



# ACTIVATION OF VACANT PARCEL STRATEGIES

City Council Meeting  
October 8, 2024

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Planning & Economic Development

# GOALS

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1. Explore opportunities to assist in activating privately owned vacant parcels for lease/sale or awaiting development.

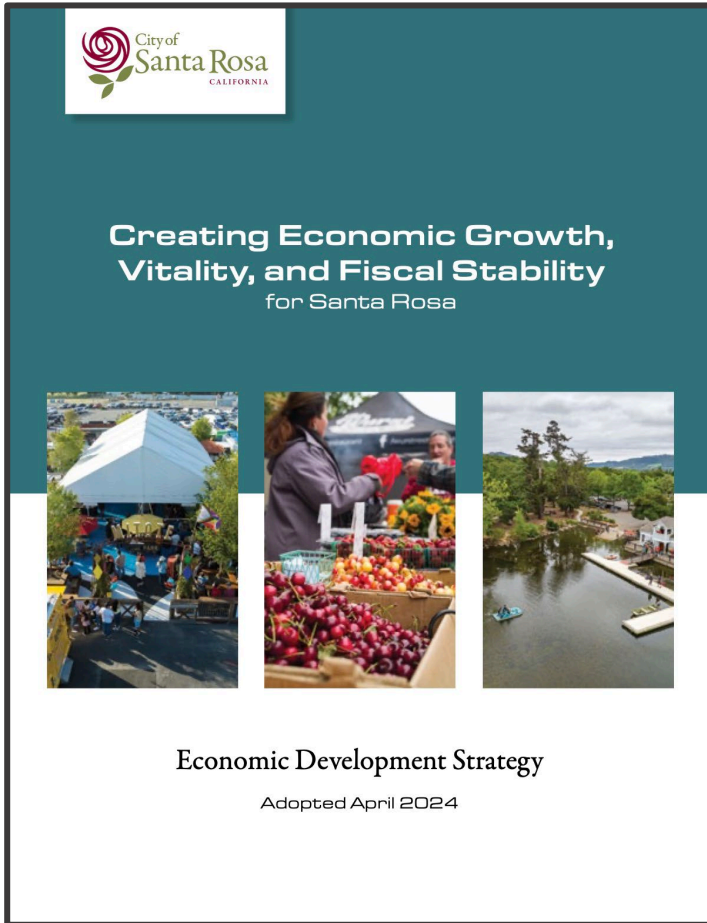
Benefits to temporarily filling vacant spaces:

- Support existing and emerging business
- Enhance and foster economic growth
- Advance activity and vitality
- Increase visibility
- Reduce vacancy periods – gain exposure
- Reduce vandalism caused by long-term vacancy

2. Review options for providing additional temporary activation of existing public spaces.



# GOALS



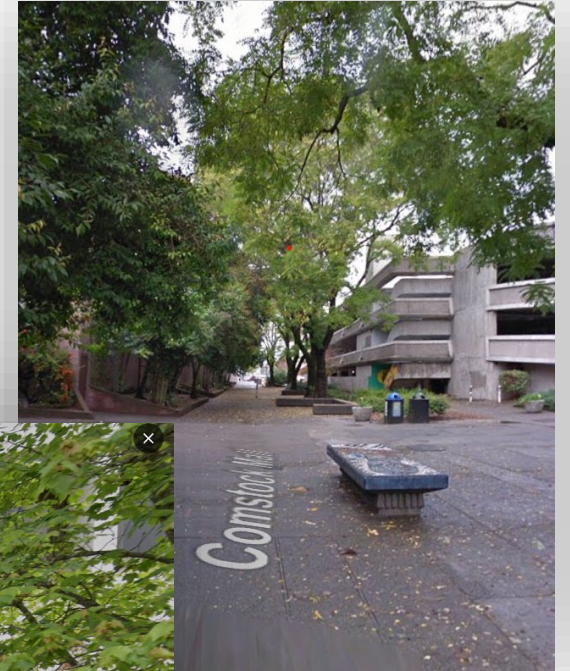
This session aligns with the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which emphasizes "identifying and optimizing land opportunities," "welcoming new ventures," and "supporting and investing in a diverse community."



# FOCUS AREAS

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- Vacant parcels (no structure)
- Vacant buildings or suites
- Underutilized public properties



# Focus Areas

## Downtown Station Area



# Vacant Parcels

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## Opportunities

- Small business pop up experiences
  - Retail
  - Food
  - Music
  - Art
- Recreational activities
  - Play structures
  - Pickleball
- Temporary art through public art program
  - Lighted art
  - Window wraps



# Vacant Parcels

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## Challenges

- Utility connections and surface improvement must be restored prior to activation
  - ADA surface
  - Water, sewer, electricity
- Privately owned parcels require short term lease
  - Cost is negotiated by private property owner
- Cost associated with required improvements may be significant for a temporary use that must be removed when final development of the site occurs
- Planning restrictions
  - Temporary use permit limited to 12 months of use



# Underutilized Public Spaces

## Opportunities

- Activation of areas
  - Less vandalism and graffiti
  - smaller outdoor events or exercise
  - Ideal for the sale of art, food, clothing or souvenirs by pushcart, pedal-driven cart, wagon, showcase or rack



## Challenges

- Cost
  - Utility connections, surface improvements and ADA could be needed- one time expenditure
  - Water, sewer, electricity – could be recouped through lease





# Pop -Up Program

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Staff has identified several vacant spaces that could serve as temporary locations for small emerging businesses, entrepreneurs, community events, sports or art and culture exhibits through a Vacant Parcel Pop-Up Partnership Pilot Program ("Program"). The Program would initially begin with the Downtown and Railroad Square area for a 12-month period.

*How it works:*

## **City**

- Serve as the program facilitator
- Provide technical assistance
- Promote through a marketing plan on social media across the US
- Preset a downtown overlay for the temporary use of pop-ups for a 12-month period for businesses participating in the Program.



# Pop -Up Program

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*How it works:*

## **Private Property Owners**

- Voluntarily participate in the Program – making their vacant property available for temporary use
- Negotiate flexible, short-term, low-cost leases that are prepared, vetted and ready to execute within 24 hours with pop-up operators
- Retain the right to pursue long term tenants or development opportunities after the pop-up tenancy



# Pop- Up Program

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*How it works:*

## **Pop-up Operators**

- Apply through the City to be considered for available spaces
- Comply with all local regulations, including business licensing, zoning and health and safety.
- Maintain regular and consistent hours of operation
- Track social media engagement
- Set and track target sales goals



# Pop-Up Program

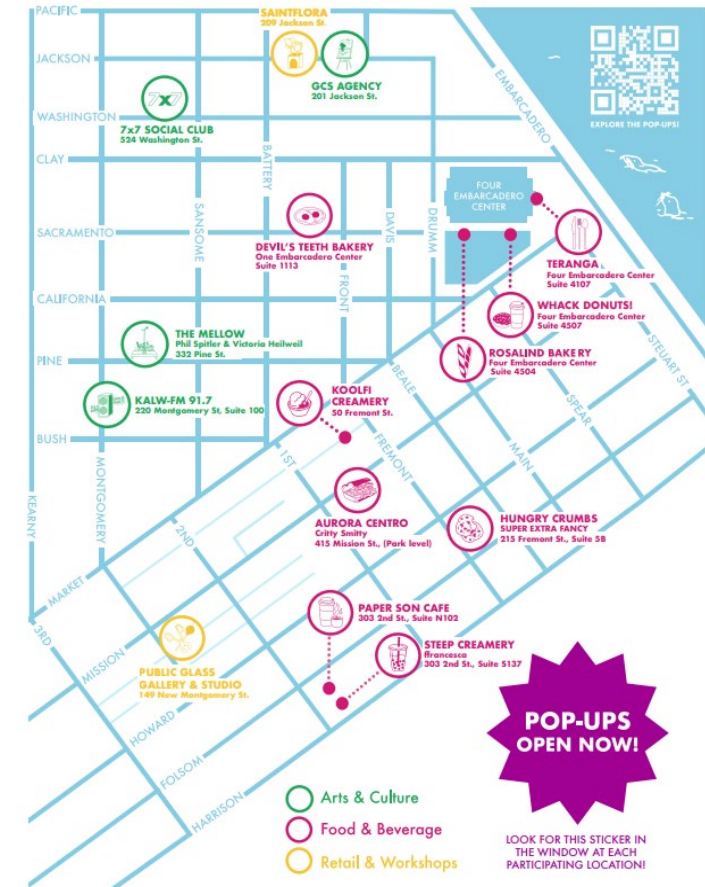
## Example programs from other cities

Santa Monica's Reed Park Pop-Up Grant Program, a city sponsored opportunity for Santa Monica residents, businesses, and community organizations to engage through temporary enhancements.

The City of San Diego allows roaming and stationary sidewalk vendor entrepreneurs to use the public right of way or public property for sidewalk vending. The sale of art, food, clothing and souvenirs are all allowed from a pushcart, pedal-driven cart, wagon, showcase or rack.

San Francisco launched "Vacant to Vibrant", a program to support and inspire the community to envision the future of downtown and re-energize the neighborhood with diverse pop-ups.

Santa Rosa staff can use programs like these to help develop and understand best practices for a similar, Santa Rosa specific, programs.



Pop Up Location Map for SFO's Vacant to Vibrant Program



# Next Steps

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To launch the Program by summer 2025, in conjunction with the Virtual One-Stop-Shop initiative, staff would propose the following timeline:

## **Q4 2024:**

- Research and review successful pop-up programs in other cities (San Diego, Santa Monica, San Francisco).
- Develop initial program framework, including pre-zoning and temporary permitting processes.
- Begin outreach to property owners and potential business participants to gauge interest and secure commitments.

## **Q1 2025:**

- Finalize program design, including the one-day online licensing process and the online property inventory platform.
- Draft policy documents and guidelines for participation.
- Continue stakeholder engagement with property owners and local businesses.
- Coordinate with the One-Stop-Shop development team to ensure seamless integration.



# Next Steps

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## **Q2 2025:**

- Obtain approval from City Council for program structure.
- Launch marketing and outreach efforts to promote the program to potential operators and property owners.
- Conduct final testing and launch the vacant property pop-up program by the end of Q2 2025, in tandem with the One-Stop-Shop.



# Questions and Feedback

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