

From: [Gregory Fearon](#)
To: [Frederick Allebach](#)
Cc: [CityCouncilListPublic](#); [Farrell, Lori Ann](#); [Nutt, Jason](#); [Osburn, Gabe](#); [Basinger, Megan](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Public comment, Santa Rosa City Council 6/16/26 Study Session on Downtown Economic Development Strategy, Agenda item 4.1
Date: Tuesday, June 16, 2026 11:24:48 AM

Greetings!

I agree, Fred. Though I can't be at the Study session, I'll let the Council know I support your suggestions.

Gregory Fearon
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On Tue, Jun 16, 2026, 5:53 AM Frederick Allebach <fallebach@gmail.com> wrote:

Fred Allebach

6/16/26

Public comment, Santa Rosa City Council 6/16/26 Study Session on Downtown Economic Development Strategy, Agenda item 4.1

Staff has presented this item to lead to one conclusion, trade the City Hall property, cash it for a new City Hall complex somewhere else, make big money in the process and revitalize downtown through a new infusion of investment, business, and commerce. This Plan may or may not be a good idea; the consequences don't seem to be fully vetted and are biased to the preferred conclusion.

Quick suggestions for Council and staff consideration:

One: the City owns the property, as a condition of sale the City should require that any housing redevelopment of the City Hall complex require 40% participation by non-profit housing developers to build 100% affordable housing for equal portions of Moderate, Low, Very Low, and Extremely Low-income categories. If the Plan is to actually create an inclusive community and reduce homelessness, the best way is to keep the precariously housed from falling off the back of the bus into displacement and homelessness by having a larger local stock of mandatory 100% affordable housing at the City Hall site. As the property owner, the City can leverage this as part of the deal.

Two: this Plan, like the South Santa Rosa Specific Plan (SSRSP), needs more intentional focus on how it will bring benefits to the 40% of City residents who are struggling with costs. Disadvantaged community (DAC) data is well known and documented. The City needs spine and political will to make sure projected economic benefits are fairly allocated and distributed. The Council directed staff to pay more attention to and to mitigate inequity issues in the SSRSP. It should do the same with this Downtown Plan. Any ongoing analysis needs focus to integrate

and manifest City equity priority goals in this Plan too.

Three: If the City wants to push memes of a sustainable future, this can't just be along economic lines. Full cost accounting is called for, with a triple bottom line. Only by including social factors and the negative externalities of economic business as usual can we ever claim to be sustainable. The market and market booster's job is to look for the money; the government's job is to act as a backstop to market excesses.

Discussion

The City is adept at counting the benefits of economic development to pay for city government but not so good at showing how these benefits will serve the 40% of the City's low-income population. Addressing these residents' struggles deserves to be a top five priority of City goals. The staff report says the Plan will "boost economic productivity and expand the tax base." What will it materially do for the poor and cost burdened?

If this plan aims at Council goals to create an Inclusive community and encourage housing for all and to reduce homelessness, how exactly will it do that? The low percent of inclusionary units in market rate projects does not come close to meeting the most glaring housing needs. *Expanding housing supply* and letting the market run may just as well act to keep on segregating the City and the housing market into the haves and have nots, largely along racial and ethnic lines.

Are economic revitalization and benefits supposed to magically trickle down to essential workers? This assumption can be challenged with strong arguments with reputable sources as objectively false. Economic business as usual creates more inequity, that's why we have our current situation of serious DAC problems in the City, and the world.

Addressing City DAC issues calls for more intentional actions; let's see those in this Plan.

How does this Plan revitalize life for the 40% of Low-income City residents? Where is the concomitant cost analysis for impacts to this 40%? The downtown area has a serious DAC population just like the SSRSP area does. Just like the SSRSP, don't keep the Displacement study etc. off to the side while counting future economic benefits for the City.

"We don't know where we're going but we have to stick together in case somebody gets there." Ken Kesey