

COUNCIL POLICY			
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BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to providing an open and visible decision-making process to which Santa Rosa residents have equal access. The City believes that an active program of citizen involvement produces more informed decision-making and municipal service levels reflective of citizen need. In January 1987, the City Council adopted a goal confirming its commitment to citizen involvement and input on municipal issues.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidance to City staff as to expected methods of citizen involvement including notification. Because of the variety of programs undertaken by City departments, no one approach to citizen involvement will be effective in all cases. The nature and objectives of each program will determine the appropriate methods of citizen involvement.

POLICY

It is the policy of the City Council to actively solicit the involvement of citizens in the public decision-making process. This is to be accomplished through public notification, media exposure, neighborhood meetings and public hearings.

IMPLEMENTATION

- A. When a project, program or issue may have identifiable impacts on a neighborhood or citizen group, a Public Involvement Plan shall be submitted to the City Manager's Office at the beginning of a program. The Plan shall be designed (a) to ensure responsiveness to the level of interest and concern expressed by the public, (b) to ensure visibility and understanding by the agencies, groups and individuals who may participate, and (c) to ensure that citizen involvement is carefully and systematically included as a part of the decision-making process.
- B. When a project may affect a neighborhood, special neighborhood meetings will be scheduled early in the project planning process. Notices will be sent to organized neighborhood groups and any individual who has requested notification.
- C. All public hearing notices shall be written in clear, concise and understandable language and incorporate maps or other graphics when it aids the message. The notices will be clearly identified as a City of Santa Rosa notice. In addition to required legal notices, additional hearing notices on major community issues may be placed in the non-legal sections of the newspaper and laid out to attract the attention of interested citizens.
- D. The City will continue to televise all City Council meetings and special meetings of Advisory Boards/Commissions when an item has broad community interest. In addition, Council and Commission meetings will be advertised on the Community Bulletin Board run on the public access television channel.

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- E. All operating departments will develop a specific plan to inform the public on City-initiated projects. This may or may not be the same as, or part of, the Public Involvement Plan in Paragraph A. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the City Manager's Offices prior to implementation.
- F. When a public involvement plan/specific public information plan has been developed, staff will include the plan as part of the Council staff report.
- G. Each department will designate a staff person to coordinate the citizen involvement/information plans with the City Manager's Office.