. The plaza has a paved walkway and a grassy area. People are walking, standing, and sitting on the grass. The scene is bright and sunny.

# Environmental Impact Report



# CEQA Overview

- **The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the State's primary environmental protection law.**
- **Results in an informational document that:**
  - Discloses potential environmental impacts of projects that have a physical effect on the environment.
  - Identifies mitigation measures to reduce any impacts.
  - Allows for public input as part of the process
- **CEQA documents must be approved/certified prior to project approval.**
- **CEQA does not dictate project approval or denial.**

# Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

## Overview

- An EIR is a public disclosure document that includes an evaluation of physical impacts to the environment that could occur as a result of the implementation of the project, based on specific and established criteria.
- The EIR is the highest-level environmental review document in CEQA.
- The EIR must be certified by the City Council prior to project approval.
- Certification of the EIR does not dictate project approval.

# Program-Level EIR

**Program-level environmental review documents are appropriate when a “project” consists of a series of actions related to the issuance of rules, regulations, and other planning criteria, (CEQA Guidelines Section 15168)**

- Does not evaluate impacts of future construction-level projects that are consistent with the General Plan;
- Does allow the subsequent project-level environmental review for future development to tier off the Program EIR; and
- Streamlines future environmental review procedures.



# EIR Process

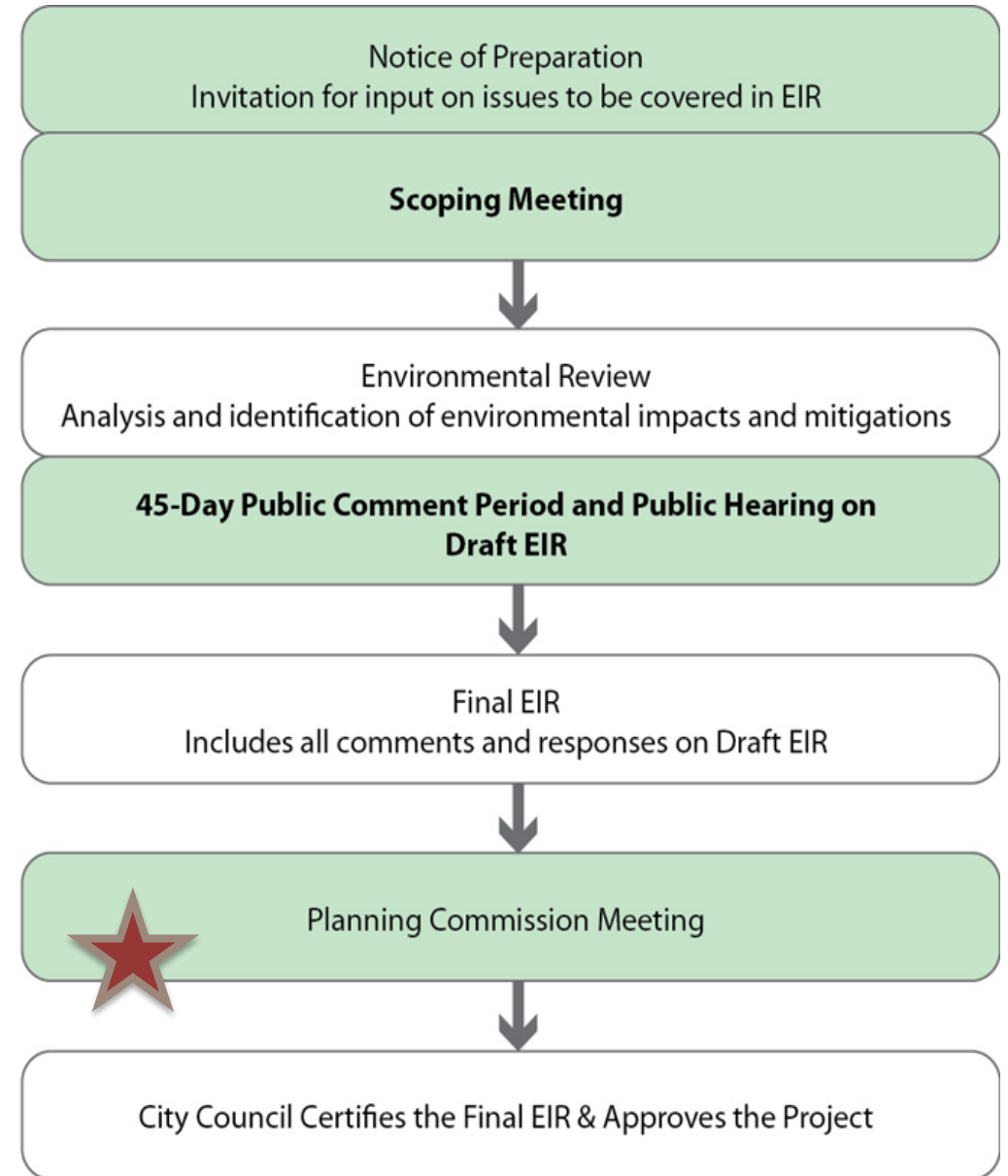
This chart summarizes the EIR process mandated by State law.



= Current phase



= Opportunities for Public Input



# Addressing Environmental Impacts

- Where significant environmental impacts are identified, CEQA requires mitigation by doing one or more of the following:
  - avoiding
  - reducing
  - rectifying
  - minimizing
  - eliminating
  - compensating
- CEQA permits the General Plan to incorporate mitigation measures as policies and actions that are designed to protect, preserve, and/or enhance environmental resources.
- Where impacts are significant and unavoidable with mitigation, the EIR includes a discussion why the impact cannot be reduced to a less-than significant level at the program-level.

# Environmental Topics Evaluated in the EIR

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources \*
- Air Quality \*
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise \*
- Population and Housing
- Public Services, Parks, and Recreation
- Transportation \*
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire \*

\*Topics found to have a significant-and-unavoidable impact.



# Less-Than-Significant Impacts

- **Without mitigation:**

- Aesthetics
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Population and Housing
- Public Services, Parks, and Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

- **With mitigation:**

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hydrology
- Noise
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

# Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

- **Agricultural Resources**
  - Convert CEQA Important Farmland to non-agricultural uses.
  - Lose Williamson Act lands.
- **Air Quality**
  - Exceed Bay Area Air District's regional significance thresholds and expose sensitive receptors to air pollution during operation.
- **Noise**
  - Expose sensitive receptors to excessive noise from construction and vehicles.
- **Transportation**
  - Exceed standards for residential vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita and VMT from new arterial lanes.
- **Wildfire**
  - Exacerbate risk of wildfire.

# Statement of Overriding Considerations

- Significant and unavoidable impacts at the program level do not preclude the finding of less-than-significant impacts at the project level for future development in Santa Rosa.
- The City may approve the project with the known significant and unavoidable impacts by issuing a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” that identifies how the benefits of the project outweigh the potential adverse environmental effects.
- The “Statement of Overriding Considerations” must be included in the record of project approval.



# Alternatives to the Proposed Project

## Alternative A: No Project

- General Plan 2035 remains in effect, is not replaced by General Plan 2050.
- No amendments to the North Station Specific Plan, Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan, and Santa Rosa City Code associated with the General Plan 2050 and Land Use Map.
- Proposed GHG Reduction Strategy would not be adopted.

## Alternative B: Increased Density

- Same households, residential units, population, and jobs as the proposed project.
- Parcels designated as Medium Low density residential (8.0-13.0 units per gross acre) in Areas of Change that are in or adjacent to PDAs would be redesignated to Medium High density residential (18.0-30.0 units per gross acre) allowing more opportunities for more dense housing near transit facilities.

# Public Comments

- **45-day public comment period from October 7, 2024, through November 20, 2024.**
- **Comments received from:**
  - California Geologic Survey
  - California Department of Fish and Wildlife
  - California Department of Transportation
  - Sonoma County
  - Bikeable Santa Rosa
  - Members of the public
- **Concerns:**
  - Mitigation measures and mitigating General Plan policies and actions
  - Vehicle Miles Traveled
  - South Santa Rosa Specific Plan

# Final EIR

- Final EIR published April 2025
- Final EIR includes:
  - Comments received during the public review period for Draft EIR
  - Responses to comments
  - Changes and corrections to text of Draft EIR
- EIR consists of the Draft EIR issued in October 2024 and the Final EIR issued in April 2025



# Next Steps



# Next Steps

## **City Council Hearing: Tuesday, June 3, 2025**

- Certification of EIR, adoption of General Plan 2050 and approval of Specific Plan amendments

## **Planning Commission and City Council Hearing: July/August 2025**

- Implementation package consisting of Municipal Code Changes and Zoning Map changes

# Recommendation

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Planning Commission, by two resolutions, recommend to the City Council:

- 1) Certification of the FEIR and approval of the Statement of Overriding Considerations, Findings of Fact, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and
- 2) Adoption of the General Plan 2050 and associated Specific Plan amendments