



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE AND UNITED SOCCER LEAGUE INTEREST IN SANTA ROSA

City Council Meeting  
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Planning & Economic Development

# 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



## 2. UNITED SOCCER LEAGUE INTEREST IN SANTA ROSA



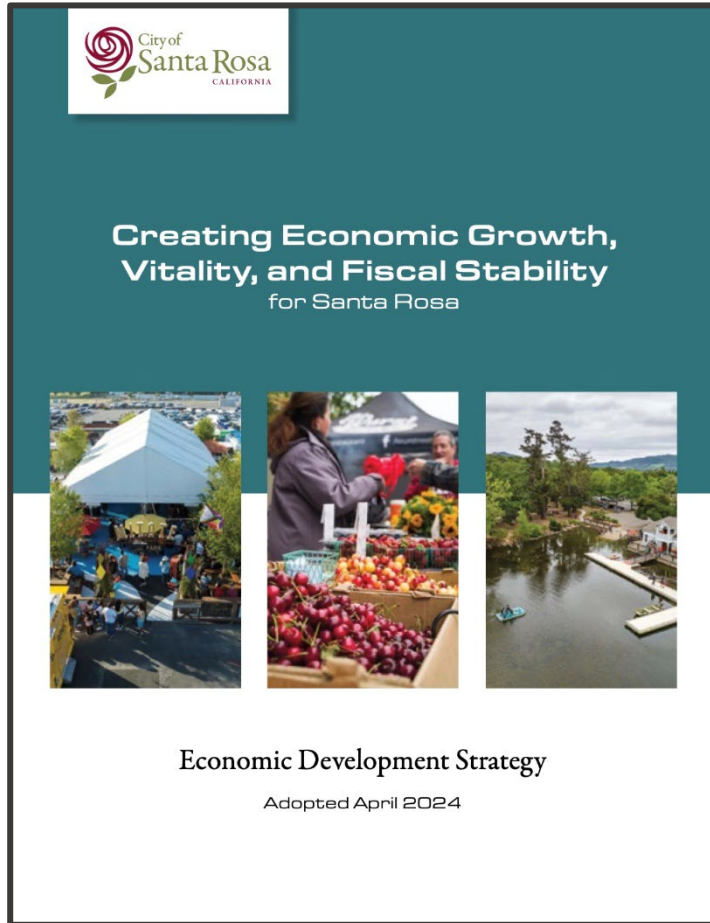
# Background

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- **Strategic Vision:** Santa Rosa's Economic Development Strategic Plan focuses on fostering a vibrant, economically sustainable city.
- **Business & Community Growth:** Supports initiatives that drive business expansion, community engagement, and regional connectivity.
- **Economic & Social Impact of Sports:** Professional sports can attract visitors, boost local businesses, and strengthen community identity.
- **Proven Success Model:** Other cities have leveraged professional sports as economic and social catalysts.



# GOALS



This opportunity 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." Also leveraging opportunities to achieve a more vibrant community.



# Opportunity

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**USL Market Interest:** The USL has identified Santa Rosa as a potential market for expansion of the league and to site both a men's and a women's professional soccer team and for a stadium located in Santa Rosa.



# United Soccer League (USL)

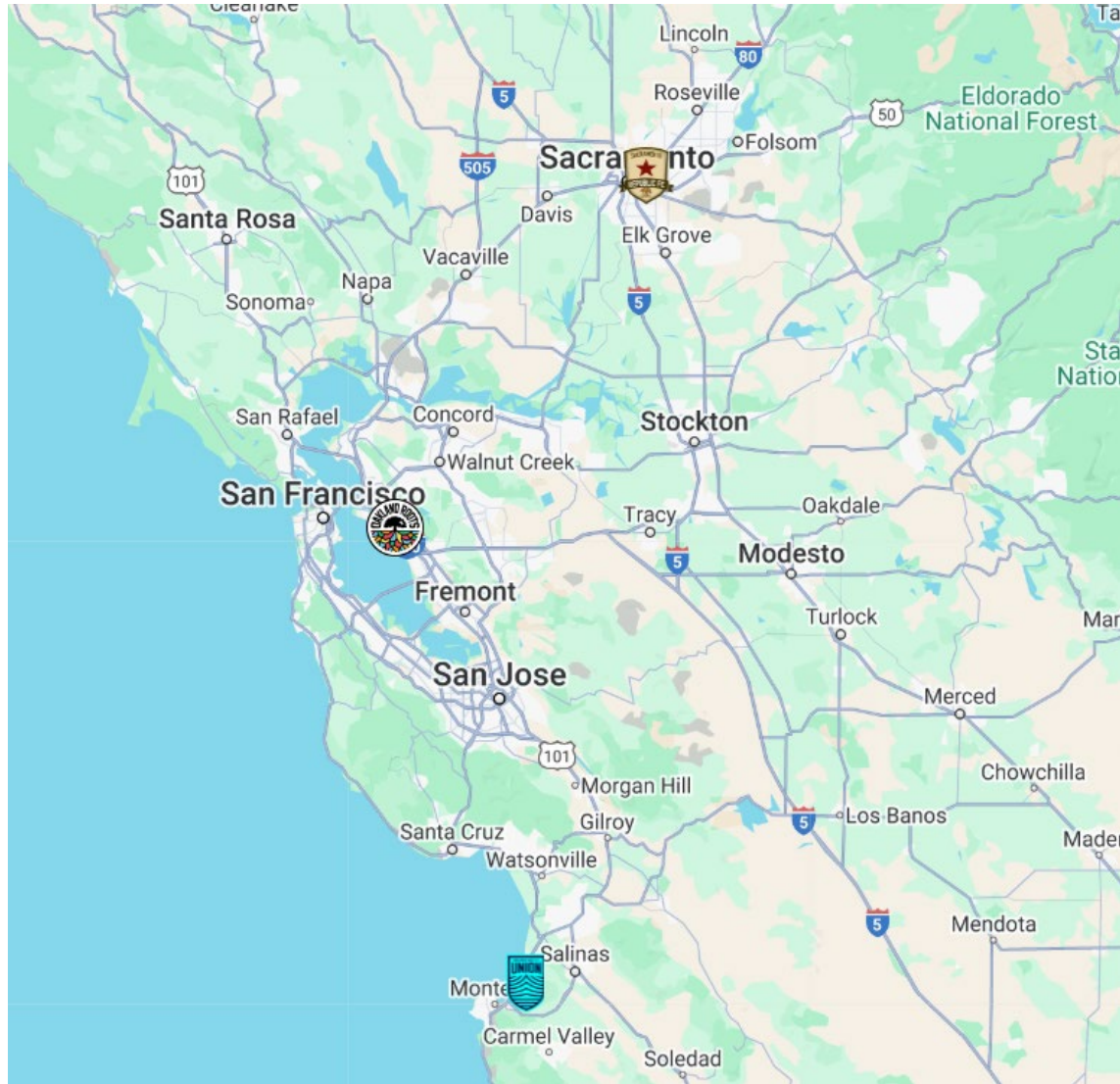
## ABOUT THE UNITED SOCCER LEAGUE

The United Soccer League (USL) is the largest professional soccer organization in North America, possessing nearly a decade of experience in bringing the world's game to communities across the United States and Canada. It counts more than 200 clubs in its membership.

### THE LEAGUES



# United Soccer League (USL)



Monterey Bay FC



Oakland Roots SC



Sacramento Republic FC





# Santa Rosa's Soccer Market

## SANTA ROSA HAS THE INGREDIENTS TO BE A TOP SOCCER MARKET



### SPORTS FAN POPULATION

87% of the DMA are sports fans



### AGE

Median age of Soccer fans trends much younger compared to the DMA



### DIVERSITY

Diverse population, that trends towards sports like soccer



### SPORTS SUCCESS

The state's professional league franchises & collegiate programs have historically been successful on & off the field



### SOCCER AUDIENCE

Soccer Fan demographics skews towards average soccer market: younger, more diverse, higher income, more educated, compared to the DMA



### CORPORATE ECOSYSTEM

Significant sponsorship opportunity revenue for the team, stadium, and stadium development.



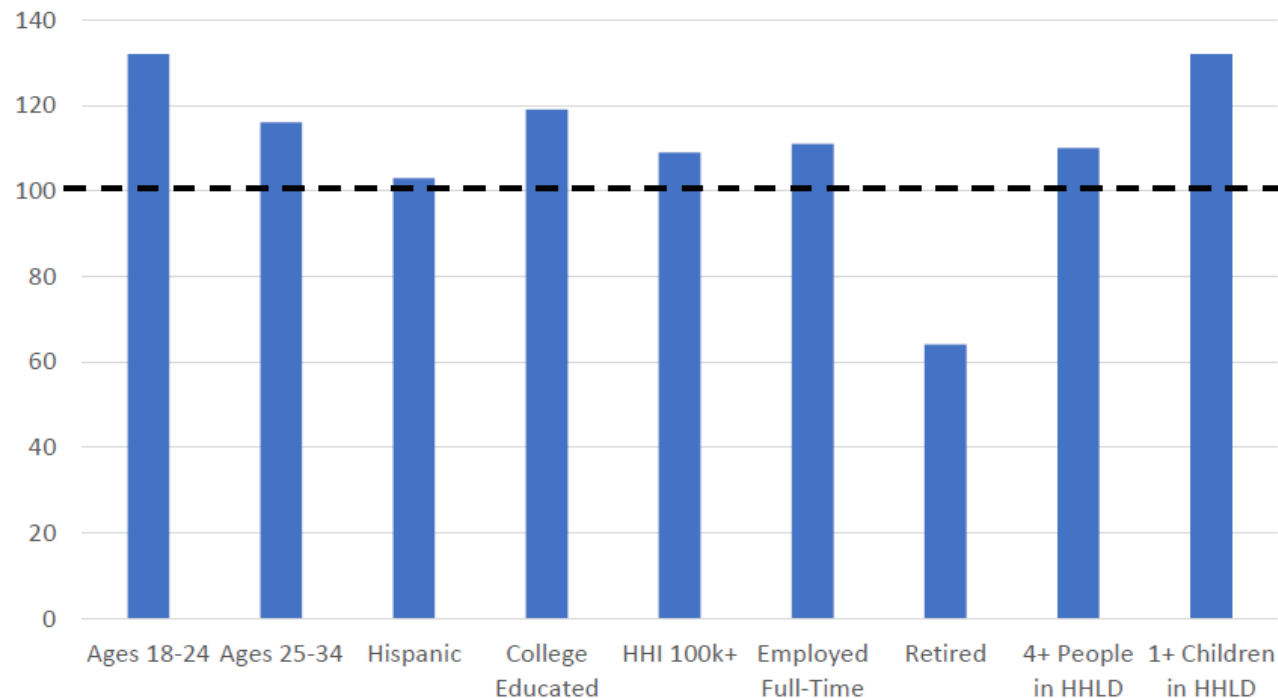
# Santa Rosa's Soccer Market

## SANTA ROSA SOCCER FANS BRING A DIFFERENTIATED AND VALUABLE CONSUMER

The Santa Rosa soccer fan represents a young, diverse, educated, and financially influential market.

Santa Rosa DMA soccer fan index compared to the Santa Rosa DMA (18+)

**Santa Rosa Soccer Fans vs. Santa Rosa DMA**



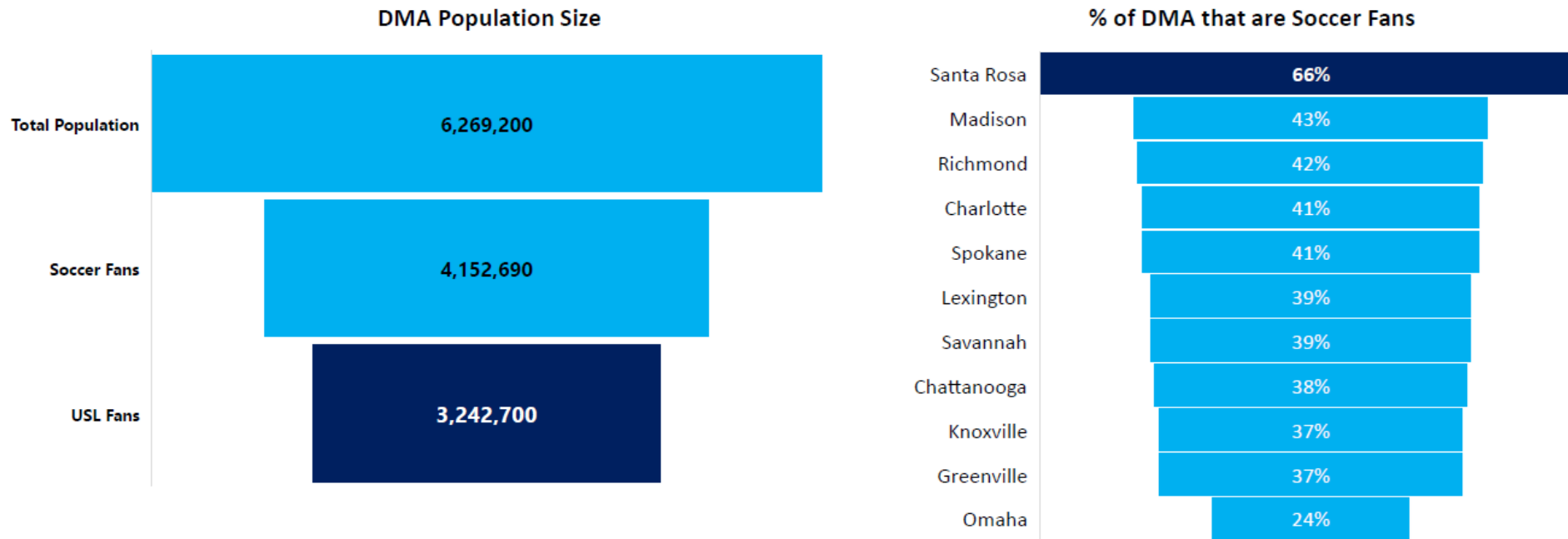
- Read as: Santa Rosa soccer fans are 48% more likely to fall between the ages of 18-34 when compared to the DMA.
- The soccer fanbase in Santa Rosa is younger than the general DMA. This suggests a strong opportunity for a USL club to engage with a young audience and build a foundation for the long-term customer value.
- Santa Rosa soccer fans have higher spending power which is notable given the younger age profile and cultural makeup of the fan base
- The younger Santa Rosa soccer fan segment is also highlighted by those with a full-time employment status and under-indexing for retirees.



# Santa Rosa's Soccer Market

## SANTA ROSA HAS A ROBUST BUILT-IN SOCCER FAN BASE PRIME FOR NEW, HOMETOWN TEAM

When compared to current USL League One markets, Santa Rosa has upside, in terms of soccer fan concentration, in addition to having a large casual sports fan consumer base.



Decoder, Dec 2023 – Nov 2024; A soccer fan is a resident of the market whose level of interest ranks 2-7 on interest scale of 1-7, 1 being not interested and 7 being extremely interested, in the following leagues: USL, MLS, NWSL, USWNT, USMNT, Liga MX, Liga MX Femenil, EPL, La Liga, Bundesliga, Ligue 1 & Serie A.



# Exclusivity Agreement (LOI)

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**Letter of Intent (LOI):** The City Manager has executed an LOI agreement with USL, establishing an exclusive negotiating period to explore league expansion.

- **Exclusive Negotiation Terms & Ancillary Development**
- **Stadium Planning & Development**
- **Financial & Legal Considerations**

*Exploratory only. No immediate Fiscal Impact*



# Next Steps

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- **Begin Community Outreach**
- **Identify Key Partners**
- **Site Selection Process**
- **Market Studies**
- **Sports Master Plan**
- **Source Operator/Franchisee**
- **Development Agreement**



# Action steps

## Phase 1: Site Identification & Feasibility

### Site Selection & Feasibility

#### Exclusivity or LOI Signed

Site Selection & Due Diligence

Site Options Analysis

Determine Zoning + Environmental Conditions

Preliminary Title + Land Use Review

Determine Land Acquisition Process + Timeline

Site Selection

Initial Community + Political Landscape Review

### Feasibility & Market Studies

Market Feasibility Study

Stadium Economic Impact Study

Mixed-Use Economic Impact Study

Public Funding Analysis

Demand studies for residential, hotel, retail, office

Stadium & Real Estate Pro Formas

## Concept Development

Preliminary master plan and test fits

High-level cost estimates (stadium + mixed-use)

Create Initial Phasing Plan

## Community Engagement

Discussions with city/county/state leadership

Outline Community Benefits

Create Steering Committee

Complete MOU w/ USL



More information and ways for the public to  
engage online at [SRCity.org/USL](https://srcity.org/USL)

**Future Community Forum:** June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 4-6pm

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